

NATALIA HUG

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**The Mountain of Signs / Israel Aten/ Amadeus Certa/ Guram Shavdia
March 5 - May 17, 2022**

Natalia Hug is pleased to present a group exhibition of three artists all which studied at the Düsseldorf academy and find themselves today dispersed throughout the world. During the pandemic Israel Aten returned to Detroit Michigan and Guram Shavdia back to his native Georgia while Amadeus Certa remained in Düsseldorf. The seemingly random acts or chance which brought these three artists together at the Academy in Düsseldorf also sent them back to their native countries after they concluded their studies.

Equally driven by traditional painterly techniques and figurative aesthetics, the works in the show exhibit undeniable influences of graffiti, Japanese Manga and Marvel Comic Books, Hollywood and Television. However, far from falling into the cliché of Pop Art, these works co-opt and subvert contemporary pop cultural references, using them to further a more earnest and introspective approach to looking at the world around us. Works, which ponder the existence of superheroes and supervillains as a common regular aspect of everyday life. Shavdia's depiction of Rambo in pink destroying the evil force around him, or Aten's bio-mechanical superhero ready to defend or to seek revenge. The surreal coexistence of the Pandemic and the Russo Ukraine war makes us question good and evil like never before.

Israel Aten (b. 1986 Detroit, USA) studied at Düsseldorf Art Academy. Recent solo exhibitions include *What Pipeline*, Detroit, *All Under Heaven*, Natalia Hug, Cologne; and *RADAR: Blast Valiant* at LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur and Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster. Recent group exhibitions include *Birds of a Feather*, Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture, Hasselt Belgium; *Jetzt! Junge Malerei in Deutschland* (travelling exhibition); *Peter Mertes Stipendium*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn; and *Black Dahlia Quest*, Garros Roland, Essen.

Amadeus Certa (b. 1992 in Mannheim) completed his studies in painting and graphics in 2016 as a master student of Siegfried Anzinger at the Düsseldorf Art Academy with distinction. For his final presentation he received the Tour Prize of the Art Academy. In 2018, Amadeus Certa was honored with the Heinrich Vetter Prize for Fine Arts. Certa's work has already been shown in numerous national and international exhibitions, including institutions such as the Schloss Ujazdowski Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw and the Port 25 Museum - Space for Contemporary Art in Mannheim. His is currently part of a group exhibition "Quattro Fromaggi" at Golestani Gallery, Dusseldorf.

Guram Shavdia (b. 1988 Tbilisi, Georgia) was a master student of Prof. Andreas Schulze at Dusseldorf Academy. His latest project before moving back to Tbilisi was 'Another Space', Christuskirche, Leverkusen. Most recently Shavdia was part of "*Know Thy Neighbour*", an exhibition commissioned by Oxygen, an art project by Georgian contemporary art institution Propaganda. Curated by Irena Popiashvili, the show brought together artists from across the region in a bid to find new, contemporary iterations of past regional connections.