

CARBON.12

PRESS RELEASE

THE BLACK FLAGS OF MEDEA

10 NOVEMBER – 29 JANUARY

-- PHILIP MUELLER

From the depths of their enclaves the Black Flamingo Sad Boys, and the Naxos Racing Team emerge. It is a gathering of old and new people from paintings past, their faces masked as they pilgrim through new terrain. We are at the cusp of a chapter coming to its close - before our feet, the embers of a lifetime spent in the fruitless pursuit of pleasure crumble to dust.

The Black Flags of Medea encapsulates a fundamental stage in the journey **Philip Mueller's** (b. 1988, Austria) characters undergo. After countless summers spent chasing some semblance of fulfilment, a dull ache has harbored in the pits of their very being. Unanswered questions loom large, demanding resolution. The exhibition revolves around this search for meaning, reflecting a period of introspection.

The days are long, awash in colors that ripen and mature underneath a late-setting sun. Mueller's steady fascination with German Romanticism permeates his new compositions, as observed through his renewed focus on the natural world. These scenic works are of personal significance to the artist - of which one crucial scene unfolds in autumn, amidst a landscape he calls his birthplace.

Within this tableau is our central figure of interest, sat amidst a smattering of burnt orange and mossy green hues. She is Medea, a figure rooted in Greek mythology - a woman scorned, a symbol of violent action turned into freedom. She is at the forefront of the procession, bearing deep wounds; from enduring exile from her homeland, to suffering profound betrayal.

Imbued in symbolism, the exhibition calls to Mueller's vast lexicon of iconography. Medea's presence, despite her tragic history, is a blessing - symbolic of renewal and the burning desire to rise again, to begin anew. Within the same frame, a cowboy boot is escorted by pallbearers to its final resting place; its "death" a final farewell to the persona it once stood for. The whole event transcends mere escapism; it is a poetic emancipation, a resolute doctrine in itself that emphasizes a rejection of blind conformism and embraces a new, otherwise unconventional perspective on reality.

As the procession takes place, we play quiet witness to the birth of a new era. "The procession is a celebration, the celebration a liberation, the liberation is the moment." are words as said by Philip Mueller. Black banners accompany the cavalcade, a swan song in Medea's honor. In essence, the flags constitute the thematic sum of the artist's message - echoing a manifesto of escape, of freedom, of hope, and transformation.

- Alexis Javero