

GAGOSIAN



BIRTH MACHINE BABY

H. R. Giger and Mark Prent
Curated by Harmony Korine

Opening reception: Tuesday, November 5, 6–8pm
November 5–December 21, 2019
Park & 75, 821 Park Avenue, New York

H. R. Giger, *Birth Machine Baby*, 1998 (detail of two from an edition of 25), aluminum, each: 20 7/8 × 8 3/4 × 8 3/4 inches (53 × 22 × 22 cm) © H. R. Giger Museum, Gruyères, Switzerland. Photo: Matthias Belz

November 2, 2019

H. R. Giger and Mark Prent are both masters of navigating beauty, horror, science fiction, and fantasy. I've admired their works for a while; they both defy genre in a way that is difficult to articulate. They create and inhabit their own worlds, populating them with classic nods to both film and sculptural tradition. Giger's and Prent's works are dense and powerful, filled with shocking characters and strange magic. The time seems right to see these two great artists together in one room.

—Harmony Korine

Gagosian is pleased to present *Birth Machine Baby*, an exhibition curated by Harmony Korine, featuring works by H. R. Giger and Mark Prent.

In this exhibition, Korine pairs eerie humanoid figures by Giger—whose name has been cemented in Hollywood history for his visual effects and design work on the *Alien* film franchise—with sculptures by Prent, a Canadian artist whose grotesque and provocative depictions of the human body were greatly admired by Giger himself. Despite the divergences in Giger’s and Prent’s chosen styles and mediums, both artists’ interests lie in coaxing out latent fantastical forms from the contours of the human body.

Depicting subject matter gleaned from the depths of his psychic anxieties, Giger’s stylized sculptures merge writhing, skeletal organisms with elegant metallic features, coalescing in his signature “biomechanical” style. Although Giger was best known for designing the iconic extraterrestrial Xenomorph from *Alien* (1979), his other works display the full range of his artistic influences, which span from ancient Egyptian statuary to twentieth-century artists such as Salvador Dalí and Francis Bacon.

Displaying a mastery of hyperrealistic sculptural techniques, Prent’s uncanny fiberglass and resin sculptures simultaneously shock and enthrall. His art—which has remained fundamentally grounded in the human form since the 1970s—melds familiar anatomies with bizarre, animalistic limbs and features, provoking a visceral process of recognition and emotional connection in the beholder. Prent’s work challenges our understanding of the body as we know it, creating haunting, chimerical hybrids that elicit innovative visual dialogues when juxtaposed with Giger’s biomechanical creations.

Korine’s cult films of the past twenty years—from the surreal *Gummo* (1997) to the contemporary “beach noir” *Spring Breakers* (2012)—merge reality with fiction and handheld camerawork with precise montage. This same heady mix of the unplanned, the seductive, and the outlandish crystallizes in his highly tactile paintings, whose strange, otherworldly motifs revel in the realm of magical realism. Korine’s own art often engages with the film industry; for his *BLOCKBUSTER* (2018) series, he salvaged a number of VHS tapes from a shuttered Blockbuster video store, augmenting their covers with paint and assembling them into patchwork grids of pop cultural references.

H. R. Giger was born in 1940 in Chur, Switzerland, and died in 2014 in Zurich. Many of Giger’s works are housed in the Museum H. R. Giger, Gruyères, Switzerland. Exhibitions include Kunsthaus Zürich (1977); Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland (1980); *Alien dans ses Meubles*, Château de Gruyères, Switzerland (1990); *Giger in Vienna*, Kunst Haus Wien, Vienna (2006); *The Oeuvre before Alien: Works 1961–1976*, Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur, Switzerland (2007); *H. R. Giger. Art—Design—Film*, Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2009); and *The Art of Biomechanics*, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, Austria (2013). Giger’s conceptual artwork and original character designs have appeared in a number of films, including *Alien* (1979), *Future-Kill* (1985), *Poltergeist II: The Other Side* (1986), *Tokyo: The Last Megalopolis* (1988), *Alien 3* (1992), *Species* (1995), *Prometheus* (2012), and *Alien: Covenant* (2017). Giger and his special effects team were awarded the 1980 Academy Award for Best Visual Effects for their work on *Alien*. In 2013, Giger was inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in Seattle.

Harmony Korine was born in 1973 in Bolinas, California, and lives and works in Nashville, Tennessee, and Miami, Florida. Exhibitions include S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium (2000); Whitney Biennial, New York (2000); 50th Biennale di Venezia (2003); *Pigxote*, Fine Arts Gallery, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN (2009); *Shadows and Loops*, Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN (2016–17); and Centre Pompidou, Paris (2017). Korine’s films include *Kids* (1995, written by Korine, directed by Larry Clark); *Gummo* (1997, written and directed by Korine); *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999, written and directed by Korine); *Ken Park* (2002, written by Korine, directed by Larry Clark and Ed Lachman); *Mister Lonely* (2007, written by Korine, codirected with Avi Korine); *Trash Humpers* (2009, written and directed by Korine); *Spring Breakers* (2012, written and directed by Korine); and *The Beach Bum* (2019, written and directed by Korine).

Mark Prent was born in 1947 in Lodz, Poland, and lives and works in St. Albans, Vermont. Collections include Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa; Musée des Beaux-Arts Montréal; Musée d’Art Contemporain de Montréal; Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Canada; and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Exhibitions include *Extended Realism*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg,

Nuremberg, Germany (1976); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1978); 1970–1975, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (1979); *Un touriste dans l'empire des ténèbres*, Centre d'Exposition CIRCA, Montreal (1993); and *Night Terrors*, Action Art Actuel, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Canada (2005). Prent has received the Artists-in-Berlin Program Guest Artist Grant (1975); Guggenheim Fellowship in Sculpture (1977); and numerous Canada Council Arts Awards. In addition to his artistic practice, Prent owns Pink House Studios, Inc., a life-molding studio based in Vermont that manufactures a unique line of molding and casting materials.

#BirthMachineBaby

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