



Davood Koochaki
Untitled, 2014-2015
Graphite on paper
39.25 x 27.5 inches

Davood Koochaki: Undercover

September 9 to October 4, 2015

Opening reception: September 9, 6-8 PM

Davood Koochaki began to seriously pursue drawing at the age of sixty. Having retired from his job as an auto mechanic, he was encouraged by his son-in-law, a professional artist, to explore his budding interest in art. Koochaki's hobby quickly evolved into a full-blown artistic practice, and his works, drawn with graphite and colored pencil, became steadily bolder and more complex. Human-like figures and mysterious creatures developed from his initial marks on paper, and grew in both scale and intensity.

Koochaki works intuitively, allowing the compositions to evolve without a formal plan. According to the artist, "I try to draw beautifully, but this is the way it comes out. Maybe it has to do with my difficult past. I begin to draw a few lines, look at them, and then I see a figure coming that I can draw." Despite the fluidity of form and sex among his figures, they all seem to respect Iran's dress code for women and are covered by a hijab, chador, or burka. These elements of concealment are not completely successful and certain elements, primarily the male anatomy, often peak through revealing their true nature.

This visual game of hide-and-seek, cloak-and-dagger, or perhaps more appropriately show-and-tell is an essential element of Koochaki's work. His figures are shrouded in dark layers of graphite. Through his drawings, Koochaki navigates the public and the private, striking a balance between what to hide and what to highlight, rendered in a visual language that is completely his own.

Davood Koochaki was born in 1939 in northern Iran. He began working at the age of seven but eventually taught himself to read and write. At the age of thirteen, he left his family for Tehran, where he was hired to help in a car repair workshop. His drawings were first exhibited in Tehran in 2008. Undercover is his second solo exhibition at Christian Berst Art Brut, and his first in the United States.

95 rivington street
new york, ny 10002
+1 917 525 5939
contactnyc@christianberst.com

christianberst.com

3-5 passage des gravilliers
75003 paris
+33 (0) 1 53 33 01 70
contact@christianberst.com

Art brut is an expression of individual mythology, conducted outside the realms of mainstream culture by people who exist in society's constructed alterity, and returns us to the metaphysics of art where the creative impulse attempts to elucidate the mystery of being in the world.



Davood Koochaki
Untitled, 2014-2015
Graphite on paper
27.5 x 39.25 inches



Davood Koochaki
Untitled, 2014-2015
Graphite on paper
39.25 x 27.5 inches



Mike Goodlett
Untitled, 2015
Graphite, colored pencil, spray paint on
paper
17 x 14 inches

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Mike Goodlett: Homebody

September 9 to October 4, 2015

Opening reception: September 9, 6-8 PM

For many years, Mike Goodlett has made his home in a ramshackle farmhouse near Wilmore, Kentucky. Accessible only by an overgrown path, Goodlett creates his enigmatic work there in relative isolation. Everything in the house reflects his distinctive style: delicate paper installations conceal cracks in the plaster, graceful wood carvings spiral from the door casements, and the walls are filled with tacked-up works in progress. The pieces in *Homebody* are individual elements of this intensely personal and private environment, a physical space that has been molded to Goodlett's singular specifications.

Goodlett derives much of his imagery from graphic sexual material, which he distills and translates into elegant, abstract shapes. Rendered in spidery graphite and colored pencil, his two dimensional works obscure the explicit nature of their subject matter, but still thrum with a subdued eroticism.

Likewise, his sculptures, cast in hydrostone plaster, evoke hyper-stylized bodies and parts of bodies. The molds for these works are stitched from Spandex; the elastic fabric allows him to shape his pieces into compelling forms, but also speaks to Goodlett's fascination with the materials and textures that accompany certain sexual fetishes. His lithe sculptures are cast in the same material used for jock straps.

Goodlett's evocative works also explore the isolating impulse to camouflage unconventional sexuality. He and millions of others have spent lifetimes finding ways to shield their identities and disguise their "deviant" desires. It's safer that way, but it can be lonely. Like a kinky predilection, Goodlett's drawings and sculptures are hiding in plain sight.

Workshop at Christian Berst is devoted to the exhibition of contemporary artists engaged with the works or ideas present in the gallery's program, recent discoveries, and immersive installations.