

# The *Collectors* Chronicle

Voices of  
Contemporary Art  
and Culture

**Vienna  
Issue**

2



**In the Studio** Norbert Bisky, Berlin

We met Norbert Bisky in his studio in Berlin-Friedrichshain to speak with him about his search for orientation in the vanishing GDR, and about his shift from reflecting on his own origins towards being more influenced by topical events and politics. ● read more on page 2



»West-Berlin is beginning to regain its former splendor.«

Timo Miettinen tells us why typically we hear more about Finnish design and architecture abroad than Finnish art, and how he sees his Salon Dahlmann in Charlottenburg become a genuine meeting place for the art scene, that follows in the tradition of Berlin's salon culture. ● read more on page 7



»The Guggenheim Helsinki could be a beacon for the whole Nordic region.«

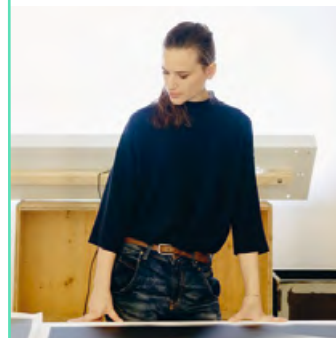
Sanna-Mari Jäntti, director of the Guggenheim Helsinki project at Miltton, talks to us about Helsinki's plans to put the Nordic region on the map as a destination for art and culture, and how David beat Goliath in the world's largest architectural competition.

● read more on page 9

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Tina Lechner, Vienna



Eva Kotátková, Prague

upcoming interviews  
and collector stories on  
[collectorsagenda.com](http://collectorsagenda.com)







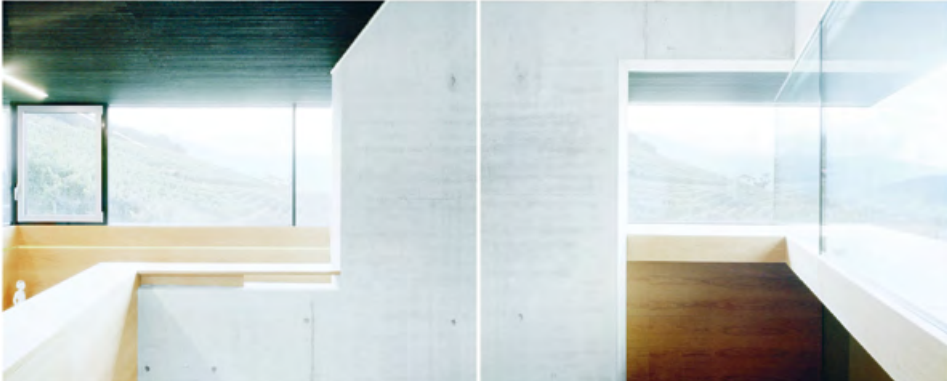


»The big Gesture – Oscar Niemeyer in Algier«

Andreas Rost (\*1962 in Weimar, Germany) has become known for his, predominantly black and white, photographs documenting big-city life. For the first time ever, Andreas Rost researches the Université des Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumédiène in Algier, which has been little known even among architects, with the eye of a photographer. Rost's photographs are testimony of a grand design of a failed utopia.

Photography, A1A artprint Alu Dibond  
Format: 85 x 60 cm (33.5 x 23.6 inches)  
Edition of 10 + 3 AP  
Signed and numbered by the artist.  
1.800 Euro, incl. VAT (13%)  
more on [bit.ly/AndreasRostEdition](https://bit.ly/AndreasRostEdition)

in cooperation with: **100 Häuser**



Diptych, two photographs framed in aluminium  
Format: 30 x 38 cm (11.8 x 15 inches)  
Edition of 10 + 3 AP

Signed and numbered by the artist.  
2.000 Euro, excl. VAT (13%)

»Bildraum P 28/2007«

Walter Niedermayr (\*1952 in Bozen, South Tyrol) is regarded as one of Europe's greatest contemporary art photographers. He is famous for his photographic series of alpine landscapes with a distinctive reduced color density. Alpine regions and urban spaces, architecture and industrial sites, but also prisons and hospitals, are a subject of his artistic investigation.

His edition Bildraum P 28/2007 shows the interior of a house in Bolzano, designed by architectural office PAUHOF. Niedermayr maintains a long-standing friendship with architects Michael Hofstätter and Wolfgang Pauzenberger, which has inspired common projects.

more on [bit.ly/WalterNiedermayrEdition](https://bit.ly/WalterNiedermayrEdition)

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# JOSIAH MCELHENY

## The Ornament Museum

27 Apr 2016 – 2. Apr 2017

Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art  
Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna, Austria  
MAK.AT

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Josiah McElheny, Examples of Neorasthenic Ornament from the collection of The Ornament Museum, 2016; Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, NYC; White Cube, London; Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago



**MAK**



**Henrik, you are someone who divides his creative energy across a wide range of disciplines. What would you tell someone sitting next to you on a flight, asking you what you do for a living?**

That depends on the duration of the flight. (laughs) Sometimes I opt for the easiest way. That is to say that I play music, then I don't have to explain and get into the details of things. Starting with fashion often turns people a little off, which is okay. It really depends on the person. But it can end up in a long story, with all its layers, in which case I would say that I work in different creative fields and do many, quite different things – theater, fashion, music, costumes, art projects and small performances, and teaching.

»Artist is such a fluffy word«

**It sounds like these different fields are in no way competing or in conflict with one another. Moreover, you seem to be switching between them without much effort.**

That's true. I don't stress myself out about things. Most of the time, I'm just trying to be in the moment using my senses. From there an idea will seek to express itself in which form ever. I could certainly focus completely on one thing only, I actually tried that once. I was trying to put all my other projects aside and

focus just on fashion for three or four months. I found out it didn't generate the productive force I had expected. Personally, I'm getting a lot out of working on different things simultaneously. Letting ideas bounce around and take them to new areas often resulted in better ideas and new concepts.

**Is this how it came about that a salami factory all of a sudden popped up in one of your Paris fashion shows?**

Yes, exactly. The idea of the salami actually came from a project we had done for the Art Cologne, a tapestry with food patterns. And one night I suddenly woke up thinking, "Hey, what about doing something with salami for the fashion show as well." I've been doing foodstuff quite a lot. It's always good to have some food involved in our collection. We have small samples every season, and I always tell my team, "We need a fruit, a pineapple, something!" There are some pretty funky fruits you wouldn't expect that they exist. They can give quite a different spin to a project in terms of their shape, their color, or their silhouette. It's not even so far-fetched if you think about it. Grapes and other fruits have always played a big role in art history.

**Sci-fi movies are an important inspiration for you. Do you like to spend time thinking about the future?**

I would typically say that the future is more important for my work than history, but at second thought I feel it is really the combination of both.



I have always liked sci-fi movies and such stuff – not when they are too violent or advanced with robots and all that. I like if sci-fi movies have a little bit of realness, but also something strangely futuristic and surreal, with different cultures blending. In all the projects we've done throughout the years, we've always created different societies of men and women who live in particular worlds, often in a post-apocalyptic sense. A lost society ...

**What do you want people to understand about the work you do?**

My works are perhaps very surreal, but I am trying to make them understandable. I hope people will recognize some kind of craftsmanship, and hopefully some form of conceptual imagination. In general the diversity of my work is very difficult for people to grab. I think it can be very difficult to classify in conventional terms and a gallery must have a hard time explaining it. I don't really call myself an artist, either. I think it's such a fluffy word and I met so many people in the big cities where many people call themselves artist only to compensate for the fact that are just a bit lost. They hide behind the word. When I meet people who pull of this "hey I am an artist" thing I usually pull back. I don't try to have the final word on what I am or should be. There is this German word Gesamtkunstwerk which I am trying to think about and focus on doing. And I am feeling pretty productive that way.

read the full story on [bit.ly/Henrik-Vibskov](https://bit.ly/Henrik-Vibskov)

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**How would you describe the art you are creating in your own words?**  
I think entering my work feels a bit like entering a Luna Park. There's the roller-coaster, there are shooting galleries, and of course the candy floss van. There are all these different tents with different things. At first glance, it might look like I make very different types of works. But if you look closer, I think most people will see that they are all very connected. The unifying element is the way I work. I fish in what I'm seeing.

**What exactly happens when you “fish” in what you are seeing, as you say?**  
Do you know the word “kolbojnik”? It is Hebrew and means “leftovers”. I think that describes very well what I do. I am just fishing for a lot of stuff that already exists. It is a constantly evolving series of impressions I pick up. It's things I see around me, little details I discover, like the fabric of the tablecloth in a painting.

If you combine different impressions what you get is a weird object that's beyond language.

**So by creating combinations of previously disconnected impressions you create a world that escapes reality.**  
Yes, I think so. I want to create something dreamlike. I think it is really interesting when people talk about their dreams, it is not about things that are actually happening. Dreams break down the conventional concept of space and time. That's the amazing thing about dreams. Art is very similar to this. It is able to reveal certain aspects of human nature that other disciplines can't. That is what makes it so important for society, because it is the “ghost” in the machine.

**What is important to you when you are standing in front of an empty canvas and are about to start a new painting?**  
You should allow yourself to be halfway directed by the painting. And halfway you should ex-



plore your personal desires and work out what is necessary to make the painting come alive. What you really want at the end of the day is to surprise yourself, just like you are making unpredicted steps on a dance floor.

»Entering my work feels a bit like entering a Luna Park.«

**What are you working on at the moment?**  
There will be a two-part exhibition together with Mamma Anderson at Gallery Bo Bjerggaard in Copenhagen and Gallery Magnus Karlsson in Stockholm very soon. For 2017, I am preparing a comprehensive mid-career survey at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, near Copenhagen.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/TAL-R](http://bit.ly/TAL-R)



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Shilpa Gupta, Singing Cloud, 2008-2009 (detail), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art



**You are showing a part of your art collection in your home and family office, a wonderful Gründerzeit house in the center of Helsinki, which is open to visitors. How did your collecting begin?**  
My mother has always been very interested in Finnish landscape painting from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, and the two of us began collecting them. We visited galleries and participated in auctions together, at age fifteen I found that very exciting. We Finns love our landscape very much, so it was obvious to us to collect landscape paintings; it did not occur to us to collect international art. It's been a long road to the attainment of our current collection. Although I graduated as an engineer, I've always been interested in “beautiful things,” and regard collecting art as a form of compensation.

**In other fields such as fashion, architecture and in the kitchen the term “Nordic” has become a label that's become internationally successful. Do you think it could also work for art?**  
That depends, especially in Finland, on how you define art. I think in the area of handicrafts it has already succeeded. There are very many extraordinary Finnish glass artists and brands like Iittala have distributed their work in the world. This might be easier for architecture and design for works by Alvar Aalto, Tapio Wirkkala, and Timo Sarpaneva and his companions are all very special and quite timeless. In art it

is more difficult. Art doesn't serve any purpose and is so very individual that it is difficult to put a label on it.

**What do you think are the reasons that only few Finnish artists are internationally known?**  
Perhaps Finns are a little shy. For a long time Finns have failed to think internationally. It is possible that we are not good yet at marketing art. We'll probably have to work on that. But there are some very well known Finnish artists and significant movements radiating out from Finland. Think of the “Helsinki School,” Finnish photography has become a kind of brand. I also want to mention the worldwide known video artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila. We'll organize an exhibition with her as well next year at Salon Dahlmann.

»I think Berlin could still experience a few surprises in regard to Finnish art.«

**“Salon Dahlmann” is your place of business in Berlin. What led you to establish a second dependence outside Finland?**  
We indeed own a house in the center of Berlin-Charlottenburg, in a side street of the Ku'damm where we show changing exhibitions including works from our collection and others. We named



Salon Dahlmann after its former owner. It is very important to me to show Finnish art there; I think Berlin could still experience a few surprises there. I've lived and worked in Germany, I speak the language well and feel deeply connected to the country. Berlin has always been a metropolis and has become so even more in recent years.

**Isn't the art and gallery scene in Berlin mainly concentrated in Mitte?**  
When I moved to Charlottenburg it was as I had always imagined Germany to be, therefore I remained in West-Berlin, although many, especially younger people, moved to Mitte or East-Berlin. Presently I have the impression that the West is beginning to regain its former splendor with so many artists and galleries. I like the tradition of the “Berlin Salon” in which musicians, writers, and painters gathered and I wish to revive it.

With exhibitions, concerts, performances, and workshops at Salon Dahlmann, we not only want to offer a great variety of formats but to create a genuine meeting place. In Salon Dahlmann we've organized exhibitions with Janne Räisänen, Secundino Hernandez, Anselm Reyle/Marianna Uutinen, Henning Strassburger, Noora Geagea, and Matti Kujasalo. In 2017, the hundredth anniversary of Finnish independence, we'll present a Tom of Finland exhibition which we are presently preparing.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/TimoMiettinen](http://bit.ly/TimoMiettinen)



Erez Israeli, Cain (Self Portrait), 2015, Beton, Karotte

[info@galeriecrone.de](mailto:info@galeriecrone.de)







For several years you have been doing indepth research on the *play sculptures* of post-war Vienna, objects which in the context of “art-in-architecture” appeared as playgrounds and “art in public places.”

I noticed the historical “play sculptures” from the 1950s when I worked with other objects of the Viennese art-in-architecture and admired their advanced language of form at a time when one rarely worked abstract in the public space. These objects were like small architecture utopias, which appeared somewhere between ‘utility plastic’ and the fine arts. Later, the sculptor Josef Schagerl, who at the time had designed many of the sculptures, confirmed that he and his colleague Josef Seebacher had considered these *play sculptures* an opportunity to produce abstract sculptures for the public space.

These *play sculptures* imply a utopian conviction that art is able to make a contribution to the improvement of life and human interaction. Do you see yourself as a political artist? Political issues inevitably come up in my work because I deal with places and topics that have to do with our environment. But I wouldn’t call myself a “political artist.” That is certainly not the essence of my work. Looking at the *play sculptures* series, it began with an interest in objects the illustrations of which I had discovered but didn’t really know and which for Vienna at the time were extremely progressive and aroused a direct attraction and curiosity. I consider the entire series and its various appearances as a questioning of this phenomenon with all its formal, social, and historical aspects, including the political meaning of abstraction in the public space shortly after World War II.

Art as means to improve life and human interaction: One would think of it more of a typical Scandinavian topic, wouldn’t you agree? The idea that art and life belong together has, in my view, more to do with Bauhaus than with Scandinavia. Bauhaus has certainly influenced Scandinavia, but also the Austrian, French, American postwar period.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/SofieThorsen](http://bit.ly/SofieThorsen)



#### »Spielplastik«, 2015

The featured edition *Spielplastik* (play sculpture), which appeared exclusively for Collectors Agenda and Verlag für moderne Kunst, is based on a climbing frame of Josef Seebacher-Konzut.

The folding distorts the original shape of a cut-out of a black-and-white photograph showing a child climbing a play sculpture. Its plasticity evokes a rudimentary three-dimensionality whilst inviting to an interplay between picture and surface.

Edition of 20 + 2 AP  
Size: 42 x 32 cm (16.5 x 11.8 inches)  
Folded inkjet print on Photo Rag paper, mounted on black cardboard.  
Hand-signed and numbered by the artist.  
Due to the manual folding process each copy is unique. Black wooden box frame by a Viennese frame maker, museum quality glass.  
900 Euro, incl. VAT (13%)

● more on [bit.ly/SofieThorsenEdition](http://bit.ly/SofieThorsenEdition)



In your works people play quite a prominent role, many of them make the impression as if they were posing.

I want to enquire into the phenomena of our contemporary lives. I am interested mainly in the aesthetics of music videos, fashion and especially social media. For example a real tendency has emerged that people present themselves through various media channels, which are now available to them. This “posing culture” as I call it has become quite obvious and very present in the day-to-day.

Are you simply creating a contemporary documentation, or are you criticizing phenomena like this posing culture?

I want to show different kinds of phenomena I observe and interpret them in a carnivalesque sense, putting a mirror in front of people. It has become a convention that people present their six-pack, their butt or even just the perfectly studied facial expression. It has become so normal that nobody questions it anymore. Don’t get me wrong, I am not trying to be patronizing. You can always discover a twinkle of the eye in my work.

Some of your paintings vaguely are reminiscent of Marlene Dumas’ paintings? Are you an admirer of her work?

Yes. I love Marlene Dumas paintings! Also Alice Neel and Henri Matisse are my all-time favorites. And of course many contemporary painters have had an influence on me. Having said that, I am continuously seeking to employ new styles in my work, new ways to paint, and I investigate different techniques.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/JenniHiltunen](http://bit.ly/JenniHiltunen)



Courtesy of Moreau Kusunoki Architects

Why does Helsinki need a Guggenheim?

When the project came into being we were thinking about the whole of Nordics, not just Helsinki. The Nordics have a long-standing record of collaboration. From a Nordic perspective, there is great potential to raise our collective profile as a destination for art and culture, in addition to architecture and design. We have a vibrant scene of talented young artists, and institutions such as Moderna Museet, Louisiana, or Kiasma are setting high standards. The Guggenheim Helsinki could be a beacon for the whole Nordic region, strengthening our art sectors all across Scandinavia, including galleries, corporate collectors, art fairs, and not least artist support schemes.

The architectural competition for the Guggenheim Helsinki has been remarkable in many ways.

As one would expect, the building of a new Guggenheim attracted a lot of entries into the open, anonymous design competition. But

»There is great potential to raise the collective profile of the whole Nordic region as a destination for art and culture.«

the number of proposals we received went beyond our imagination: 1.715! What made the competition unique was the fact that it was very participatory and content-oriented. It set off discussions about the design of the city and its needs, as well as Finland’s design and architectural heritage, involving the harbor administration, the city planning department, the tourism board, lobby groups, and so on. The winning architects were Moreau Kusunoki. The decision for a small two-year-old architect duo, instead of a superstar architectural practice, completely changed the way many people

looked at the project. It came as a reassurance to many that in this project some things were done differently.

The public discussion regarding the project continues. Will the Guggenheim Helsinki ultimately see the light of day?

I do believe so. We’re hoping that the government will make a decision about their investment in the fall. Until then, we have to wait and see. The conditions for the project’s realization are better than before and we are glad to have the support of so many local stakeholders. However, one should never dismiss the fact that there are a lot of decision-makers: foremost the City of Helsinki, which needs to make an independent decision about its role, and there are private funders, the local foundation and the Guggenheim in New York as well. Getting all these actors to commit to a single model and move it forward together is a complicated act. But who said it would be easy?

● read the full story on [bit.ly/SannaMariJantti](http://bit.ly/SannaMariJantti)

Eingeladen vom

**Salon Dahlmann | Miettinen Collection**

Sammlung Haus N und Sammlung Wemhöner  
Eine Initiative der  
Mittleren Zusammenarbeit

**LAUFZEIT 12.09. – 26.11.2016**

**ÖFFNUNGSZEITEN** Samstag,  
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Salon Dahlmann   Marburger Str. 3   10789 Berlin





**Your choice to get involved in the art business is understandable. Your parents have been the owners of Gallery Nordenhake since the early 1970s, so art must have played a role for you since an early age.**

It's true that art has very much been a part of my upbringing. My parents would always take us kids along to a lot of events like artist dinners and studio visits, and museums and galleries of course. I remember how much I enjoyed going to art fairs as a kid: the overload of visual impressions and the diversity of the art and the people attending was really exciting – and sometimes the art on display even contained nudity! (laughs)

**How important is it to you as a young gallerist to attract people your age to the gallery and introduce them to contemporary art?**

One of the best things about my job is to sell an artwork to a person my age or younger. Usually it's the first artwork they buy, and a comparatively large investment, and it's not the richest kids or those with a family background with art, but rather someone who has found out about this world on their own, and is eager to become a part of it. It's a ticket to a scene filled with creative, crazy and glamorous people and that identity-building process should not be underestimated. That's why the majority of my clients are entrepreneurs or other self-made people. The art they buy becomes part of who they are and how they view themselves.

**Moving forward, how do you see the Swedish art scene develop?**

In the past 20 or 30 years Swedish artists could gain a lot of success without even being widely exhibited in Swedish art institutions, while exhibitions in museums and galleries outside Sweden were almost unheard of. I think there is still a very regional mentality, which I am sure is going to change. I think for Sweden's commercial art sector there is only one way forward – to venture outside Sweden, and to build stronger relationships with the international art market. This is already evident from looking at those Swedish artists who have garnered international success – they almost always studied or exhibited first abroad.

**Are Swedish artists risking missing out in the game, if they don't make the leap abroad?**

I wouldn't rule out that an artist who chooses to stay in Sweden can be successful, but the odds to success are greater if one ventures abroad. It is likely that the career of an artist who did not have the chance to study abroad or to participate in an international artist-in-residency program will stop at the level of domestic gallery shows. I think it benefits both the artists and the art scene in Sweden, to have more artists living and working abroad.

»Art is a ticket to a scene filled with creative, crazy and glamorous people.«

**Do you think that galleries should play a stronger role in fostering the success of Swedish artists abroad?**

I think galleries could play a much stronger role in raising the profile of Swedish artists internationally. They introduce new artistic positions to an international public through gallery shows, the internet, or on art fairs, usually before they come to the attention of curators or institutional exhibitors. A gallery is the first stop for a graduated artist, and if we had more galleries daring to participate in international fairs, we would be seeing more Swedish art finding success abroad – and that always leads to further interest back home. I hope in the future to lead by example in this regard.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/ErikNordenhake](https://bit.ly/ErikNordenhake)



Nordic Notes

The Nordic countries – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland have made a name for themselves as a driving force in innovation and design.

Their cool Nordic stance on fashion, cuisine and interiors has long started to influence the way we dress, cook and live. Also the scene for contemporary art from the Nordic region is expanding and is developing new dynamics as international collectors are watching the scene.

With our upcoming format 'Nordic Notes' we are therefore putting a spotlight on the Nordic art and cultural scene on a regular basis.



[collectorsagenda.com](https://collectorsagenda.com)

»It's simply not a sport to buy from an established artist.«

**Investigating in the Swedish art scene one is quick to notice your name as one of the country's first serious collectors of contemporary art.**

It's true that, when I started collecting thirty years ago, there weren't many art collectors around in Sweden. There was simply no awareness for contemporary art. As a result, there were few galleries, aside of the auction houses. I was among the very few who visited galleries on a regular basis. This picture has changed completely. Today there exists a very vibrant gallery scene, especially in Stockholm, and people are browsing the art galleries on a regular basis.

**In art circles you are recognized as having a natural eye for art that is important and topical.**

I don't want to sound complacent, but over the years I've developed a sense for what is good and what is bad art. I see or rather feel it immediately. With very few exceptions this feeling has never disappointed me in thirty years of collecting.

**A lot of people, including prominent players in the art scene, rely on your judgment.**

**How do you judge the quality of an artwork?** One important aspect is whether I get the feeling that I haven't seen anything like it before. This feeling can relate to both the artistic conception or the style represented in the work. It is very much a gut feeling, which I act on.

**Thirty years are a long period of time. Did your collection take new turns over the years?**

In the beginning, I was focused more on international art, including American artists such as Roy Lichtenstein or James Rosenquist and other international artists, for example Sigmar Polke. During the last few years, I have restricted myself to collecting Swedish artists. I often try to support young artists and some of these artists who were still young when I discovered them are now widely known and acknowledged in Sweden and internationally. Ten years ago, I bought a video work by Natalie Djurberg from her gallery. Marconi was astonished that someone was interested in her work. Today, Natalie Djurberg is perhaps the most wellknown Swedish artist.



**Do you think that Swedish artists are ready for the international art market?**

Yes, I think some of them are. Natalie Djurberg has been among those who paved the way for Swedish artists in the public perception. I am sure that others will follow in her footsteps on an international level.

**Who are the other artists you discovered for yourself early on?**

There have been a number of Swedish artists like Annika von Hausswolff, Ernst Billgren, and Jacob Dahlgren, whose talent I was among the first to have supported. In general, I find it much more interesting to buy art from a young aspiring artist than from someone at the age of sixty, who has been widely recognized. For example, I wouldn't buy Andy Warhol today – even if I had the money I wouldn't. I find it more satisfying to know that I was among the first to recognize an artist's talent and value before everyone jumps on him. It's not exciting to buy from an established artist. It is simply not a sport.

**Collecting with a 'sporting spirit' is an interesting concept. Every sport is based on a strategy. Have you got one?**

No, I haven't really got a strategy, except that it should be good art. (laughs) I don't collect art according to a particular theme or so. As I have already mentioned, it is important to me that the works meet a very high standard. At least I like to think so. I am collecting every genre

ranging from sculptures to oil paintings and more recently also video art, I don't collect watercolor. I'm not really interested in the entire work of an artist, I rather focus on the quality of the individual artwork.

**Many collectors seek a personal relationship with the artist. Often they find it just as rewarding as the idea of owning an artwork.**

To be honest, it is not that important to me. Moreover, I try to avoid building close relationships with the artists. That way I stay clear of any commitment and maintain a level of personal freedom, should I decide to sell a work in my collection for whatever reason, which otherwise I would not have.

**Would you share with us a piece of advice for people who seek to get seriously involved in collecting contemporary art?**

I think first of all you have to be knowledgeable about art. Perhaps I wasn't so knowledgeable myself, but anyhow. By reading many art books you will get a grasp of the broad spectrum of contemporary art. The more art you look at the better will you be able to discern the conventional from the original, and ultimately what will make a contribution to your collection. Also, when I started, I learned a lot from speaking to gallery owners. Over time you will develop a sense, which galleries sell quality work, from which you can buy safely. Ultimately, it's always about quality, not quantity.

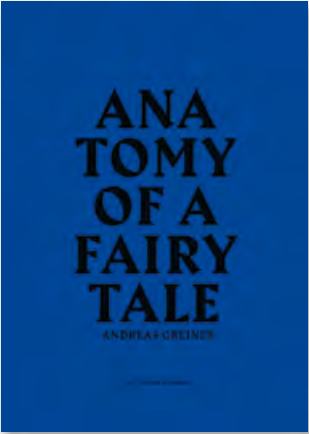
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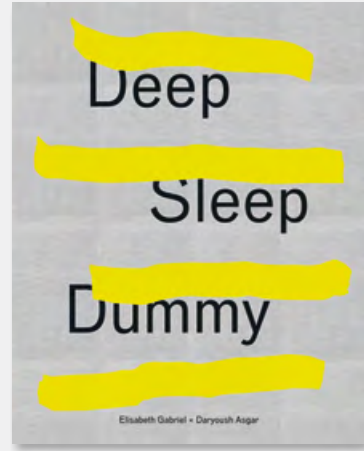
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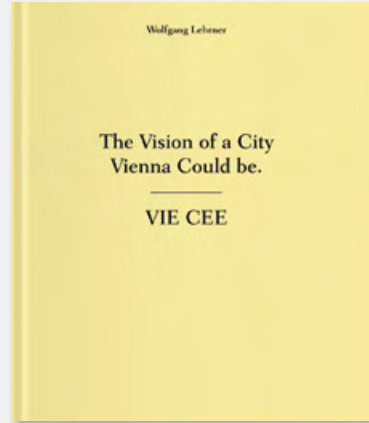
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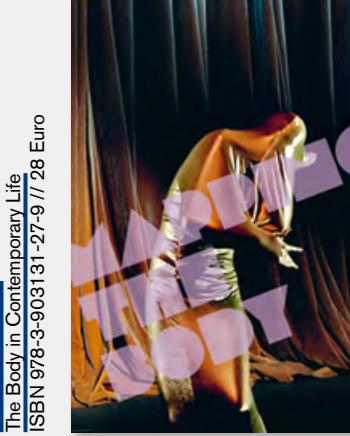
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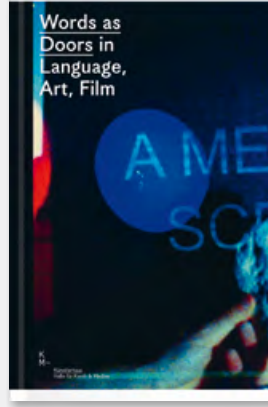
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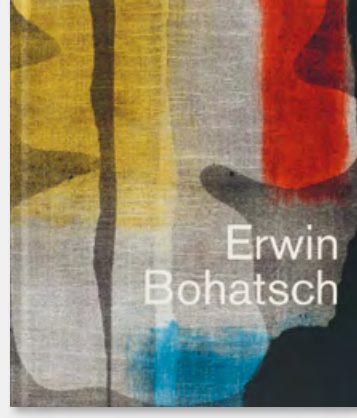
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VERLAG FÜR MODERNE KUNST





**Your work is known to be quite political. Do you see the role of the artist as a critic of society?**

Yes, but I believe that happens anyway, because artists always represent their time. Each artist finds his or her place in art history and of course that applies to contemporary art too, art communicates current events to the people. Some say, “when words no longer function, art sets in.” That may sound a little corny, but it contains some truth, because art is truly a separate language; it reveals as it were the location and time in which we exist.

»When words no longer function, art sets in.«

**To be chosen to represent your home country Romania at the Biennale di Venezia surely generates another dynamic, especially when the contribution concerns an explosive topic as you’ve chosen.**

That’s true. The concept for the Venice Pavilion was to leave the entire space completely empty, a criticism directed against Europe’s frantic expansion and the structure of the European Union. The same year, in 2005, Romania signed the contract to enter the EU. When my project went public, an avalanche of criticism was triggered, first in the national newspapers, followed by the first questions from the Romanian parliament. The Guardian described my work as “non-work.” The International Herald Tribune on the other hand found that it was one of the best works at the Biennale and deserving of a prize. The work polarized tremendously.

**You like to speak of your works as “materializations”. What exactly do you mean by that?** I understand my works as materializations of concepts. Earlier I used to call them invisible works although they are not really invisible, because they are documented, by the viewers, the press, in fact even this interview “materializes” my artistic practice. The viewer’s discourse with the work reflects exactly what we are and what we represent – therefore materialization.

**In your studio we can see a lot of castings. Are they another form of materialization?**

It is resin poured into a form that I have cast from street surfaces and manhole covers near the Pont Neuf in Paris. While the resin is hardening, I add various colors. The castings depict exactly the structures of the surface of the street where I took them, for example this puddle. On a historical level, the castings make a visual link between two bio-political structures, in this case the gallery wall (architecture) and the street. What becomes visible here, materializes if you will, is our existence, the traces we leave behind in the anonymity of the flat street level. When the work hangs on the wall, it emerges as strongly as the indentations in the street. Like a flat-screen, behind which our common daily history functions as an apparatus for the production of images. I have worked on it since 2012 and have collected castings from various cities worldwide.



**Are you preparing an exhibition at the moment?**

At the moment I am preparing a solo presentation for the Galerie nächst St. Stephan Vienna on the occasion of abc Berlin. It concerns a one-person-bunker, which I will dismantle in the Brunswick harbor and reconstruct in the hall of the art fair. The work will have the title “Solo – Bunker” and will refer to the perception of history through the “eyes and experience.” The view through the 20 cm thick wall is by means of extremely thin slits. The distorted sounds heard from outside through these slits generates a feeling as if the “soul looks out of the body.”

● read the full story on [bit.ly/DanielKnorr](https://bit.ly/DanielKnorr)



All images: Courtesy of Galerie Crone and Peter Jellitsch

**Your black-and-white data drawings look as if they were digitally rendered topographical maps of mountain ranges.**

At first glance they may appear like it. In reality they are visualized measurements of digital signals and data that are invisible to us, but that we are exposed to every single day. From the moment we get up in the morning until we go to bed at night we are continuously in touch with our Smart-Phones, tablets, and laptops.

**We are using data streams and at the same time generate huge amounts of data ourselves, which can be linked to create all sorts of findings about us ...**

Yes, it is eerie when you think about it. And we accept it quite uncritically! However, once in a while we ask ourselves the question: Who is standing behind it all? Who is profiting from all the data? Which conclusions can be drawn about us and about our lives?

**How did the idea come up to “measure” our day-to-day lives?**

My work is often concerned with the transformation and visualization of processes connected to our daily routine. In 2014, I participated in an artist-in-residency program at MAK in Los Angeles, where I noticed mobile phone and transmitter masts, which were camouflaged as palms to blend into the cityscape. These “palm tree antennas” are almost invisible, but omnipresent. Subsequently, I began focusing on examining data streams and have also produced an artist’s book which especially focuses on these palm tree antennas.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/PeterJellitsch](https://bit.ly/PeterJellitsch)



»Nevio«, 2016

The saying goes that curiosity killed the cat, but then they also say that cats have nine lives. It is a popular theory amongst catisticians that the often fatal consequences of feline curiosity led cats to decide that nine lives would be much more efficient than one.

This gave them the freedom they so desired, as well as adequate time to sleep in cramped spaces, look bemused, sleep on clean piles of laundry, look apathetic, sleep outside, attack anything that moves, look disapproving and be scared of cucumbers.

Once they’d worked out how to put mortality on ‘paws’, cats were free to attack life with the gusto, agility, bravery and stupidity that only cats can. Daniel Gebhart de Koekkoek sets out to document the aerobic prowess of flying felines in action, and presents, for the first time, his fantastic images of Ume, Elli, Flitzie, Nevio and Fiffy. Now you can enjoy their 1/125 of a second of fame for your wall.

*Gijs van den Berg, KesselsKramer*

Photography in wooden frame  
Format: 36 x 48 cm (14.28 x 18.9 inches)  
Edition of 5 different sujets, each 9 + 1 AP  
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Opening: November 10, 2016

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Setting the right frame

As is often the case, hidden champions are not necessarily to be found only in the big cities. The small town of Kirchen, near Cologne, is home to an extraordinary family business, and a superlative product: the Halbe family has been making handmade quality customized frames for 70 years. Halbe has been fortunate in being able to retain a high level of craftsmanship and specialist expertise in-house while attracting fresh talent to its team. Its solid stance on producing exclusively in Germany and to the highest precision standards have earned Halbe the trust and loyalty of artists, galleries, museums, and private collectors in Germany — and increasingly abroad. Its signature magnet frame principle has won the company the Red Dot design award.

**How do you define ‘museum quality’ in a frame?**



Museums need to present artworks to the public with the greatest impact whilst ensuring their safety at any time. Therefore museums have the highest standards for frames such as dust protection; UV-protective, color-neutral and anti-reflective glass; emission-free and ageing-resistant materials; and of course safety features. Halbe frames live up to all of these criteria.

**What makes your frame principle so unique?**

Our magnetic frame system is the first of its kind worldwide. It is dust-tight and solid like a conventional frame, but it allows ultimate flexibility when it comes to changing or repositioning works inside the frame. Its simplicity is unmatched.

**Who are your customers?**

Everyone who values art ... Curators of art institutions such as Museum Ludwig in Cologne or the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, firms such as Allianz and Deutsche Bank, who own important corporate art collections. And of course we count many private art collectors among our clientele, who appreciate the fact



that they are able to redesign the presentation of the art on their walls without always having to consult a framer. More recently, we have been observing an increasing demand from countries like Sweden or the Netherlands.

**How important is innovation in a business like yours?**

I believe that timeless design, quality and simplicity will always define our product. But we are developing with the requirements of the art world and are keeping up with emerging technologies. For our Protect Magnetic Frame series, for example, we teamed up with the Fraunhofer Institute to develop a built-in sensor system which allows for 24-hour control of artworks as well as a record of their condition and the ambient environment.

**How much manual labor is still involved in the production of a Halbe frame?**

Due to the many made-to-custom orders there is little automation on our shop floor. In the early days we still produced our frames at the kitchen table. Obviously that has changed, and today CNC-controlled machines support our craftsmen. Digital technologies work hand in hand with know-how. The important finishing steps, which require experience and sensitivity, are still performed in manual labor.

● [halbe-rahmen.de](https://halbe-rahmen.de)



David Halbe leads the family business in the third generation





### »Samantha« (Edition 2016)

The name Robert La Roche is associated with iconic eyewear and has become a cult brand of global reputation. His ad campaigns are contemporary documents of the creative scene in Vienna from the 1970s to the 1990s, which have made waves internationally. Famous wearers of La Roche eyewear include Hollywood stars such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Meryl Streep, and artists such as Yoko Ono and Andy Warhol. Today, vintage originals of his classic eyewear once again enjoy enormous popularity.

The MAK in Vienna recently dedicated the solo exhibition *Personal View* to the designer's singular oeuvre. In collaboration with Robert La Roche, Collectors Agenda presents a sujet of one of his iconic ad campaigns for Model S-4, dating from 1975, as an exclusive art edition.

Limited series of hand-made silkscreen prints of different superimposed color layers, based on sujet shown above. Each print a unique.

● more on [bit.ly/Robert-La-Roche](http://bit.ly/Robert-La-Roche)



Photo: © Absolut Elyx / Inge Prader

»Pleasure can have so many facets – jumping into a cold, clear lake, or leisurely visiting an art exhibition during the day...«

Lilli Hollein comes from a family where culture is high on the agenda. Her father was the visionary architect Hans Hollein. Her brother led cultural institutions to international prestige. As a curator and design expert she has made an international name for herself. Peter, Barkeeper at the Loos Bar, met Lilli Hollein over a "Honey-rider" and talked with her about the various facets of pleasure and what connects her personally with the architecture jewel in Vienna's first district.

#### What does pleasure mean to you, Lilli?

Pleasure can have so many facets. A personal pleasure of mine is driving around in the car by myself listening to music, without having to be on the phone at the same time. Jumping into the water from a jetty, into a cold, clear lake is a special treat! But foremost: cuddling my child, spending time with my husband, away from organized family affairs.

#### There are surely moments of pleasure that you might like to enjoy more often?

Of course there are! Something I don't have very often is time to leisurely visit an art exhibition during the day – free time during the

day, as the saying goes. Even if one feels a bit guilty in doing that, I really enjoy visiting a museum in-between two appointments in another city.

#### So pleasure can be integrated in the day-to-day work routine?

I hope so, since in my life work and private life do overlap a lot. I take pleasure in my work, to make things happen is a strong driving force and definitely a great pleasure. Therefore I have founded the Vienna Design Week together with Tulga Beyerle and Thomas Geisler, which I am still organizing with great passion after ten years. I don't want to go into its strenuous aspects. Looking at it as a pie, they would occupy the larger part. Only the part with the cherries and whipped cream is what makes the whole thing so pleasurable – to react quickly, to curate, and to program the festival – it doesn't compensate, it is the incentive.

#### We are sitting at the Loos Bar, an institution of the city.

For many years I've had a relationship with this bar. At home, it has always been a topic of conversation. Little Lilli, who wasn't allowed yet to sip on drinks, already knew that the Loos Bar was a small jewel in Vienna's first district. The portal of the bar, contains the lettering "American Bar" until today, which has been reproduced by my father on the occasion of the exhibition *Dream and Reality* in 1984. Also later, the Loos Bar took a special role in my life, because seventeen years ago I had my first date here with my husband for which it has a special place in our heart.

● read the full story on [bit.ly/ElyxLilliHollein](http://bit.ly/ElyxLilliHollein)

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