

## **Katabasis / Caron Greenblatt**

The exhibition “Katabasis” presents Caron Greenblatt’s series of works in charcoal, created over the past two years. The series presents a unique visual language that conveys personal and collective pain in the face of disaster. The imagery, created from emotive responses and associations, do not form a cohesive narrative; instead, they remain unbound and open to the viewer's interpretation.

The inception of each piece lies in a few broad gestural marks which shape the route by which the composition and imagery emerge. The quasi-human, semi-animalistic or imaginary images function as mythological or allegorical entities. Some of the works are inspired by art history, from artists such as Pablo Picasso, Marino Marini and Nicolas Poussin, and others draw directly from the imagination. The works do not strive to tell a single story but instead express an emotional experience of existential and parental anxiety, of mourning and helplessness.

Repeated motifs and images charged with multilayered meanings are present in the works. One of the reappearing figures is the Mother, based on the archetype of the Great Mother. She simultaneously embodies the artist’s individual fears as well as the universal anxiety of all mothers. Another reappearing figure is the Pied Piper of Hamelin – a seductive figure concealing a dark secret of lost innocence, taken from a well-known children’s tale. It appears here as a contemporary vision of reality comprising intertwined temptation, repression, and loss.

The exhibition features a drawing of two connected figures riding on an undefined mythical creature. These ghost-like figures, hovering just about the ground, move with ambivalence towards the dark landscape. The work, both dark and magical, seems to be taken from a tale that has not yet been written. It beckons viewers to embark on a journey into the unknown, imbued with a sense of adventure, danger and curiosity.

The choice of charcoal – a dark, direct, erasable material – fulfills a fundamental function in Caron’s visual language. Charcoal, created from the residue of natural elements of the earth, is by its very nature temporal. The imagery it magically summons onto the page creates a feeling of instability and impermanence. The sheets of paper on which the drawings were made tend to tear, and the drawing may disappear. The material's fragility resonates with the existential fragility of humanity and the inability to control the changing reality. In this way, the act of drawing itself becomes a conceptual experience of a raw process which is unmediated and exposed.

The exhibition title refers to the ancient Greek word katabasis, which means descent. This term references a point in a story when the hero or heroine descends into the underworld to obtain

important knowledge, in order to continue their journey, undergo transformation, or retrieve a loved one. Odysseus descended into Hades to ask the prophet Tiresias for advice; the Sumerian goddess Inanna descended into the underworld to die and be reborn; and Orpheus aimed to bring back his beloved (and failed). The practice of descending to the nether regions is a spiritual and emotional process which may be perceived metaphorically and psychologically.

The works on view, born out of a deep internal drive, invite viewers to embark on a journey into the depths of the soul and the individual and collective subconscious. It is there, in the mystical, intimate space that they will encounter the self.

**Dina Yakerson**