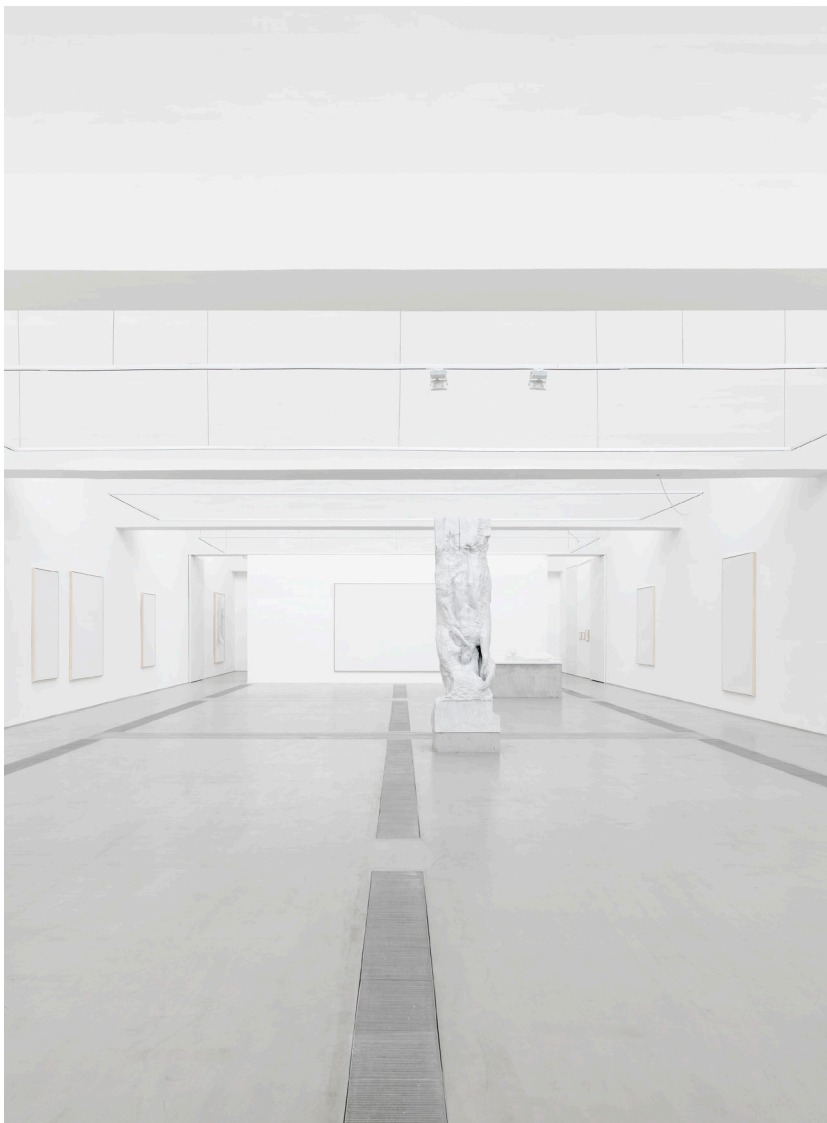


# CHRISTIAN LEMMERZ NORBERT TADEUSZ

HORSENS ART MUSEUM



Frontpage: Norbert Tadeusz, Graues Atelier, 1985. Courtesy Estate of Norbert Tadeusz (detail)  
MEAT exhibition at Faurschou Foundation 2016. Courtesy Faurschou Foundation

In 2016 the exhibition MEAT was exhibited at the Danish Faur-schou Foundation in Beijing. Originally, the exhibition included artworks by the German artist Norbert Tadeusz (1940-2011) and the German/Danish artist Christian Lemmerz (b.1959). Sadly the exhibition did not go as planned. When arriving at the Chinese border, the Chinese Government censured Norbert Tadeusz' paintings.

The only artworks that were allowed through the border were the artworks by Christian Lemmerz. The planned exhibition did open, but only with the artworks by Christian Lemmerz. White paintings were hung on the walls, as a gesture to what should have been filled by Norbert Tadeusz' paintings. The exhibition was aesthetically beautiful, but the wanted dialog between the two artists did not happen.

Now four years later, Horsens Art Museum is honored to finally bring the artworks together in a new exhibition, which takes us through different materials, medias and generations. The intention behind the exhibition is to activate and actualize the two artists interests in the body and flesh. The exhibition also presents new artworks by Christian Lemmerz, including new marble sculptures, 3D-printed plastic sculptures and the Virtual Reality artwork Locus Solus from 2020.

Though Christian Lemmerz and Norbert Tadeusz are related, as Norbert Tadeusz is Christian Lemmerz' deceased brother in law, it is not their family background that brings the two artists together. Instead it is the artists' interests for flesh as a motive. In the exhibition, you are able to experience the original artworks by Norbert Tadeusz that was supposed to be exhibited in Beijing. This includes the artworks 'Marcelleria' (1970), 'Pistoia. Ochse II' (1983), 'Ulla in Pistoia' (1986) and 'O.T' (1987). All of the artworks are paintings produced in the period 1970-1987.

They will be presented as a dialog with Christen Lemmerz' new sculptures and Virtual Reality artwork. In that way, Christian Lemmerz' contribution to the exhibition in 2016 is now reinterpreted and expanded, covering themes such as life, religion, anxiety and death.

### **The body and the flesh**

Life and death are undeniably connected and is something that connects Christian Lemmerz and Norbert Tadeusz together in their artistic process. In a way they examine and celebrates death through a thematic and materialistic focus on the flesh. As human beings and animals we are all made of flesh, bones and skin, and when we die this is what remains before we perish. Life ends with death whether it being a natural death, or when an animal is butchered in a slaughterhouse. Both Christian Lemmerz and Norbert Tadeusz have worked with the body and flesh in connection with death, in sculptures, painting and installations. They exhibit both the grotesque and beautiful aspects of the body and flesh. With Christian Lemmerz and Norbert Tadeusz, you don't sense a political agenda in their extensive work with the body and the flesh, but more an attempt to create a certain artistic language or aesthetic through this. As a viewer the meeting with their art can seem overwhelming. Many seem extremely grotesque in their expression and display parts of life or the human or animalistic body that we may not be used to in our daily life.

### **The carcass and the open body**

In the 1980's Norbert Tadeusz worked with a focus on both the human and animalistic carcass' and body in his paintings. His artistic examination/research of the body can be seen in his large paintings, mixing everyday life scenarios with a surrealistic twist, in both technique as well as motif. Many of his paintings from this period can for example be seen in reference to the Dutch painter Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669)

and the Irish painter Francis Bacon (1909-1992), whom similarly worked with artistic depictions of carcass' and the flesh. This can for example be seen in the four-meter-long painting 'Graues Atelier' from 1985. A group of naked people hang and stand around a hung carcass in the middle of the room, while other dead animals can be seen both lying and hanging in the background. In the left side of the painting a photographer can be seen, taking pictures away from the hectic scene in the middle of the painting. The title of the work and the jars with paintbrushes in the right side of the painting reveal that we are in an atelier, where an artist is working as we speak. The painting is very dynamic, and as a viewer you get a sense of being a part of a surrealistic dream universe, something that you may not normally experience even in our subconscious.



Norbert Tadeusz, Cavallo Balbano II (Ochse), 1986 (87). Courtesy Faurschou Foundation (detail)

## A frozen moment in time

In working with Norbert Tadeusz's paintings alongside Christian Lemmerz sculptures, one of the recurring elements of their otherwise different artistic process has been an ability to create unique pictures, which seem to freeze a certain moment in time. Something that Christian Lemmerz has worked with extensively through the years and seems to master in a very special way. In the exhibition this is visualized through five new marble busts: 'The Director, Alt. Version', 'The Director', 'The Entrepreneur', 'The Gallerist' and 'The Photographer' all created in 2020.

Christian Lemmerz has worked with the classic material of marble through many years. Art historically the material holds a very long and prestigious history. There aren't many artists today who are trained within the classical sculptural style as Christian Lemmerz is. He access' the media and material with a different mindset, that what is typically seen through the art history. Whereas marble in the Antique, Renaissance and Neo-classicism portrayed the beautiful and aesthetic sides of the human, Christian Lemmerz shows quite different sides, often more gruesome, dark and disturbing sides of the human body and existence. His sculptures are often very noticeable, with the marble as the primary material, through which he portrays modern, relevant and thought-provoking themes.

The five portraits seem almost psychedelic in their visual expression, as if the portraits are caught in a moment between shape and process, which makes it difficult for the viewer to interpret the sculptures altogether. Whereas the traditional portrait shows just one moment in time, Christian Lemmerz portraits seem to capture several moments in time in a way that gives the sculptures an almost conscience expanding look to them.

### **Working with Virtual Reality as a medium**

When Christian Lemmerz exhibited at Horsens Art Museum in 2013 with the exhibition 'Christian Lemmerz – eine Gruppenausstellung', the artist told Horsens Folkeblad that he in the future would focus more on creating artworks through new mediums, which he had not formerly worked with. Now, seven years later, we can see this through a series of three new Virtual Reality works, 'La Apparizione' from 2017, 'Traum' from 2018 and lastly 'Locus Solus' from 2020. At the exhibition at Horsens Art Museum is it possible to experience the newest Virtual Reality work 'Locus Solus'. In 'Locus Solus' the viewer is placed within an infinite room. Around thousands of skulls spin around their own axis as planets. A hypnotizing voice describes and guides the viewer through the universe, as the last stage before death.



Christian Lemmerz, *Locus Solus*, 2020. Courtesy Christian Lemmerz and Khora Contemporary

## Artist info

Norbert Tadeusz (1940-2011) was born in Dortmund, Germany. He studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, Germany, from 1961 to 1966. In 1970 he had his first solo exhibition at the Düsseldorf Art Museum, which was followed by a series of gallery- and museum exhibitions around the world. In 1982 Norbert Tadeusz exhibited at the Venice Biennale. His artworks are dynamic, intense and colourful often with elements of still life, dead slaughter bodies and abstract elements of everyday life.

Christian Lemmerz (f. 1959) is a German/Danish sculptor born in Karlsruhe in Germany. He studied at the Art Academy in Carrara, Italy, from 1978 to 1982. He then moved to Copenhagen to study at The Royal Danish Art Academy in 1983 to 1988. Since then Christian Lemmerz has made a strong mark on the national and international art scene, with sculptures and decoration commissions created in materials such as marble and bronze.



Norbert Tadeusz, Graues Atelier, 1985. Courtesy Estate of Norbert Tadeusz (detail)

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