

A.R.Techno

Kesang Lamdark

April 12 – July 26, 2024

Opening hours: Fridays from 11 - 18 h and
upon appointment.

Upon entering A.R.Techno, Kesang Lamdark's latest exhibition at Grieder Contemporary, one is immediately engulfed in an aura that evokes the essence of old-school rock'n'roll. Despite the exhibition's title hinting at a techno(logical) theme, the atmosphere channels the spirit of 70s glam rock intertwined with Tibetan spirituality, all with a distinctly contemporary twist. Figures emerge from the dimly lit space, casting shadows that challenge the viewer's perception—is it a two-dimensional rendering or a tangible, three-dimensional object? Is it a lavish crystal-encrusted artifact or a meticulously crafted pierced mirror lightbox?

Kesang Lamdark is renowned for his talent in seamlessly merging seemingly disparate worlds: the mysticism of eastern spirituality and the allure of western consumerism. However, it's not simply a matter of binary opposition between east and west, spirituality and consumerism; Lamdark adeptly navigates the complexities of identity construction and the fetishization inherent in both cultures, as vividly demonstrated in this exhibition.

As one steps further into the gallery space, attention is immediately drawn to two expansive nets of perforated plastic, intricately woven to create a labyrinth within the room. These "curtains" and chicken wire serve as quintessential elements of Lamdark's artistic signature, symbolizing his immigrant experience—the perpetual sense of displacement. Utilizing this material, Lamdark sculpts whimsical figurines and objects, such as an upright Siddhartha crafted from vibrant magenta plastic, and a tree trunk-like structure adorned with a mirrored Buddha motif, evoking a captivating interplay of light and reflection.

At the heart of the exhibition stands a commanding portrait titled "Me and Gesi, 2020": a figure with meticulously braided hair, clad in a leather jacket, unmistakably depicting the artist himself. Yet, there's a subtle irony in his depiction as he turns his back to the viewer—an almost modest gesture amidst the grandeur of his portrayal. The background, once again, features the repetitive motive of the chicken wire. Flanking this self-portrait are illuminated lightboxes, displaying images of the Dalai Lama holding a palace within a soap bubble, and adjacent to him, Paul Stanley, the Starchild of the rock band Kiss. Lamdark draws parallels between these two seemingly disparate worlds, noting the shared attributes such as long hair and the use of makeup as a nod to tribal origins.

A poignant piece within the exhibition is "Tankman" from 2018, referencing the unidentified Chinese man who courageously confronted a column of tanks leaving Tiananmen Square in Beijing on June 5, 1989, amidst the government's violent crackdown on protesters. The work meticulously renders the tanks, punched against the mirrored surface, echoing Lamdark's pursuit of a strong protest tone in his artistry.

Within the gallery space, a diverse cast of characters from party culture, Mao Zedong, and the visages of Che Guevara and construction workers, resurface on four circular canvases known as tondos. Reminiscent of Renaissance art, these canvases are rich with symbolism representing the theme of impermanence, juxtaposing elements like skulls and flames with internet pornography.

Lamdark introduces a fresh series of works exploring the urban landscape. Three new pieces, characterized by his distinctive punctured style, capture urban motifs, particularly architecture from Zurich's industrial zone, including landmarks like Kornhaus and Hardbrücke. Among these, two pieces are literal objets trouvés—architectural drawings discovered by the artist outside his studio— intricately pierced and encased within plexiglass frames. Unlike his previous works illuminated by LED lamps, these pieces rely solely on natural light and its interplay, accentuating their organic connection to the environment.

Lamdark's style embodies a profound duality: while he imbues mundane objects with sacred significance, transforming everyday objects into vessels of potential wisdom, he also adeptly subverts expectations, infusing banalities with unexpected depth and complexity.

BIOGRAPHY:

Kesang Lamdark (*1963, Dharamsala, IN) Lives and works in Zürich. Lamdark's most famous artworks include his mirrored lightboxes and plastic sculptures. He combines unusual materials in his work, bringing together the unfamiliar and transforming everyday objects into works of art. Lamdark's Tibetan-Western identity is often an important topic on his work, evidencing his displaced and multicultural upbringing. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including at the Queens Museum, New York; ShugoArts, Tokyo; Nam June Paik Arts Centre, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea, and the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, Guangzhou, China. His work is represented in private and public collections in Europe, Australia and the USA.

The exhibition can be visited every Friday from 11 am to 6 pm and by appointment. For further information and images, please contact Petra Tomljanovic at info@grieder-contemporary.com or call +41 43 818 56 07.