

# CUETOPROJECT

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## MARKO VELK *\_Transitation*

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*"I draw and then I think"*. In most contemporary art, the idea – usually a socially conscious one - is rationalized, debated and pre-meditated. It tends to precede, and supersede the visual. But Marko Velk instinctively embarks upon a journey across the page. In the act of drawing, he unleashes a raft of raw emotion. His soul, and the web of emotions brooding deep in his unconscious mind, pour, trickle and explode onto the white paper. Marko's art is free from the sights and sounds of modernity that constantly vie for our attention, distracting us from what we truly are.

Since he graduated from the 'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs' in Paris, where etching was his chief technique, Marko's focus and commitment to his chosen medium – charcoal - has been unshakeable. To Marko, color (or any other media) is neither tempting nor necessary to create the drama that he desires.

Indeed, a powerful mystery and suspense resonate from every drawing. It is impossible not to be struck by the artist's amazing dexterity with this slippery medium. The range and quality of his mark-making is astonishing. Set against each other on one page, the black and white marks form a landscape of exquisite harmonies and discords, not unlike a Mozart symphony, creating something that is as beautiful as it is unsettling.

Marko's upcoming exhibition at Cueto Project, is entitled '*Transitation*'. One could loosely define this as a development or evolution from one form or stage to another. This exhibition pivots around the notion that nothing is stable. The only certainty we have is death, and we can interact with, or perceive these 'truths' in a variety of ways.

The first room of the exhibition houses the artist's blackest works. It is here that the Velk unearths the dark memory store of painful emotions buried deep within his soul. 'I came here with this baggage. I'm expressing something that is old. That is inside. That has a certain weight. Something that has depth.' The luminous images in his 'Nine' series - a single anonymous face, an owl's head, a mask, or an ancient or unusual helmet - are shrouded in a thick and impenetrable darkness. The absence of a fathomable seeing eye, or pair of eyes, plunges the viewer into the unknown, and sensing Death, he finds himself grasping frantically for that comforting crutch of certainty.

In the second room, Velk presents his sitting 'figures' – a group of drawings entitled 'Observation'. The savage gaping jaws of a ferocious beast, a beautiful face, its flesh disintegrating, pairs of weary staring eyes, and forms melting into one another suggest the process of transformation and mutation. Something unconscious, a dream perhaps, has been brought into real time. The eyes are alive and open now. They are face to face with Death. But those delicate, caring female hands, in 'Seduction', clasp the skull so affectionately to their bosom, as if to say *Death is not so terrible, actually*.

There is a third room. Here several large works from Marko's 'There is something in the air' series have been positioned directly opposite the three 'Transmission' drawings. The former depict an explosive phantasmagoria of images hailing from his prominent themes of hunting, violence, redemption, life and death. The 'Transmission' drawings consist of two helmets and a mask, all equally obscure. The dynamic between the two sets of drawings is that the helmets symbolize a sort of protection from all of those fearsome elements that we know exist, but which are constantly shifting and transmutating, defying our laws of gravity, time and space. From behind the rigid mask, with its carefully cut-out eye slits, the wearer has a smidgen of control over the harsh world outside.

Just as Marko's creative expression gushes freely from the very core of his being, the beholder of his work will have a reaction that is visceral and instinctive. Then, a moment or two later, his mind will set about demystifying the exquisite black and white tapestries, with myriad interpretations.