

ETHAN COHEN

Fears of Art

Armory Post-game Party and an Opening Reception at Ethan Cohen Gallery

Opening 7th of March, 2019

6 - 8 p.m.

Ethan Cohen Gallery is pleased to present the group exhibition *Fears of Art* that explores the ways in which artists from around the world work through and react to the fears and worries that permeate each of our lives. The exhibition will include artists from various cultural backgrounds and ages, including **Ai Weiwei, Mina Cheon, Gonçalo Mabunda, and Taha Heydari**, as well as a selection of **Unknown Tribal Artists**. The viewer is invited to experience and reconnect with their deepest and most primal urges through imagery and objects fetishizing that which we most fear and demonstrate the changing role of fear in modern life.

Fear is typically regarded as a negative experience - it is not enjoyable to feel powerless in the face of impending danger, but in an evolutionary sense, we require fear to fuel our development. Fear forms the basis of our societies - early humans learned that we are safer together and this philosophy continues to bond us to our neighbors as protection against the unknown. The kinship we feel towards people we recognize as similar to ourselves keeps society functioning. Conversely, fear of those perceived as 'other', even those within our own societies, continues to create rifts, which only further the potential for danger.

Fear both brings us together and drives us apart - ultimately, our individual fear of death is what defines our lives. How we come to cope with the knowledge that our time is fleeting and what we do with the time we have is the conclusive measure of living. As essayist Jorge Luis Borges said in his 1949 short story *The Immortal*, "Death...makes men precious...every act they execute may be their last...Everything among the mortals has the value of the irretrievable and the perilous".

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As a recording of our collective mind and emotional state, art unveils unexpected sides of fear and proves its diversified role. From the tribal masks that sought to repel spirits by visualizing fear as a way to counteract it, to political messages in the work of **Gonçalo Mabunda**, who uses discarded weapons to make a statement of beauty instead of one of destruction. From **Tony Shore's** painting *Fucked Up* referring to the ongoing racist social crisis in America to **Wang Keping's** contemporary ink painting of a gàn bù, a government official in China, who is deaf, blind and mute - painted as a head with no eye sockets, no mouth, no ears and no nostrils, commenting on enforced political silence. The group exhibition *Fears of Art* is a collective artistic endeavor to outline and comprehend the various fears of the modern through knowledge, humor, criticism, myth, and utopian dream.

Full List of Artists

Aboudia, Qiu Deshu, Ai Weiwei, Taha Heydari, Tony Shore, The Blue Noses, DeShawn Dumas, Lan Zhenghui, Gonçalo Mabunda, Soly Cissé, Avelino Sala, Isaac Aden, Mina Cheon, Huang Yan, Pan Xinglei, Wang Keping, Sui Jianguo, Jeffrey Spencer Hargrave, Melora Griffis, Moffat Takadiwa, and Unknown Tribal Artists.

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