

Coniunctio

Ross + Kramer is pleased to announce the opening of “Coniunctio”, the gallery’s second exhibition by Christian Rex van Minnen.

Van Minnen makes arresting images that he considers studies in contrast; beautifully rendered surfaces exist in direct tension with at times grotesque imagery; contemporary visual elements are at odds with the very traditional techniques used to make the work. The show consists of 11 large scale oil paintings, and 11 smaller monotypes, as well as a new series of digitally animated NFTs.

Van Minnen, who is a self-taught painter, studied the methods of both Italian and Northern European Renaissance painters. Whereas the former used a white underpainting resulting in luminous works, the latter used a mid toned underpainting that allowed for a greater sense of depth. Van Minnen combines these two methods in his paintings: the Italian style for the “gummy” elements that seems to float on the surfaces of his paintings, hovering over his invented subjects; and the Northern European style for the backgrounds and figures themselves.

Van Minnen’s monotypes feature both invented figures and people that he has encountered in the Web3 community. The artist solicited community members to send him self-portraits and their PFPs (profile pictures), which he used as source material, layering the PFP image like a skin over the portrait of the person. These works are titled with the usernames of the subjects.

In addition to paintings and monotypes, the artist is presenting a new series of NFTS that will be available for auction on his proprietary NFT platform www.vanminion.fun.

Regarding the title of the show, Van Minnen writes this:

Coniunctio, literally “conjunction”, was used by ancient alchemists to describe chemical unions and Carl Jung adapted this term to describe the psychological union of the opposites, and the birth of new possibilities. In this body of work, oil painting, monotype, and digital, I have created portraits that are the conjunction of identities, and layers of self. As our consciousness expands further into the digital realm, so do new layers of identity. The interplay of these identities in one’s self is what interests me.

Jung saw that the alchemists made external, you could say projected, an inner work, the inner opus, upon substances. Humans continue to externalize this complicated internal process, consciously and unconsciously within the digital realm, Web3. It is no coincidence that the rise of web3, crypto, nfts, and metaverses, coincided with a resurgence of interest in psychedelics, a cycle repeating itself over and over. People seek new horizons of consciousness and connection, within and without. This new digital space is psychedelic, mind bending, and full of new possibilities of reinvention and growth, as well as ample opportunity for projection, activated shadow.

The exhibition will run from May 19–July 2, 2022. The gallery is located at 515 West 27th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues.