

The *Collectors* Chronicle

Voices of
Contemporary Art
and Culture

11

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Issue



Photo: Christoph Liebentritt

In the Studio Renate Bertlmann, Vienna

The pioneer of Austrian performance art takes an ironically provocative approach in her work when she explores such themes as sexuality and gender roles. The artist, who is at home with many media, lures with her charming aesthetics before the second glance reveals the “sting of feminism”. ● read more on page 2



Photo: © Alexander Yakovlev

»We are forcing
constant participation.«

AES+F are one of the most successful and well-known Russian art groups. The group is probably best known for their overwhelming multi-screen video installations of enigmatic narrative character. Behind crisp and sharp images lies a survey of the values and conflicts of modern global culture. ● read more on page 3



Photo: © Christoph Liebentritt

»I am interested
in a subject and its sculptural
translation.«

Cäcilia Brown employs a documentary approach to her artistic practice; sculptures allow her to explore dimensions, surfaces, and even her relationship to herself and to space in a variety of ways enabling her to formulate associations. ● read more on page 4

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Rio de Janeiro



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Emeka Ogboh
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in our Online Journal on
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Photos: © Christoph Liebentritt

Renate, looking at your extensive oeuvre, the great variety of media is striking: Performance, photography, graphics, installation... Is there a particular medium in which you like to express yourself, and if so, why?

I constantly alternate between many media: drawing, photography, and also painting, although I'm not someone who typically wields a brush loaded with oil paint, I prefer to work with mixed media. What I really love is to work three-dimensionally, making objects or object installations. Photography is very important to me, I record with the camera everything I do, installations or objects, in order with another medium to make another level transparent to me.

How would you describe your artistic work of working in general?

There is an inner voice, an inner "urge", an obsession, a "must", something that is given to you. So I don't prescribe anything for myself, I actually feel like a tool. Everything I absorb

flows into my work and is then transformed in a new form, but the how and when and why I leave to chance.

You studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and immediately thereafter taught painting techniques in the master class for restoration and technology until 1982, while at the same time already starting with your performances. How was it for you, as a woman, at the academy, to be active in what was then a very male-dominated field?

At the time, there were very, very few women at the Academy. I was shocked because I had not expected it to be so patriarchal. The professors were all men, like Sergius Pauser, my professor – a good but very traditional painter. And the fantastic realists, who were en vogue at the time, two of them also had professorships at the Academy. There wasn't a single professor or role model available to provide us with orientation. That was a huge, huge frustration.

In 1978 you defined your artistic maxim *Amo ergo sum*. Can you tell us more about it?

It is not that simple. It had emerged within me, then, all of a sudden it was there. When I analyze it, it is certainly a condensed form of all concepts, and utopian ideals, I hold. I would wish – and this is especially important for artistic people – that body, soul, and spirit form a unity, because only then can one be really creative and strong. I dare to be aware of things, I dare to think and act revolutionarily, in the best sense of the term. And this includes mature sexuality, because only then can you equate it with Eros as the creative force par excellence. If we become sexually atrophied and deformed, we are prone to start wars. In this sense, the title of my *VERBUND* catalog is *Amo ergo sum*, a subversive political program.

Your work revolves strongly, as you have mentioned, around sexuality, men-women relationships but also other gender roles. What role does provocation play in this? Provocation isn't important to me at all. I simply want to express what moves me, what hurts me, what drives me, this is what I want to express and to do so uncompromisingly, this

is in itself provocative. For me it's a "must", for others it's often a shock, because of its directness. I'm glad that people are not bored on seeing my works. The aesthetic of my work is seductive, but it's also a trap, when you get close, there's the sting – I like that.

»The aesthetics of my work leads into a trap.«

In your performance pieces in particular, you receive immediate audience feedback, do you recall any specific situations or reactions? Since I have always involved the audience, there may have been situations that may have been considered "embarrassing" – especially for those who were coerced into participating, as in the *Sling Shot Action*, I did at Franklin Furnace in New York. I danced with sex dolls and picked people out of the audience and more or less forced them to dance with the sex dolls too, and many of them didn't feel very comfortable. A very funny thing happened during the performance of *The Pregnant Bride in the Wheelchair*, in Vienna. I gave birth in the performance: I got out of the wheelchair, discarded the baby leaving it to the audience, so to speak. Then a young man from the audience came forward and placed a small milk carton next to the baby I had left lying on the floor.

This year, you will be the first woman to present a solo exhibition at the Austrian Pavilion in Venice. What was your first reaction when you heard about it?

Surprise, I didn't expect it. But then I was very happy about it, because I had already come to appreciate Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein as a curator at three exhibitions in the past. And of course it's a great pleasure and a challenge to be able to design the pavilion alone, it's not easy to play it, but I will conquer it.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_RenateBertlmann



Renate Bertlmann

is represented by
Richard Saltoun, London
Galerie Steinek, Vienna

UPCOMING SHOW
Austrian Pavillon
Biennale Arte 2019 in Venice

Hier ruht meine Zärtlichkeit
Niederösterreichische Landesgalerie Krems
26 MAY – 29 SEP 2019

Interview: Barbara Wüsch



Photo: © Alexander Yakovlev

What is behind your group's name AES+F?

E: We started working together in 1987. At the time, it was just Tatiana (Arzamasova), Evgeny (Svyatsky) and myself (Lev Evzovich). Later, we came up with AES as an abbreviation of our surnames, when we realized that people had a lot of trouble spelling our names correctly. After Vladimir (Fridkes) joined the group in 1995, we became AES+F.

S: There was never a definitive moment when we decided that from tomorrow on we would be working together. It happened organically.

You have become quite successful with exhibitions around the world and participations at the Venice Biennale and the Manifesta among others. Can you talk about some milestones along your way of reaching international acclaim?

E: The decisive moment was the *Islamic Project* in 1996, which received a lot of public attention and created controversy in the media.

A: The project was intended to be quite provocative and politically incorrect in regard to Islam and reflected the Western Islamophobia. We created digitally manipulated images of famous landmarks and tourist destinations, making them look as if they were taken over by a radical form of Islamic culture.

E: It caused a lot of controversy around the world, but with the events of 9/11, somehow we were hailed as "prophets". This doesn't happen often, but sometimes it does.

S: It was kind of pure artistic intuition, which



Interview: Valeria Demonova

AES+F, *Last Riot 2, The Carousel*, 2007



AES+F, *Mare Mediterraneum* #1, 2018

was confirmed when reality caught up with the artwork.

E: And the second success was at the Venice Biennale ten years later, in 2007, when we represented Russia in the Russian Pavilion with *Last Riot*, which introduced the aesthetic of a new work cycle. In retrospect, it was one of the first projects that defined post-internet art and all the issues related to it.

»We are concerned with contemporary quasi-religions, or secular religions.«

After *Mare Mediterraneum*, a project of yours on the occasion of Manifesta last year, we are now able to see your interpretation of *Turandot*, which inaugurated at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and will shortly be showing in Bologna.

E: We have reinterpreted the famous opera by Giacomo Puccini in collaboration with the Italian director Fabio Cherstich. Our version takes place in the Beijing of 2070, the capital of a Global Empire. We created a utopian city of bionic architecture, where the cruel princess Turandot reigns.

A: We introduce the idea of techno-feminism with a totalitarian touch.

E: The project deals with some of the topics that are central to our work: concepts of the future, feminism, post-feminism, and fake news.

Your video installations claim extremely wide screens that can span up to 20 meters or so. What is the dramaturgic idea behind this?

S: It is extremely important to us to put the viewer into a state of full immersion. To overwhelm the viewer with more than they can process is a conscious decision that evokes such a state. Plus, it is part of our artistic language.

F: We want to avoid the comfort that exists in film, where we eat popcorn and look at a screen. Instead, we are forcing constant participation and movement, which results in a more conscious experience.

A: The "inconvenience" of viewing the storyline inevitably touches the viewer in an awkward way and may also evoke a sense of "guilty pleasure".

S: It can be compared to real life, where you are never in a position to take in and process every piece of information around yourself. That fuels the desire to watch our video works again and again because, each time, you may discover something new.

In your video narratives one encounters a lot of fabulous creatures in mythical settings that are often charged with religious symbolism. Can you explain what we actually see?

E: Recently we spoke with (the French art historian) Jean-Hubert Martin in our studio: He said that, for him, all art is religious by nature. This idea, which seems obvious, is not prevalent in the contemporary art world. That's why this religious subtext that you mention is transformed into an overt message by the viewer, into her or his own ideas of the sacred or religious or maybe even into something anti-religious. In the *Feast of Trimalchio*, another work of ours, we reference biblical scenes such as the crucifixion as a juxtaposition to contemporary concepts of narcissistic enjoyment, or consumption, which takes the role of a quasi-religion. So, I would say we are probably more concerned with contemporary quasi-religions, or secular religions.

S: This allegorical aspect is present in our other works as well ...

A: ... but without didactics. We do not really manipulate the viewer. To speak frankly, there are things in the world that confuse us or make us doubt, pose questions for which there are no answers. We take this and show it to the viewer, and also to ourselves. The interpretation of the scenes is always subject to the previous knowledge and personal experiences of the viewer.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_AESF

AES+F

work with following galleries a.o.
Galerie Nikolaus Ruzicska, Salzburg
Triumph Gallery, Moscow
Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
Galeria Senda, Barcelona

CURRENT SHOWS AND EVENTS:

Turandot
Teatro Comunale di Bologna
28 MAY – 7 JUN, 2019



Photo: © Christoph Liebenritt

Căcilia, can you describe how you deal with sculptural questions and their social and political components?

There is an interest in a subject and its sculptural translation. Sculptures can be described with characteristics that allow references to the theme itself or its peculiarities. If buildings in Vienna stand half demolished for months, they inspire a sculptural interest in me, for destruction is an interesting action in itself, in this state of semi-destruction, the buildings are partially rendered into their individual materials and components. There are things that lean against and support each other, compress or smash against each other, or form piles – these are moments that I introduce into my sculptural repertoire, and I can't avoid thinking about why so much is torn down yet at the same time, still stands. A current example are penthouse apartments, which are

additionally developed and intensely advertised and sold as luxury and speculative objects. Or the demolition of old buildings in order to erect new buildings which gives rise to further questions: At whose expense are these buildings constructed? For whom are they built? Isn't the market for luxury apartments already saturated? Cities are continuously expanding and space is becoming increasingly scarce. But are these luxury penthouses really providing the needed space? And how do these buildings influence the social interaction in a district?

»The state of semi-destruction, when things lean against and support each other, compress or smash against each other, inspires a sculptural interest in me.«

Does the role of women as artists concern you in today's art world?

I think it's impossible for a woman – regardless of the field – not to deal with this topic. I am lucky to have been born in a generation where young women are encouraged. This certainly leads to difficult conflicts that become visible for example with the quota system. I think the quota doesn't distract from the fact that the



Căcilia Brown, Zahnfee, 2017
from the series Leicht Mädchen, Courtesy Gabriele Senn Galerie

system itself is unchanged – if, for example, an interview for the position of an art professorship continues to be held in such a way where-in applicants are thought to be convincing based upon their presentation as the loudest, the most casual, or the most self-publicizing – this may be considered to perpetuate Chauvinism.

How important is your studio to you? Do you have a special relationship to the rooms or are they purely functional?

I love having a studio. I like the way from home to my studio and back. On the way many problems are solved that I don't see standing in front of the sculpture. I love the neighborhood of my metal dealer and I also like the various surrounding, their different atmospheres, I become aware that Vienna is in fact a big city after all... I also like the studio itself, I loved the previous ones too, but to have a place that is both a home and a working space in which everything can be standing expands my own space of movement, mentally and physically. Ultimately, it's about the mood of the place, if it's good and you like going to the studio, it can be any space.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_CaeciliaBrown

Căcilia Brown
is represented by
Gabriele Senn Galerie, Vienna

Interview: Alexandra-Maria Toth



Photo: © Michael Kimmel

Lori, looking around here one thing in particular attracts one's attention: Your works radiate. There are reflecting and shiny surfaces, fluorescent colors on canvases – a variety of very different surfaces.

Surfaces are fascinating because they can be both banal and profound. In or behind them there always hides the other, perhaps it may be something quite profound. For me the surface represents everything or nothing, it can be both the truth and deception. Surfaces can attract, satisfy, and at the same time repel. In the visual arts where the visual dominates the surface represents the most immediate ambassador for the access to the viewer's senses and impressions.

You confront your viewers often quite brutally with your work and with themselves, for example in the case of your mirror works.

Absolutely, my large works have a claustrophobic effect. The mirror confronts the viewer initially with the question: Am I a unique piece or is there a copy that resembles me? And if so, are there endless copies of myself? The use of mirrors enabled me to address the question of the uniqueness of the forms, which may also be grotesque. Each viewer can recognize in my mirrors that they are part of the artwork, even if only fleetingly.

With the mirrors you move away from the classical concept of the image carrier. What is decisive?

Including the real space, the architecture is very decisive. To be more precise, the impact of the mirror is an attempt to destroy the idea of finality, of veracity. In painting I was searching for a more radical surface, a substitute for the white canvas, for a picture carrier that has even less characteristics.

What has art to trigger to enable it to function?

It has to show the contrast and contradictions of the superfluous. I am always electrified when art is both great and ridiculous. I believe artworks upon which have been placed very big demands have already arrived at the ridicu-

lous. A work that is unable to endure these contradictions or attempts to question them quickly loses its meaning for me. Time is the greatest condition of life and the artist ultimately tries to overcome it. My creed is: The artist must be exploited by art: and the artist must in turn exploit art.

»For me, the surface can be both the truth and deception.«

The media that you use have very different demands. How do you deal with that?

What demands? Theoretically I could do anything. I have made art too long in order to simply try something else and expect that something is going to happen. My oeuvre is mature; I reflect very carefully on what I can add. The question of timelessness is really important to me. Ultimately it's important to develop one's own language regardless of the medium.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_LoriHersberger



Lori Hersberger

is represented a.o. by
Galerie Clemens Gunzer, Zurich/Kitzbühel
Galerie Nicola von Senger, Zurich
Galeria Casado Santapau, Madrid
Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York
Laleh June Galerie, Basel



Fragment: Die Lehnende, 2018
from the series Es gibt Ecken, aus denen kommt man nicht mehr heraus, Courtesy Gabriele Senn Galerie

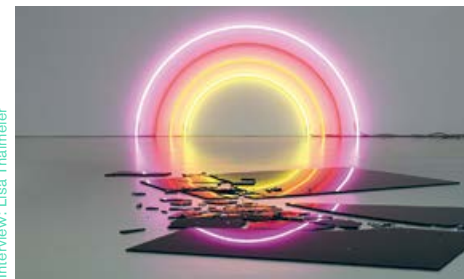


Eleuthera, 2017, © Sean Scully

SEAN SCULLY
ELEUTHERA

7.6. – 8.9.2019

ALBERTINA



Interview: Lisa Thalmeyer

Sunset 164, 2006, Exhibition view of Lori Hersberger - Insideout, 2006, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri Berlin, Photo: © Hans-Georg Gaul



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Conceptual artist Fiete Stolte studied sculpture at the Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee with Karin Sander and graduated in 2007. We talk with him and his partner Julia Stolte about the conceptual approach of their work, about letting go, and their special form of collaboration.

Fiete, with the conceptual work *Measure 8 Days a Week*, which stems from your student days, you became famous. One day didn't have 24, but 21 hours and one week became not seven, but eight days. You even designed your own clock to make this alternative calculation of time real. What was the starting point of the work?

F: The work *Measure 8 Days a Week* is only one neon script from a series of neons and has been part of my 8-day week. It is an attempt to shift existing parameters without material means, i.e., actually with nothing, a means to create something new. Specifically, I divided the week into shorter days with 21 hours. This is both a sculptural and performative approach. I divided the day, rearranged and then lived within it. This resulted in new works in which I have transferred the latently existing otherness.

Had you previously felt the need to go against conventional social rules and our conventional division of time?

F: My need first arose from dealing with time. I didn't consciously seek to question such things. As an artist, one exists always a bit outside of conventional rules. Early in my studies the studio became a place of participation, of being

in nature and also of being apart and outside of everything. Important factors to me were temporal parameters, some of which can be comprehended astronomically like a day or a year. A week however, has been determined arbitrarily, this was different in the past and may be different in the future. Such determinations are children of their time. Since the invention/contrivance of artificial light, we are no longer restricted to working during the day and sleeping at night. Many conventional norms and classifications are arbitrary constructs.

Julia, you and Fiete speak as WE, develop ideas together, exchange ideas. How is your cooperation really? You, Julia, are clearly more than "just" the wife. How would you describe your cooperation?

J: It's very complex. I support Fiete in the progress of his artistic development, in the development of his ideas and his work, and I also become a part of it. We work together at eye level. But it's deliberately not Julia Stolte on the work, but Fiete Stolte, we never wanted to change anything about that. The works have a lot to do with him as a person. Meanwhile I am also developing my own ideas for Fiete. He also develops ideas and we introduce them to each other. It's thinking into his work. Meanwhile I am able to think ideas in such a way that it seems to him as if they were his own. There's a congruence in thinking which has emerged during our five years of working together.



Your studio is located in a large park, at a cemetery, and looks almost like an island in the middle of Berlin. What role does your studio play for you and your work?

J: I like to use the term "Twilight Zone" to describe the place. We are in the middle of the city and are yet somehow outsourced, somehow in-between. There's a prison nearby, an airport, we're close to the lake, surrounded by trees,

there used to be a cemetery right here, everything is in the middle of nature. You can stare at the sky or at the lake. Many works are created in exactly this way – sometimes through reflections of the sky in a teacup or in the eyes. We are not free of art openings, we both studied at the art academy. But I must always be able to free myself from all this information and find my own way. And here the place functions like a filter and brings one back to a certain originality of observation.

F: One recognizes where the works were created. They carry this place within them. They also carry the idea of simultaneity within them.

»As an artist, one exists always a bit outside of conventional rules.«

Presence and absence are a big topic in your work. At the 57th Venice Biennale you showed the work *Printing my Steps* in the Arsenal: a footprint.

F: It is a footprint, chased and chiseled in copper worked into the sheet of metal. The work plays strongly with absence and with negative forms, very simple. There are two imprints in the ground as if someone had walked in the sand. It looks very ephemeral and, at the same time it is of high quality and possessing durability, a quality owed to the material. For me, copper stands for touch and has great conductivity. In addition, copper is also used in etching. The work is therefore comparable to a three-dimensional printing plate and as with such plates the footprints are intended for the purpose of duplication. They represent walking, one placed in front/ahead of the other, thereby symbolizing progress – in both temporal directions, forward and backwards.

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

Fiete Stolte
is represented by
albertz benda, New York City

UPCOMING SHOWS
RealitätsCheck
Kunstraum Potsdam c/o Waschhaus
30 AUG – 6 OCT, 2019

So wie wir sind 1.0
Stiftung Neues Museum
Weserburg, Bremen
UNTIL 5 JAN, 2020

Interview: Dr. Sylvia Metz, Julia Rosenbaum

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A-K-R-I-S-



Renate Bertlmann
Discordo Ergo Sum
Curated by Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein

58th International Art Exhibition
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
Austrian Pavilion 2019

This year the recognized artist Renate Bertlmann, a pioneer and role model of early feminist performance art, will take over the Austrian pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019 in Venice.

The works of the artists will be shown at the pavilion curated by Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein, curator, art historian and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, who amongst others is active in the research of feminist theory and art practice.

By selecting Renate Bertlmann, curator Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein opted for an artist whose work does not only hold a significant position in the female performance history in Austria but who also is highly esteemed in the international feminist avant-garde.

The Vienna-born artist received the Grand Austrian State Prize in 2017. By presenting Renate Bertlmann, the Austrian pavilion will be dedicated to a female solo exhibition for the first time in its decades-long history.

Toward an Aesthetic of Risk
Excerpt of the introduction
by Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein

Renate Bertlmann's complex oeuvre bespeaks an artistic commitment that is both aesthetically and conceptually intricately connected to an aesthetics of risk. Always keeping a keen eye on the transformative potential of difference as a counterweight to power, the artist oscillates performative, sculptural, graphic, photographic, filmic, and textual aspects between the past and the present, between dispossession and covetousness, between the everyday and the unusual, between art and life.

Renate Bertlmann not only distinguishes herself through her extraordinary formal and conceptual precision: **The agitative programmatic character of her work, under the artistic motto "Amo Ergo Sum," and her obsessive exploration of body images directly address the sociopolitics of popular culture.** Already at the beginning of her artistic career, Renate Bertlmann knew to question institutional conditions and concepts of art both critically and enthusiastically by using the individuality of materials as a jumping-off point for her analytical feminist reflections and laying bare the mechanisms of the art system. All the more formidable, then, that she manages to sensuously, impressively negotiate these questions in a synthetic enactment using performative and traditional forms of expressions.

For her exhibition at the Austrian pavilion, Renate Bertlmann developed an installation entitled *Discordo Ergo Sum* ("I dissent, therefore I am"). **By rephrasing the philosophical principle cogito ergo sum ("I think, therefore I am"), the artist attempted to dismantle logocentrism's supremacy of logocentrism and to describe herself in her insurgent self-image.** On the basis of her subversive artistic axiom *Amo Ergo Sum* ("I love, therefore I am") the striking work in front of the pavilion, and the installation of knife-roses

covering the pavilion's entire courtyard, display a synesthetic artistic commentary that allows us to sensuously experience the dichotomy of our existence. This subversive treatment puts the principle of her artistic approach in a nutshell.

Causing upheaval at the highest level, Bertlmann appropriates the arsenal of social symbols, breaks it open and reassesses them feministically. In this process, contradictions stand side by side in accord, are made to oscillate, and are perceived as an expression of human diversity and plurality. From the nimble foundation of the artist's two central figures, the lover and the insurgent, emerges a transitional space where incongruities convene, separate things change sides, and hierarchies and dichotomies are set in motion. Created in an interplay of conceptual, aesthetic, and material intensities, this space offers a basic tension that, on the one hand, critically presents itself as personal and sociopolitical phenomena of global developments and, on the other, points to the transformative potential of art in aesthetical and sociopolitical contexts.

The present book is more than an exhibition catalogue; it is an extension of the exhibitions in book form, as the texts by Hélène Cixous, Catherine Wood, Beatriz Colomina, and Lina Streeruwitz offer in-depth discussions, analyses, and discursivizations of Renate Bertlmann's works. **Readers are invited to continue their excursion through Renate Bertlmann's thought and practice in the so-called sourcebook, which gives insight into the artist's virtually inexhaustible archive.** Notes, sketches, and other finds from countless diaries and sketchbooks, analytical material such as charts, association cards, sketches of unproduced projects, wishful booths in fictitious exhibitions, texts by authors that have been instrumental to Renate Bertlmann and her artistic work, her own texts about art, her poems, manifestoes, and musical scores get to the heart and brain of Bertlmann's fifty-year cosmos.



Photos: Sophie Thun



Renate Bertlmann
Austrian Pavilion, Biennale Arte 2019
Installationsansicht *Discordo Ergo Sum*

Renate Bertlmann *Discordo Ergo Sum*
Biennale Arte / Austrian Pavilion 2019

Editor: Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein
Preface: Gernot Blümel
Texts: Renate Bertlmann, Hélène Cixous, Beatriz Colomina, Peter Gorsen, Lina Streeruwitz, Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein, Maria Vogel, Catherine Wood
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Photo: © Inna Gavrich

Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein,
curator of the Austrian Pavilion in 2019

Felicitas, which personal motivation or let you take on the role as the commissioner to this year's contribution of Austria to the Venice Biennale?
Curating the Austrian contribution to the Venice Biennale is a unique challenge and honor that I accepted with pleasure. Renate Bertlmann is the first artist in the history of Austrian Biennale contributions to present a solo exhibition in the pavilion. For years, many curators and artists in Austria have pointed out the anachronism that, since the establishment of the Austrian pavilion, no invitation to a female artist for a solo presentation has been given and have emphatically promoted a shift in thinking. Therefore I am now glad that it has come so far and that I can now create this setting. But I am also aware of the associated responsibility and hope that with our contribution we will create a basis that will stimulate a rethinking of the pavilion.

How did the choice fall on Renate Bertlmann?
To start with I am an enormous fan of Renate Bertlmann's artistic work. We have entertained a very productive collaboration for many years. As a curator, I am interested in a new perspective, a perspective that remains in motion, also in the sense of an art that moves across media. Renate Bertlmann's work is exemplary in this respect - with its range and its performative approach, which permanently aims at transformation, at reclassification, emptying and filling of social symbols, signs, language and attributions with new contents. In this sense, these works articulate human-existential questions as well as the refusal to allow attributions. It is not only about the male and female gender, but about something existential that includes spirit, soul and body as well as our environment and our planet with all its conditions. This range of topics - from climate protection to existential issues - was anchored in her work at a very early stage already. From today's point of view, however, what gives Bertlmann a special status is perhaps the fact that from the very beginning she has been researching a pleasurable undecided terrain with her body

analyses and prosthetic body extensions, which exhausts sexual subjectivity. As early as the 1970s, she thus opened up perspectives of a queer and posthumanist space for action. This makes her a role model for a young generation of artists. The best prerequisite for building bridges.

The artist has produced a new piece of work specific to the pavilion. What can you tell us about her work which will be shown in the pavilion and how it interacts with the site?
For the exhibition in the Austrian Pavilion, Renate Bertlmann has developed a new two-part installation with *Discordo Ergo Sum* ("I contradict, therefore I am"). With this rewording of the philosophical principle "Cogito Ergo Sum" ("I think, therefore I am"), the artist tries to cancel out the predominance of logocentrism and describe herself in her resistant self-image. On the basis of the artist's subversive programmatic approach, *Amo Ergo Sum* ("I love, therefore I am"), the impressive written work in front of the pavilion, with which Bertlmann signs the pavilion in her own ironic gesture, and the installation of the *Knife Roses*, which occupies the entire inner courtyard of the pavilion, displays a synaesthetic artistic commentary that makes the existential ambivalence of human experience a sensual experience in form and content. In this context, a basic tension becomes vividly perceptible, which on the one hand shows itself as an individual and socio-political phenomenon of global developments in crisis and on the other shows the transformational potential of art in perceptual aesthetic and socio-political contexts. The installation does not touch the architecture itself. Above, behind and below is the pavilion as an outer shell like a ruin. All the more so, its dubious history and that of the Giardini are manifested in a new light.

Not only did you set a mark with appointing a feminist artist to make use of the Pavilion. You also chose an unconventional path by expanding the discourse beyond the timing aspect and physical space of the Austrian Pavilion.
With the Biennale Lectures we created a lecture series in the run-up to the Biennale which took place in Vienna and which we curated together with Andreas Spiegl. They were an attempt to push the boundaries of the temporary format of the Biennale exhibition. The Biennale generates a large public and thus makes it possible to open up and test spaces for discourse. In cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and artistic interventions by Jakob Lena Knebl, we have launched the Lectures as a format in which topics anchored in the pavilion were discussed. From this perspective, it was as obvious as it was necessary to complement the political significance of the Austrian Biennale's contribution and critically reflect and illuminate the socio-political context of the exhibition in Venice and its underlying conditions. The results of this increasingly condensing process of exchange and cooperation in artistic, curatorial and cultural-political respects are available online. The Venice installation by Renate Bertlmann will also be on view at the Upper Belvedere in Vienna at the beginning of 2021.
biennalearte.at

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Secundino Hernandez, Madrid

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In the Studio Nasan Tur, Berlin



Photos: © Franziska Rieder

In his artistic practice, Nasan Tur addresses the tension between self-responsible action and inactivity. He examines existing power structures and questions them. The boundaries of communication, as well as the tentative, or fragile nature of perception, are both driving forces behind his practice, and many of the situations that he creates.

Nasan, many of your works are performances on the street or performances to which you invite others. What interests you about the public space?

My early works are performances in the public space that do not require an audience. I did them without people recognizing it was a performance. For example, I did somersaults in different cities around the world, or lay down in a puddle. I've always been interested in the activism in people. I grew up very apolitical and behaved like it. This certainly has something to do with my socialization as the child of an immigrant worker; my parents always had the feeling that they were merely guests, so they preferred to keep their heads down in order not to attract attention. That changed for me only as an adult through art. During my studies at HfG in Offenbach there was an important project for me with the title *Larve* (larva). Offenbach has Germany's largest proportion of immigrants, with dozens of mosques existing inconspicuously in garages and backyards, while in the city center, the church stood in almost a state of approaching abandonment. I asked myself: "What is a religious community about?" That led to a singing performance, based on the muezzin's call to prayer, which I



Interview: Dr. Sylvia Metz



chanted from the church tower across the city several times a day. The whole action got a bit out of control.

What happened?

My chanting attracted people to the place, people with whom until that time I had no experience: Satanists, fundamentalist Christians, street-provocateurs! There were verbal and physical attacks, police operations and political pressure from the mayor to stop the action, but there were also many positive, loving, and interested reactions. I was completely overwhelmed, but the whole thing affected me. After the project I decided to become an artist. It was a very clear decision, without a Plan B. In retrospect this decision was very important, it gave me focus and left no room for compromise.

»I've always
been interested in the
activism in people.«

In your work *City says ...*, since 2008, you collect words found in cities, spray over the images creating a new image. Why are you interested in collecting these words and writing them on top of each other?

It is an action and, at the same time, a reaction to the actions of others that have preceded it. The population of a city uses the façades of a city, i.e. its face, as a platform for their ideas and thoughts. Everything that moves a society can be found on these façades. I therefore see my work as a kind of readymade, because I don't change the content of the lettering. A person consciously decides to perform an illegal act in the public space, probably at night, secretly, looking to the right and to the left to make sure nobody is approaching, they begin to spray-paint a façade – which is a very explicit act. In my performance it is also an emotional act, because I take on this role and bring exactly this one example of graffiti back to the wall. In a performative act I have sprayed all the façades I've collected in the three to four weeks as I walked through a city onto one and the same wall. For me these works, which had been cre-

ated in such diverse cities as Ljubljana, Vienna, Istanbul, Belgrade, and Thessaloniki, are a sort of city portrait, but they are also explicitly related to the *zeitgeist* of the moment I made them.

Do you consider yourself a "political artist"?
Of course, I'm political. I am a political person, not just a political artist. I think politically, my commitment is political. Perhaps not in political parties, but in relation to being a critical voice within the political confusion in which we find ourselves, and also to taking a stand through my artistic work. That doesn't mean that as an artist you have to say which party or agenda is right or wrong. It always depends on how you position yourself as a *human being*. I am always interested in an anthropological and sociological approach. "How do we live? How do we reflect?" This happens from a point of view that is clearly critical. And this critique means nothing other than being political. We live in Germany, there is no war here. We live here like maggots in bacon, even if you have little money, you live relatively well and don't have to fear for your life, here unlike in many other parts of the world, I don't immediately get locked up if I do a critical artwork; here I act from a very privileged position, and I am aware of that.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_NasanTur

Nasan Tur

is represented by
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Photos: © Paavo Lehtonen

Visiting Marjatta Tapiola, one of the main protagonists of Finnish Neo-Expressionism takes you back in time. From her studio in a 400-year-old threshing house, far removed from the outside world, Marjatta creates her monumental paintings that recount life's cruelty and carnal indulgences and, more recently, increasingly take their inspiration from biblical themes.

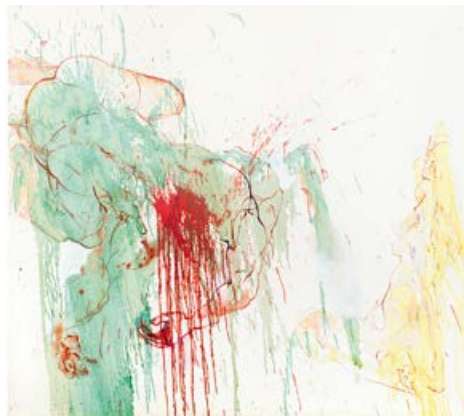
»I'm fucking young! I just started to get a grip on what I'm doing.«

Marjatta, you are well known for your mythological creatures. Why did you include them into your repertoire?

Some artworks arise for insane reasons or from specific situations like the one I had around 2005, when a colleague told me that I wasn't able to paint from anything else but a model, which really bothered me. Somehow I was inspired by the Minotaur and Centaur from Greek mythology and felt tremendous joy painting them, because they made me realize that I was indeed able to paint whatever I wanted.

What conditions are you creating for yourself when you are painting?

Often I waste time until I get into working,



Judith ja Holofernes II, 2019
Photo: © Jussi Tainen

because it takes time to focus and to get rid of all the distractions. And it helps when my financial situation is stable and I don't find myself in troubles unexpectedly. In order to focus I have to deny myself everything nice, no parties! It is extremely painful. Six months before an exhibition I live in absolute solitude.

You not only work in quite an ancient setting, a threshing house dating from the 17th century, you also paint with tempera, an ancient mixture of paint that dates back to antiquity.

I'm a conservative painter. No one can bring plastic or acrylics into this studio. I trust the old masters, and mix my paint the same way as Caravaggio and Rembrandt mixed theirs. I mix oil, egg, resin and water to bind the pigments. I would recommend the tempera painting technique to younger artists to save them the frustration of the technical limitations of synthetic colors which cannot produce the same shimmer, a specific impression, certain hues and depth of color as can be achieved with the old technique.

There's a fair amount of blood splatter, death and brutality in your more recent art. How did you end up using biblical themes?

During the past two summers I traveled to Italy. Thanks to my new love I was introduced to the art in Florence, Rome, Venice, and Naples. I was deeply touched by the great masters who knew what they were doing! Looking at Caravaggio's *Conversion on the Way to Damascus* in Rome impacted me so deeply that I painted my own version of it. This painting marks a new beginning for me. I'm very drawn to religious motifs. I can't tell what I have on my mind for the future, but the great old masters have definitely inspired me.

Do you follow your intuition when you work?
I follow the flow. When I am onto a good work I instinctively pick up the right brush, choose the right color, the right everything. I have learned that when I have made a mistake I can get myself back on track. But when I am making yet another mistake, then it's time to take a break. I really need to have the best stamina, both physically and mentally.



Is there something other than art that can excite you?

There are only two things I actually get excited about: work and life. Right now, I am extremely eager to make new paintings. Lately I was glad reading in the newspaper that Sigrid Schauman [a 20th century Finnish-Swedish artist] had her first exhibition at age 86. I'm fucking young! I just started to get a grip on what I'm doing. And I have this funny feeling that at age 67 I can finally give myself the permission to paint anything.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_MarjattaTapiola

Marjatta Tapiola
is represented by
Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki/Stockholm

Interview: Rasmus Kyllönen

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**VIENNA
DESIGN
WEEK**



Photos: © Luna Lund Jensen

With roots in the quiet, peripheral landscape of Denmark and parents working as psychologists, Danish artist Asger Dybvad Larsen has found himself absorbed in a space of reflection from an early age. A space of looking inward and reflecting on the process of coming into being, which has also become a defining element in his art.

Asger, you grew up in a small town on the west coast of Denmark. How do you think your upbringing has influenced your choice to become an artist?

I believe that there has always been some sort of creativity present in my life. Both of my parents are psychologists but they also have a creative side. I guess art has always been an important part of our family. My mother once decided on a rule; we had to visit at least one museum and one church every day, when we were on vacation. This meant that my siblings and I were introduced to art from an early age, and I have clear memories from museum visits throughout my childhood.

Can you recall how the desire to create art for yourself matured on you?

One of the earliest memories I have, of me being creative, is of my brother and I, when we would draw together. I remember us watching *Terminator*, and we used that movie as inspiration for our drawings. It was my brother's idea and I looked up to him, so whatever he wanted to do, was always undoubtedly cool. In addition, I grew up in Fjaltring – a city where there is not a lot going on – so I found entertainment and relaxation in drawing, when I got home from school. I have always enjoyed being alone,



Interview: Anne-Liil Brok



and art provided me with a place where my thoughts could play freely.

Can you talk about the interplay between your artistic practice and the roots of art history?

There are several ways to look at this – first, with my work as a starting point, and then a movement back in art history, or with my interest for art history as a starting point, with a movement forward to my work. There is an interplay where past and present are woven into each other, literally and metaphorically. To me, art is about combining things that I find exciting, with a respect for what predates my practice, and which has helped me develop the way that I am currently working. Inspiration, to me, moves on several levels – on one level, you have the artists that I actively reference, such as Frank Stella, Agnes Martin and Ad Reinhardt; on another level, you have the artists who I have a visual familiarity with, such as Piero Manzoni, Conrad Marca-Relli, Alberto Burri, Eva Hesse, Steven Parrino, Samuel Levi Jones and Sterling Ruby, and on a third level you have the artists whose practice and work methods I have the deepest respect for, such as Alexander Tovborg, Magnus Andersen, Ida Ekblad, and Mads Westrup, who, in contrast to me, have a far more traditional approach to painting, which fascinates me and inspires me on a different level.

Often, your works refer back to the medium itself or the process of creating the work. Can you elaborate on the level of self-referentiality in your works?

I often compare people and paintings. I appreciate people who are self-reflective – people who can look into themselves and dare question their own existence and in some way, I create art that reflects on its own process, on its place in art history, or its relation to a previous set of works. As mentioned earlier, I grew up with parents who are psychologists, and it has always been easy for me to talk about life on an existential level, which manifested itself in my practice in some way. To me, a great painting is made up of X amount of different factors that the artists have to take a stand on, both in

terms of the process, where the artwork fit in terms of art history, and more formalistic concerns such as composition, scale, colour etcetera. Whether a work succeeds or not comes down to these choices, and in my own artistic practice, the artwork's relation to its own process is crucial.

»It is the new ideas that drive me, and to see them unfold.«

What is driving you and what makes you come to the studio again and again?

I work in the studio almost every day. I am privileged that I am offered many opportunities to take my art in so many new directions. I agree to many events and offers and I have to create a lot of art accordingly, but above all, it is the new ideas in my head that drive me – to unfold them and see how they look in real life. It might be compared to a 'fix' – I get super happy, when I create an artwork that I can be proud of and that I feel succeeds.

● read the full story on bit.ly/_AsgerDybvadLarsen

This story has been published as part of a collaboration between Collectors Agenda and Artland, a free app which allows its users to connect with collectors and galleries worldwide.
artlandapp.com

Asger Dybvad Larsen
is represented by
Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin/Rome
Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp
Gether Contemporary, Copenhagen



Dejan Dukic

**Reset, 2018**

Oil paint pressed through canvas
ca. 12.5 x 10 cm (4.9 x 3.9 inches)
Series of 16 unique works
550 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

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

Stefanie Moshhammer

**Fred's Sword, 2015**

From the series *Young Gods*
Archival Pigment Print
in white-painted lime wood box frame
29 x 23 cm (11.4 x 9 inches)
Edition of 5 + 2 AP
1.700 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

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

Angelika Loderer

**Snowball (Edition), 2018**

Cast patinated brass
with hoop for wall-mounting
ca. 7 cm (2.75 inches) in diameter
10 unique pieces + 3 AP
1.000 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

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

Jacob Dahlgren

**No Stars, But Stripes, 2018**

Jacob Dahlgren *1970 is among Sweden's most important contemporary artists. Attracted by minimalist tradition, he finds abstraction in everyday objects and often overlooked details of contemporary life, which he employs to create dynamic interactive installations and performances that refer to the artistic styles of the 20th century such as Constructivism, Minimal Art, Pop Art, and the Op Art movement. Besides being represented in numerous institutional and museum shows internationally, Dahlgren made use of the Nordic Pavillon at the 52nd Venice Biennale di Venezia.

Dahlgren's edition *No Stars, But Stripes* takes its roots in a digital performance that took place during April 2018 as part of a performative continuum of his Instagram feed, which has been featuring the artist for years, wearing a differently striped T-Shirt each day. His meticulously

archived collection of T-Shirts has grown to above 2.000 in the meantime.

For *No Stars, But Stripes* Dahlgren wore 14 T-shirts, that were selected by Collectors Agenda from his ample archive. As if by chance all these shirts used Blue, Red and White in their stripe pattern, the colors also used in the American flag. Each T-Shirt can



thus be considered a minimalist proposal of a new design for the American flag. Following in the footsteps of Dahlgren's search for minimalist form and his almost obsessive focus on stripes, of course none of these alternative design proposals included any stars – an ironic comment on the United States of America whose current political leadership is giving the country a new identity and is dividing American society. The 14 individual wall plates which represent the edition *No Stars, But Stripes* derive their minimalist patterns from the T-shirts that Dahlgren wore as part of his 14-day performance on Instagram. Each piece comes with a certificate that documents the specific performance day.

Fine Art Print mounted on Dibond
38 x 27 cm (14.6 x 10.6 inches)
Series of 14 unique pieces, with documentation of Instagram performance day
800 Euro, per piece (incl. 13% VAT)

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

14 Tobias Zielony

**Fire Boy, 2018**

Derived from an excursion to Riga for the series *Golden*
Archival Pigment Print in light grey-painted lime wood box frame
24 x 36 cm (9.4 x 14.2 inches)
Edition of 10 + 2 AP
990 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

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

Madeleine Boschan

**What lays bare in me, 2017**

Laquered aluminum with pedestal
41 x 21 x 9 cm (16.1 x 8.3 x 3.5 inches)
Series of 7 unique pieces, with certificate colors: light salmon, light turquoise, light yellow, lilac, rust, strawberry red, teal
950 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

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

Asger Dybvad Larsen

**Untitled (Cut-up 31), 2018**

Paper cut-outs, printed on rough canvas fabric
by manual silk screen process
ca. 39 x 32 cm (15.4 x 12.6 inches)
Edition of 10 unique pieces
700 Euro unframed (incl. VAT 13%)
850 Euro in black lime wood box frame

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

15

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Photos: © Luna Lund Jensen

Claus Busch Risvig didn't grow up with art, and yet, the Danish collector ended up devoting his life to it. Be it on social media or in real life, he shares his contemporary art collection with people from around the world, determined to initiate dialogue around art and show the rest of the world that collecting art is not just for the few.

Claus, you are among the youngest, most recognizable Danish art collectors. Not only

have you grown a big collection in a short time, you have also grown an impressive Instagram profile of 25.000 followers.

I started out as a greenhorn, who persistently tried learning how to navigate the art scene, and a way of doing that for me was creating an Instagram profile exclusively focused on art. I had no strategy or goal of growing a large follower base. To me, it was a question of finding my own voice as a collector, and my Instagram profile became a sort of visual diary, where I could save and share the works that awoke emotions in me. Artworks and artists that I believe the rest of the world should acquaint itself with. The fact that I now have a platform where I can express myself visually adds an extra dimension to my collection.

Your collection revolves mainly around artists from your own generation.

Through our generational relationship, we share many of the same frames of reference and can more easily identify in the themes that they work with in their art. They are our contemporaries. In addition to that, we have an opportunity to meet them, not that that is the most important thing to us, but the personal contact gives the artworks an additional dimension.

Do you pursue a particular genre?

Not really. Moreover, our collection represents a bandwidth of genres. However, we do have primarily abstract and conceptual artworks in our collection, which I'm particularly drawn towards. The experience of seeing an abstract work leaves a lasting impression on me due

to the fact that I can read into it exactly what I want. I feel that I will never be 'done' with it.

»I cannot imagine not being guided by art. It has gotten under my skin!«

Is there a practical and affordable way to lay the foundation to one's own collection?

If you are about to buy your very first artwork, I would consider buying prints, which can be a great way to get started collecting. They are inexpensive compared to unique pieces of art and it is possible to get works from well-known artists that way. Finally, follow your gut feeling. You can get a lot of advice from people who have been in the business for many years, but ultimately, you are the one who is going to live with it. Most importantly, look inside and ask yourself: why does this work speak to me?

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

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Interview: Anne-Lill Brok

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*Andy Warhol (1928–1987), Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli, 1978,
synthetic polymer and silkscreen ink on canvas, 101.5 x 101.5 cm
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