

Talking to me?!

Nic Hess

April 12 – July 26, 2024Opening hours: Fridays from 11 - 18 h and
upon appointment.

What ties together Rembrandt, Michael Jordan, the Swiss Alps, Tintin, and Peter Greenaway? They, along with an array of characters from pop culture, comics, art history, politics, film, and consumerism, converge in Nic Hess's visually striking world. His latest exhibition, "Talking to me?!" at Grieder Contemporary, presents a tapestry of interwoven narratives and showcases a cacophony of voices, references, and dialogues – all within a uniquely crafted realm of site-specific tape work and bold graphic gestures.

Upon entering the space, visitors are greeted by a small relief (2018) seamlessly merging with the gallery's background. It features recognizable corporate logos, signs, and symbols encrusted in wood relief, akin to precious Asian religious script intarsia – a nod to the emerging "consumer religion" of the global shopping mall. Notably, a second relief made of cardboard with a figure of a large open mouth ("The winner takes it all", 2024) recalls Gordon Matta Clark's cutouts, followed by another collage relief depicting glimpses of Rembrandt's portraits overlapping each other ("Rembrandts Flowers", 2024).

On the opposite side of the wall, a grand ship in a storm unfolds – reminiscent of historic landscape paintings of the romantic period yet also evoking a constructivist form transfiguring from a wave, all executed in tape work. Among these works lies a poignant piece: A collage of the map of Ukraine, made from a vertically mirrored cover of a Ferdinand Hodler catalog overlaid with lines reminiscent of rain or hail, indicating the Russian aggression war. («U-Rain», 2022)

As one navigates the gallery space, they encounter unexpected elements such as a large "Davos" sled, whose wooden slats appear to have continued growing and serve as a portal to Hess's exploration of "Swissness." A dynamic relief referencing old Swiss tourism posters hangs next to a seemingly idyllic scene with a sailboat, ironically referencing the logo and corporate colors of the now-defunct Credit Suisse bank from last year ("Adieu CS", 2024). Nearby, a Ricola herbal candy pack is displayed with bronze casts of sheep pellets, radiating both humor and irony.

Unexpected rays of tape mimic sunlight falling from above, leading to two strong architectural reliefs with references to Escher and Robert Indiana. Across the room, a striking perspective shortening made in tape features small works depicting motives from pop art, Americana, consumer culture, and Mondrian's vocabulary.

Concluding the exhibition is a diptych that appears to diverge in tone and intent from the rest of the artworks. In shades of purple and blue, two details of figures depict "The Belly of an Architect and His Wife" (2018), rendered through bleaching patterns. Adjacent to it, visitors encounter the trophy head of a wild pig (made of foam/PVC) attempting to bite or dislodge oversized Mikado sticks protruding from its mouth – creating turmoil with every movement, being greedy

and disruptive. This piece also serves as the exhibition's title; "Talking to me?!" encapsulates the essence of the exhibition, disrupting and reconfiguring the "common of the community." Alongside, a cardboard relief of Tintin, the quintessential character of adventurous tales blending fantasy, mystery, political intrigue, and science fiction, seemingly tries to evade the chaos.

In this exhibition, Nic Hess prompts reflection on the mystery of the self and the inherent inconsistencies within us all. As viewers navigate through the space, they are reminded of the complexities of the world and the need to embrace tension and confusion in a rapidly changing environment. Through his art, Hess sparks awareness and invites us to contemplate the intricacies of human experience.

BIOGRAPHY:

Nic Hess (*1968, Zurich, CH) Lives and works in Zürich. Nic Hess is known for his stirring, dramatic decorations of walls and interior spaces, which he covers with gestural ciphers and pictures – here playfully dynamic, there with irony. His installations have been seen in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Europe, the USA and Mexico, including at the Haus der Kunst, Munich, Casa del Lago, Mexico City and Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Nic Hess has received numerous awards and grants, including Switzerland's prestigious Eidgenössischer Preis für freie Kunst, the Manor Kunstpreis, a MoMA PS1 grant and a Landis & Gyr studio grant.

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.