

# HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

— EST. 2016 —

## KEEGAN LUTTRELL - PALISADE

Opening reception: 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: 28<sup>th</sup> August - 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Curated by Linda Toivio

*PALISADE* explores the vulnerabilities and helplessness of humans from different perspectives, addressing both those who aspire to shield things inside and others who seek to protect themselves from the outside world. An armour has historically served to protect an individual from danger and assaults from the surrounding environment. In the context of *PALISADE*, an armour is not merely a barrier or protective layer against external attacks; similar to a membrane, it also seals in what is kept inside, as sometimes not speaking up is a survival mechanism. Consequently, this raises the questions of who is meant to be protected and from what.

Working with clay, Keegan Luttrell has created two armours, which positioned in the gallery side by side represent the duality of passive protection and defensive aggression; one is white and seemingly more traditional, while the other is black and made with protruding spikes. The two armours can thus be understood as having opposing functions, or means to fulfil their roles. The display is intentionally solemn, referencing ancient burial sites or archaeological excavations. In contrast, a video installation presents a disintegration and transformation of Luttrell's work. Submerged in water, black and white clay gauntlets gently melt away, before reassembling in hands covered with spikes and concentrated growths. Suggesting that the man-made armature is no longer necessary, it brings forth the potential redundancy of artificial barriers and their failure in protecting us from physical or emotional harm.

Luttrell's research and work reflect the theories of psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, who initially trained with Sigmund Freud. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Reich was one of the major contributors in the bodymind science field of the Western world; he coined the concept of armouring, linking certain physical attributes and functions such as posture and muscle tensions to the character and emotional affliction. He sought to bridge the gap between the mind and body, believing that this divide was causing humans to behave destructively towards themselves, each other and the environment. According to his teachings, a metaphorical armour expressed through unconscious muscle contractions is developed as a defence against the awareness of feelings, suppressed trauma and inhibited behaviour. In his practice, Reich developed innovative methods based not solely on psychotherapy, but also the sense of touch, since reuniting the body with the mind was essential for dismantling the character armour. In line with Reich's theory, aspects of Luttrell's works may be interpreted through the concept of de-armouring: as the clay body armour slowly disintegrates in the water, the tension and the pain held in the tissues get released and the numbness disappears. In lieu of brutally shattering the armour with force, the process chosen by the artist seems more like an invitation to willingly surrender.

While a barrier might create a boundary preventing uninvited access to our bodies and a membrane safeguards our truth within, Luttrell fusions them through minutiously constructed aluminium chain mail pieces. Embedded in skin-like silicone, they rest on metal palisades, merging the external with the internal, the true self with the superficial or public layer. For the viewer, PALISADE offers a transitional experience of the artworks, evolving from sculptural works to murky waters and back.

Text © Linda Toivio

#### About Hošek Contemporary

Established in 2016, Hošek Contemporary is a gallery, performance space and art residency located on a historical boat in Mitte, Berlin. The focus is primarily on performing arts, site-specific installations and experimental sound works. The gallery hosts weekly improvised music sets, providing musicians an opportunity to showcase their sound skills to a Berlin audience.

#### About MS Heimatland

Built in 1910 in Fürstenberg an der Oder, MS Heimatland was initially operating under the name Ida and used for transporting coal to Charlottenburg. After the Second World War, the 58-meter long cargo ship was renamed Heimatland, meaning 'homeland'. Until the 90s, the ship was sailing on Elbe and Havel, moving sand and chippings. It served for artistic and cultural purposes for the first time in 2002, when German sculptor Christiane Möbus chose it for her Nackte Tatsache Tatsache project. Finally in March 2018, Heimatland became the main exhibition space and artist residency of Hošek Contemporary. The boat is permanently anchored in the historic port of Berlin.

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