

# CHRISTINE PARK GALLERY

## 2020 VIEWING ROOMS SERIES I

Tom Poeet:

*Paralipomena - Various underground tales*

June 5 - July 11, 2020

In collaboration with Artvisor, London

156 Reade Street, New York, NY 10013

Viewing Rooms: <https://christinepark.viewingrooms.com>

Viewing Room by Tom Poeet opens at 9am EST on Friday, June 5, 2020

Open by appointment only due to COVID-19.

For appointments, please email us at [info@christinepark.net](mailto:info@christinepark.net)

### For immediate release

Christine Park Gallery is pleased to present *Paralipomena - Various underground tales*, a solo exhibition featuring ballpoint pen drawings by Tom Poeet. This is the first show of the Gallery's newly launched, online-based exhibition series titled '2020 Viewing Room Series (<https://christinepark.viewingrooms.com>)'.

By concealing his real name, gender, age and nationality, Poeet releases the audience from the social and political implications of the artistic experience. This allows the audience to be immersed in a non-verbal, emotional and enigmatic experience that pierces the subconscious. Though very limited information is available, we know that he exhibited during the 1950s under a different name. Under a new pseudonym, Tom Poeet returned to the art scene in 2015. Influenced by Surrealists such as Hans Bellmer and Alberto Savinio and the post-structuralist movement that emerged in France at the end of the 20th century, his imagination veers between anatomical dissections and fantastical abstractions of the human form.

*Now at his third solo show, the mysterious Tom Poeet continues to elude the art world. Through his curtain of anonymity, he challenges the mechanisms governing its institutional and market dynamics, which are increasingly one and the same. Critical of an art system that is more often than not concerned with identity (and) politics, rather than with the inherent qualities of the art itself, Poeet has chosen to shield his identity, to focus the attention of the viewer only on his art. His drawings, where virtuosity and technical prowess meet a wild imaginative intricacy, are labyrinthine critical devices.*

*From a distance, the works may look like traditional drawings falling within the most classical styles of figuration: portraiture, landscape, still life. However, one immediately perceives a sense of uncanniness: a tree that is at the same time more and less than just a tree; a tower hiding something eerie in its very architecture; a figure whose expression is atypical, and possibly malignant. The viewer is drawn to look closer. In that moment, the beauty and the bizarre are revealed: a garden of mutating signs, traits that sketch human profiles in one direction while suddenly becoming beastly creatures in the other, revealing portraits within portraits, building mutant architectural landscapes. A persistent, arduous use of the ballpoint, unforgiving medium, whereby the repetition of the gesture reminiscent of the masters of chiaroscuro gives rise to myriads of creatures, emerging on the surface almost autonomously, independently from the artist's will. The spontaneity of the penwork reveals that there is no project, sketch, or preparatory drawing. The hand is driven by a sort of animalistic instinct. The shapes morph into one another and form, together, an image determined by these elements and at the same time unrelated to them. Like an ecosystem, each figure exists thanks to, but also despite, all its parasites.*

*When these representations touch the human form, it is easier to relate to their familiar shapes and expressions. A landscape, even the same landscape, can be idyllic or terrifying, depending on the point of view; but it remains something external to us. With portraits, on the other hand, there is empathy. With Poeet, it is mostly a sense of unease and the sort of enjoyment that comes from very dark humour. Deceptively innocuous characters who, on inspection, reveal themselves as decomposing bidimensional cut-outs, as grotesque caricatures. Some are outright monsters: a profile that could be made of tanned leather, or of cork tree bark; a head pinned to the ground like an anthropomorphic tensile structure; a prognathous cranium becoming a macabre object of decoration when fruits and vegetables start growing out of its scalp (vanitas and still life in one).*

*Others are apparently more humane, reassuring and inviting. An attractive girl whose sensual hair evokes Leonardo's famous studies on the topic, where he compares the flow of hair to the shape of water <sup>1</sup>. She looks cheekily towards the viewer, and she seems to be wearing a mask...but is she? An old man holds his face in a typically pensive manner. His expression is serious, and the roles are reversed as it is him observing, studying us. There are no weird creatures, no anomalies hidden in the lines that time has excavated on his face. He is a "man, paradigm of the monster" <sup>2</sup>.*

*Landscapes emerging from faces and vice versa, still life melded with portraiture, architecture stemming from organic forms: the work of Tom Poeet is a journey onto which one must embark with an open mind, ready to receive the many surprises that his mastery and boundless imagination reserve to us along the way.*

*Piero Tomassoni, June 2020*

The exhibition will be available online-only on its dedicated Viewing Room page at <https://christinepark.viewingrooms.com>. Sales inquiries can be made directly from the Viewing Room.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Pedretti, M. Cianchi, *Leonardo. I codici*, Dossier d'art, Giunti 1995

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Wilcock, *Il libro dei mostri* ("The book of monsters"), Adelphi, 1978

For press and other inquiries, please contact Margherita Usberti, Associate Director in Exhibitions at Christine Park Gallery at [margherita@christinepark.net](mailto:margherita@christinepark.net).

### **Instagram**

@ChristineParkGallery #TomPoeet #Paralipomena #ChristineParkGallery #CPGViewingRooms  
@Artvisor #Artvisor

### **About the Artist**

Tom Poeet (b. Unknown) keeps his identity shielded. In doing so, he strips the experience of engaging with art from its social and political parameters. Liberated from any preoccupations and distractions from the art, through media coverage, criticism or the press, the anonymous artist forces us to return our focus to the artistic process.

Concentrating primarily on drawing, the artist continually breaks away from the original organic idea (one with a start and finish). Using a path of unpredictable repetition, he gives place to movements that generate difference and push his work in absurd and imponderable directions.

### **About the Gallery**

Christine Park Gallery is a young gallery dedicated to supporting both emerging and established international artists. Located in TriBeCa, New York's burgeoning art hotspot, the gallery has an extensive programme of solo shows, conceptually curated group exhibitions, and special installations. With a constantly developing roster of innovative artists the gallery prides itself on exhibiting works in a range of media, seeking to provoke cross-disciplinary debate and extend the boundaries of the current contemporary art scene.

Our vision is to provide a platform to allow artists to develop and gain greater recognition. Therefore, as well as providing a commercial space that artists can use as a canvas to realise their projects and present their works to the public, we actively foster relations with art foundations, public museums and private clients.

The exhibition is organised in collaboration with Artvisor ([www.artvisor.com](http://www.artvisor.com)), a bespoke online art advising service group based in London.

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