

15.05.2018 | 23.06.2018
RICHIE CULVER

C'EST SOMBRE VERS LE NORD

LEHMANN + SILVA presents *C'Est Sombre Vers Le Nord* the first solo exhibition by British artist Richie Culver (Withernsea, Yorkshire 1979) in Portugal.

Richie's work draws on many personal references, from his working-class roots in the North of England, to metropolitan living, as well as his own experience of the darker side of urban life, making humorous references to popular culture, contemporary politics and social commentary.

The exploratory and improvisational approach to painting we find in Richie Culver, can be seen as an outcome of the tensions between binary cultural and social opposites – provincial vs. cosmopolitan; on Benefits vs. affluent; art museum highs vs. street-cultural lows; North Vs South. In what seems an examination of one's experience and inner self.

As Oliver Morris Jones said, "the brevity of the content and the austerity of painted matter, contributes to an overwhelming sense of truth; a sort of colloquial chat that makes for an unbelievable sense of urgency. (...) Culver's painting enacts the frankness of his intervention, an empty canvas becomes decorated with the details of a brief exchange of words, a documentary painting, if you will.

Culver's practice is awash with arcane messages and symbols where dialect, colloquialism and local knowledge come into play. At a time when the gentrified art world is becoming an echo chamber of middle class artists, Culver's work cuts to the critical point. He represents a cohort of artists still making work that is strictly rooted, tethered honestly to a personality and person whose art knows no deviance. (...)

He rightly does not make a spectacle out of his roots or the strife of a community but his practice, after all, aligns his humour with a certain optimism and pride."

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C'Est Sombre Vers Le Nord roughly translates - It's grim up North. A term used by people living in the South of England towards those living in the North.

In the autumn of 1933 the author and playwright J. B. Priestley went on a tour of England. His subsequent book *English Journey* is widely blamed for the "Grim up North" stereotype.

C'Est Sombre Vers Le Nord, is a glimpse into the North Vs South divide in the UK and other parts of the World. The Football rivalry, the class divides, the political or sometimes personal tension that can run deep into and beyond the realms of society, be that home or away.