

# the goma

## **TILL GERHARD**

*Spellbound*

19/05/2016 - 15/07/2016

This body of new work is based on photographic material that I took myself or directed to take. Over the last couple of years I attended and documented certain folkloristic rituals in southern Germany and Switzerland. I became interested in these because of my affection for the grotesque, the use of masquerades and enigmatic actions which do not seem to make much sense to our modern rational mind. But being amidst these happenings I could feel there was a strong resonance and a deeper level of understanding. Something spoke to me. Often these ancient rituals were intended to make a connection between human communities and their natural environment: to the change of seasons; ploughing, sowing and pleading for a good harvest or thanking for it, so to speak to the whole circle of life and death.

Last January I attended the so called "Silvesterchlausen" in Switzerland. From break of dawn little groups of bizarre mummified men walk from farm to farm. They swing huge cowbells, start a beautiful harmonic singing and get rewarded with a zip of booze by the farmers. The groups consist of male and female figures (all represented by men) to wake up fertility spirits for the new year. Back home after this stay in Switzerland I found out that we had stayed in a BnB almost next door to German painter Albert Oehlens house. I took this coincidence as a sign. The task is to bring the two worlds of contemporary art and ancient rituals together again.

Last summer I began to shape masks and costumes of archetypal figures. I invented little symbolic rituals to give something back to certain aspects of nature and to pick up a silent dialogue with places in the closer environment. The "Bienengott" (Beegod) poured a glass of honey into a river as a thank for the work of the bees. "Father Ergot" did bake a bread and buried it in a field as a thank for all the crop that it had provided. I found out that the costumes and masks help to step back from the everyday persona and "become" the archetypal figure. I overworked the photos with thin acrylic paint to interweave the images with a layer of an "inner" colour.

Till Gerhard (Hamburg, 1971) studied at Muthesius Collegue of Art and Design in Kiel University and in the Faculty of Science and Design of Hamburg University. His work has been exhibited in the exhibition "The Triumph of Painting" at Saatchi, in the Hamburg Kunsthalle, CA2M ( Madrid) among many others galleries and museums worldwide. Till's paintings and sculptures are included in collections such as Jumex, Sammlung Falckeberg, Inelcom and in the private collections of Richard Prince and the Hort Family.