

# LODOWN

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# 93

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# MYSTIFIED BIOTA — HEIKO MÜLLER

In the surprisingly ace TV series " Fargo ", which deliciously feeds from the quirkiness and general spirit of the Coen Brother classic, Billy Bob Thornton's devilish character Lorne Malvo states that there are no saints in the animal kingdom - only breakfast and dinner. And while there certainly is a lot of truth to that, it's a safe bet that Hamburg's very own Heiko Müller would beg to differ. Having just finished his biggest solo show to date at Feinkost Krüger Gallery, on which he steadily worked for the past 18 months, his paintings often seem to offer a starting point for a new kind of contemporary fable, where animals solve triply cosmic riddles and the spirit of the old Flemish masters receives a psychedelic makeover. Not surprisingly, Müller's paintings aren't necessarily too interested in representing a tessera of the here and now, but delivering timeless snapshots from an alternate reality close to our own one instead. " David Lynch, for example, is great in creating mystical scenarios in urban surroundings ", he tells Lodown, " the reason why I focus on rural motives is that I'm usually trying to create pictures which have a certain influence on the atmosphere of the room in which they are hanging. I want them to be like an open window in a mountain shelter, so to speak, and I have no idea how to create this effect by painting urban scenarios. Referring to that timeless quality you just mentioned, well, in 2007 I went to Art Basel. I was strolling from booth to booth wondering why even the greatest paintings couldn't knock my socks off, but then I stumbled over some little watercolor pieces I really liked. I was too lazy and tired to ask who the artist was

"Usually my creations are a mix of things I love. I love the countryside and animals, but I'm also a big fan of classic horror and science fiction films like 'The Birds' and 'Phase IV', novels with mystical elements and dark comics like those of Charles Burns and Daniel Clowes.

I grew up in the city but now I'm living in an area with woods and some lakes. Usually I try to go jogging through the forest twice a week.



Sometimes late and so it's while I'm in the woods. Then I can hardly see the forest tracks anymore... and that's when I'm getting quite nervous.

Every little sound scares me to death.

I think it is very interesting that something I usually enjoy so much gets so frightening when there is not enough light around."

LANGUR (2014)  
OIL ON CANVAS, APPROX. 8" DIAMETER

and so I went on. Some booths later I saw some simple small paintings which fascinated me more than all the other stuff on the fair. They were from Michael Borremans who I've never heard of before. On my way out I said to my friend that I would like to look at the watercolor pieces again, and I was really freaked out when I saw that those were painted by Michael Borremans as well. So obviously there is an aspect in his work which I feel very attracted to and which I didn't find in any of the other countless works at the fair. I think it is some kind of dignity and quietness you can also find in some old masters' works, which then results in a piece of art with a timeless quality. To reach this as well is one of my goals."

A few of Müller's peers may draw from a similar inspirational pool and skill-set, but it is pretty remarkable how he backs up his already unique vision by strictly working in a square format, which could either simply relate to a matter of aesthetics or hint to an elaborate bond with vinyl culture. " I think that your last assumption isn't that far away from reality ", Müller explains, " I grew up with two much older brothers. One of them was a big record collector and he infected me when I was a teenager. I'm kind of addicted to the square format and most of my works are even in 30x30cm which is exactly the size of a 12" cover. From time to time I catch myself imagining how other artists' paintings - that usually are in portrait or landscape format - would look in square. Gerhard Richter once said: composition is when the main figure is in the center. I can fully agree with Richter, but would expand the sentence with: ...of a square format.

Before I actually focused on art, I was earning my living with screen design for seven years. I spent a lot of that time however drawing pictures with Photoshop. Independent of each other, my friends Henning Kies and Till Gerhard suggested exhibiting my digital art at the Feinkunst Krüger gallery. The gallerist accepted, and, surprisingly, the show turned out to be a big success. I felt so elated that I contacted the most important lounge galleries in the US. I did get positive replies, but only as long as the gallerists didn't notice that I was offering digital art. That was quite a letdown for me, especially since I knew that I was pretty good at drawing and painting. And so I decided to paint some of my digital creations with oil on wood. That was six years ago, and in the meantime my stuff was exhibited in most of the galleries which refused my digital art."



WAZ DETAIL, OIL ON BOARD, APPROX. 16" X 24" 2014



LOST IN SWITZERLAND (2009)  
OIL ON CANVAS, APPROX. 47" SQUARE



TOGETHER ALONE (2009)  
COLORED PENCIL ON PAPER, APPROX. 12" SQUARE



RISE (2010)  
OIL ON CANVAS, APPROX. 40" SQUARE



SEA DRAGON (2011)  
OIL ON BOARD, APPROX. 12" SQUARE



DEVIL (2012)  
OIL ON BOARD,  
APPROX. 12" SQUARE



GUARD (2013)  
OIL ON CANVAS,  
APPROX. 32" SQUARE



FUR (2013)  
OIL ON CANVAS, APPROX. 8" DIAMETER

Get ready to be enthused and feel free to start telling your own mystic tales through his work, which can be next seen at the "Don't Wake Daddy IX" at Feinkost Krüger in November, San Francisco and Art Basel Miami in December, followed by shows in Portland and Seattle in May 2015.

HEIKOMUELLER.DE  
FEINKUNST-KRUEGER.DE

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