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Johannes Holt Iversen



JOHANNES HOLT IVERSEN

Johannes Holt Iversen is a Danish painter and sculptor and an apprentice of Danish painter and sculptor Erik Rytter (former assistant of Poul Gernes). Holt Iversen focuses on exploring the tension between artificial and organic material and life forms and works with both traditional art forms and cutting-edge technology including AI, to imbue his viewers with an existential awareness of the hyper-slick representation of reality that surrounds them.

Johannes will be exhibiting his works in Marchal from mid-April. More info on the exhibition coming soon.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHANNES

How would you describe your artistic style?

It is always difficult to describe one's own artistic style. Right now, I am very interested in the scientific paradoxes in light, time and space and contribute to the discussion about the development of artificial intelligence - in an artistic as well as a scientific and philosophical sense. Of the artistic styles, palaeolithic art in prehistoric times, in a form-wise sense, has been especially attractive to me. So, I will probably adhere to how art historian Simon Thykjær Sørensen described my style, as a kind of paleo futurism. And by this term it must



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So, where the typical Western cultural institution takes its beginning in the dawn of civilization in ancient times; I write this off and start from a more general human primordial artistic practice, namely the cave painting. Where, due to the passage of time, we have no concept of the art's societal value or functionality. We have a sense of these artworks being a spiritual medium but cannot unequivocally prove this.

Are there any artists, movements or styles that have had a significant influence on your work?

There are many artists who have had a great influence on my work. All living artists who are in my sphere have an influence on my work - directly or indirectly. I think it is important to distinguish between direct influence and influence on a personal level. After all, all living artists sit together down in the trenches of culture. We are a kind of Band of Brothers and Sisters.

But I can always mention my great dead heroes; Asger Jorn, Edvard Munch and Pablo Picasso - who with their megalomaniacal artistic personalities awakened my own urge to have a voice and put artistic life into words. But it's probably more the way they wanted to be curious, perceptive, hard-working artists that has had an influence on my work, rather than real human role models. I am absolutely sure that I would get into a loud argument with Pablo Picasso and Asger Jorn in relation to their treatment of women and their artistic attitude. And Edvard Munch would probably just sit and sulk in the corner most of the time. You can easily imagine it. A madhouse!



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such an extent that you, as a viewer, cannot avoid it. You need to be able to access it at a time when many other technologies can easily get your attention faster. My approach has been to influence the interaction with the art to such an extent that the viewer's experience becomes very personal - where colour and light follows you while you interact with the work.

What themes or concepts do you explore in your art? Are there recurring motifs or subjects?

In addition to the aesthetics of cave painting, the cave itself, the palaeolithic art history, and the anthropomorphic has had an important driving force through my work. I believe it will continue to be a recurring aesthetic strategy in the years to come as well. As mentioned earlier, technology and here the fear and fascination thereof are also important driving forces in my work.

In many ways, I am always seeking a simple yet impactful ways to describe the human existence today. One that depicts our technological fascination and fear without the artwork necessarily being particularly technologically sophisticated in its execution or appearance. But the feeling it evokes resonates clearly with the viewer, arousing a distinctive kind of futurism. Ideally, the past and the future should meet in the artwork.

Can you share the story or inspiration behind one of your favorite art works?

I had a very hard time at the Art Academy in Amsterdam, where I literally lived from sale of



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full-time job, and the paradox was that I quickly found out that I had to advance my artistic career before it had even started.

So, secretly I started building up some exhibition business in Paris and then prepared my first solo exhibition called "Concerning the Hyper-Primitive" in 2019. All the works were prepared at the academy but were not allowed to appear "commercial", so I painted many of the paintings in large installation situations, which masked my undertaking so that they appeared a bit more fragmented. So it didn't look like the typical white cube gallery works. But the paintings were painted and one of them called "Ai Data Mining" I was particularly pleased with, and it almost visually summed up the external and internal chaos I found myself in when I had my academy course in Amsterdam. Today, the work has been purchased by Statens Kunstfond and is part of the National Collection in Denmark.

Are there any significant milestones or experiences that have shaped your artistic journey?

One of the major milestones I recently experienced was working in Edvard Munch's Atelier in Ekely. My good friend and artist Christian Tony Norum, with whom I share a great love for painting, invited me and a large number of artists from Norway to create a large group exhibition at Ekely. 35 artists were gathered to create works that would hang side by side with works by Sigmar Polke, Edvard Munch and Asger Jorn. Living international artists met the old giants. It was a great experience and a happy chaotic artistic fusion party somehow.



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all I think that a pure artistic breakthrough comes like a thief in the night. I don't have a specific moment that can be considered a breakthrough - more like a series of events which together can encourage a breakthrough.

When I prepared the first works that would later become my Lascaux series back in 2016, I knew, for example, not that a foundation had been laid for something far-reaching in my artistic work that would extend all the way into the 2020s. That the decision I made to myself at a street café in Aalborg, Denmark back in May 2014 about wanting to apply to the art academies was to become a reality already two years later with being accepted at the Art Academy in Amsterdam.

If I were to describe a feeling of breakthrough, it would probably be the first time a Lascaux artwork was exhibited, which was at the Annika Nuttall Gallery back in 2019. It laid the groundwork for the attention my work received subsequently.

Who do you create art for and what do you hope the recipients take away from your work?

To a greater or lesser extent you always create art for yourself as an artist. As a starting point, I am not an advocate of hoping that the recipient has one specific experience of your artistic work. It can quickly become a hindrance if you want to dictate the viewer's experience of your works or artistic thoughts. The strongest works of art are those that can evoke an existential wonder without necessarily spelling it out for the viewer. Just like the breakthrough we talked about earlier, it



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Learn more about Johannes Holt Iversen, his artworks and how to purchase pieces from the exhibition

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