

**EXHIBITION PRESS RELEASE**

I CAN BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS ME, AND GENTLY CARESS IT TOO

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**Artist:** Tamara Al Samerraei                      Paula Kamps  
Bernhard Buhmann                              Amir Khojasteh  
André Butzer                                      Maximiliano León  
Jane Corrigan                                    Philip Mueller  
Andrea Joyce Heimar                          Nazım Ünal Yılmaz

André Butzer's figures with oblong eyes and flattened perspective are framed by the phrases "Nasaheim Repeated" and "Nasaheim Remembered". In homage to how the past informs the future, Butzer's words activate the comprehensive survey of contemporary figuration, *I can bite the hand that feeds me, and gently caress it too*. Artists hailing from Canada and Iran, to Kuwait and Mexico exhibit new paintings, which despite being imbued with discreet, distinct intent, unite under a shared universal consciousness. Nodding at the reemergence of classical portraiture, the works equally denote the necessity of abandoning the very canons that constitute it.

Personal experiences taint objective portrayals of appendages and closely framed visages—whether Philip Mueller's manipulation of mythology with twisted fantasy, Amir Khojasteh's faces perceived through a lens of existential fear, Butzer's infusion of hyper stimulation, or Maximiliano León's uncanny straddling of the latter two. Fleshy painterliness, naïve bodily depiction, brute material application and liberal tonal interpretation may further connect Andrea Joyce Heimar, Nazım Ünal Yılmaz and Tamara Al Samerraei—but so do the undertones of absurdist narrative that resonate through works by Jane Corrigan and Paula Kamps, or Bernhard Buhmann's sociological take on *The Spectacle*.

Each recognisable character is brought to life through a refreshed take on form and formalism, providing visceral confrontations with the nuances of the human condition, the obscurity of anatomy, and its interaction with the environment. Traces of Cubism, Expressionism and Surrealism echo throughout—but the tenets of these schools are subverted. The influences upon the bodies of work are palpable, but so are the artists' visual DNAs, which offer parallel timelines of figuration's progress. Edging forward cyclically, the paintings honour bygones while seeing the idiosyncratic growth of their painted figures take precedence—biting the hand that feeds them, but gently caressing it too.

— Katrina Kufer, July 2018