
Press Release**Artists Anonymous
Virus**25 Jan – 1 March, Private
View 24 Jan

Haunch of Venison is pleased to announce the exhibition of Artists Anonymous, a group of collaborative artists from London and Berlin who will present 'Virus', the final installment of their multi-sensory anti-superhero epoch, *Apocalyptic Warriors*, a series of shows executed and exhibited over the past three years in New York, London, Berlin and now Zürich.

By throwing aside the individual artist's ego and working as a collective, Artists Anonymous deny personal authorship and thus open up a new realm of anarchic experimentation. Their complex multi-faceted installations quite literally throw the viewer down the rabbit hole as their installations fill entire gallery spaces with paintings, sculptures, performances, photography, print and video. Each exhibition in the *Apocalyptic Warriors* series is devoted to a single 'Warrior', of which there are six: War, Drugs, Hunger, Pollution and Overpopulation, Death and finally Virus.

'Virus' alludes to Pestilence, the biblical purveyor of illness, but is visually represented as a female deity reminiscent of Kali, the Hindu Goddess of Destruction. Various techniques such as painting, photography, sculpture and installation comprise 'Virus'. The multitude of media is typical also for every other chapter of the *Apocalyptic Warriors* series. Nevertheless Artists Anonymous consider themselves, first and foremost, as painters. Their compositions are informed by numerous art historical precedents, ranging from El Greco's miniature models, to John Singer Sargent's grandiose portraiture. Despite the highly politicized and occasionally morbid nature of the *Apocalyptic Warriors* series, Artists Anonymous imbibe the work with a distinct sense of dark humour that is both ironic and playful, without passing moral judgement or assigning blame. They take a theme and throw it into a kaleidoscope, shattering one central idea into hundreds of overlapping, fractured, yet still unified elements, which coalesce in their installations to create a provocative and surreal universe.

The show will comprise various elaborate installations encompassing different aspects of viral contamination in contemporary life. Just as plagues in the Middle Ages were the fault of Pestilence, fundamentalist Christians argue today that AIDS is God's punishment for homosexuality, despite all statistical and scientific evidence to the contrary. As our understanding of genetics develops, affording man more power to manipulate his body and environment, the existential responsibility to use this power for social progress, and not for personal gain, grows more immediate. If man attempts to replace God as Creator, humanity enters a new era of post-modern morality, beset by dilemmas of "right and wrong" that are specific to our scientific age.

By alluding to such an inapprehensible and yet so "virulent" topic, Artists Anonymous,

just as in the other *Apocalyptic Warriors* series, aim to personify the intangible concepts of each of the exhibitions' themes, interpreting and appropriating them through a series of interactive installations, encompassing the *Zeitgeist* of modern life.

With 'Virus', the final component of the *Apocalyptic Warriors* we are forced to ponder who is the true conductor of this tragic symphony, playing out its final notes as humanity descends into the abyss and the *Apocalyptic Warriors* ride on.

For further information and images please contact:

Claire Walsh, Haunch of Venison London

Call +44 (0) 20 7495 5050 or email claire.walsh@haunchofvenison.com

Silvia Lorenz, Haunch of Venison Zürich

Tel: +41 (0) 43 422 88 88 oder E-mail: silvia.lorenz@haunchofvenison.com

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Editors' Notes

The five artists of the Artists Anonymous collaborative have studied at University of the Arts, Berlin; Academy of Visual Arts, Nuremberg; Central/St. Martins College of Art, London; Bruckner Conservatory, Linz; Desmond Jones school of Movement Theatre and Mime, London; The Philipps University, Marburg and the Dance Academy, Berlin. Artists Anonymous have exhibited broadly in Europe and the US, upcoming shows include Kunstverein Bregenz and Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

