

# The *Collectors* Chronicle

Voices of  
Contemporary Art  
and Culture

**Berlin/Vienna  
Issue**

12



Photo: © Franziska Rieder

## In the Studio Monica Bonvicini, Berlin

With her multi-layered works conceptual artist Monica Bonvicini is one of the most exciting artists of our time. We spoke with her about the dissolution of patriarchal structures in art history, about clichés that she had wanted to eradicate for quite some time, and about the necessity of change in life. ● read more on page 2



Photo: © Lukas Gansterer

»As collectors we're doing everything wrong.«

**Johann König** comes from an influential family at home in the art world, and he grew up surrounded by artworks by Andy Warhol, On Kawara, and Gerhard Richter. Together with his wife, Lena, he manages one of the most important contemporary art galleries in the world, KÖNIG GALERIE in Berlin.

● read more on page 3



Photo: © Florian Langhammer

»I wanted to leave that last presence.«

**Toni R. Toivonen** reflects on the duality of life. Moving between abstraction and realism, his golden-hued works on brass depict decaying animals lying recumbent. As the dead animal's body decomposes it leaves its presence on a sheet of brass, an aesthetic image that is both peaceful and dignified.

● read more on page 4

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**PARALLEL  
VIENNA**

## Online Stories



**Norbert Bisky**  
Berlin

Photo: © Florian Langhammer



**Regine Schumann**  
Cologne

Photo: © Damian Rosellen

more stories  
in our Online Journal on  
[collectorsagenda.com](http://collectorsagenda.com)





Photos: © Franziska Rieder



**Monica, how did it all start? When did you know that you had to make art?**

After high school I was not sure what to study: sociology, political science, or art. I took a year off and went to Hanover to learn German; I really wanted to read Nietzsche in the original. I looked and applied to a few art colleges including Berlin. I could have had a place in Venice, where I would have studied with Emilio Vedova; I wanted to become a painter at that time. I was interested in the dichotomy between economy and socio-political issues, and thought I could work on these issues through art. At the time, I found Berlin so exciting, because it was so ugly, so bleak. I thought, in this city one would be able to concentrate well on the essential.

»Art has always been a social mirror. I expect that from art.«

**Even in your first works such as *Wallfuckin'* (1995) you had broken with the idea of conventional space. What fascinates you so with in architecture – and its artistic changes?**

It is difficult to imagine something that is not a space. We live in an apartment and we work in an office, or at the cash register in the supermarket, or in a law firm – no matter where – one is always surrounded by spaces. When one exhibits in an art gallery, in an art association, or a museum, one has to deal with spaces. Even if one works with the public space, there are boundaries. Urbanism is also a form of built space. One can't think of the "self" without thinking of spaces, in which the "self" develops and takes place.

**Could you talk a little about your current exhibition *I Cannot Hide My Anger* at Belvedere 21 in Vienna?**

My works, especially the installations, like those shown at the Belvedere, enable an understanding that is first accessed through physical perception. The museum itself, the architecture, the institution's history can help to understand

works. I work with that and try to be as clear as I can so that what I mean becomes clear.

**Some people feel provoked or scared by your work, for example by the encounter with the swinging big whip in *Breathing* (2017), which could be seen at the Art Basel this year. Others remain standing meditatively in front of it. Can you understand such reactions to your art?**

I don't want to scare with my art. On the contrary, I want to do the opposite. I want my art to inspire ideas of which one would otherwise not have thought. One should wake up a bit through what one sees. I am often very surprised by people's reactions. I also enjoy watching these reactions. There are also people who have no inhibitions at all with *Breathing*, for example, and get much too close.

**Because of your range of different styles and your strong interest in various materials, objects, and substances art historians often compare you to famous male artists like Bruce Naumann. Does that annoy you?**

It could be worse than to be compared to Bruce Naumann (*laughs*). I think art history is still strongly dominated by male figures. Right now, the subject gets a lot of attention although people know they generally shouldn't do that any longer, preferably not for the next twenty or one hundred years. I can't say that it annoys me because I know it's just the way it is. There are indeed artistic references between Bruce Naumann and me, but it is not nice to be constantly confronted with these father or male figures. At some point you have to kill the fathers, and I have already been doing that for a long time. The work takes this space that becomes free as a result.

**Is attacking patriarchal structures a common theme that is running through your work?**

Yes, I believe so. I am still interested in that. Although many things have already changed, much has remained the same. If I were a man, my work would probably be understood differently, even today a different kind of work is still expected from women artists. I enjoy attacking a certain kind of art history and messing it up a bit.

**What roles do change and renewal play in your artistic career compared to recognition and focusing on specific themes? Is there now a kind of "brand Monica Bonvicini"?**

If there is a "brand", then others ascribed it to me. It is incredibly difficult to choose from all of the possibilities; it is a great responsibility to me and to others, and at the same time a great freedom. I want to exercise this freedom by not only making videos or installations with light and so on. In the past 25 years I have surely developed a certain aesthetic, which I think is clearly recognizable. For me, if a theme has been dealt with, then it is finished and I no longer have the need to reexamine it. And that's what I often think when it's exactly what it has to be – why make variations? Don't all artists want to do that, to make everything new?

**Do you see art as a mirror of society?**

I think art is always a mirror of society. I expect that from art. What else is it supposed to be? If it's not art then it is décor. And when it is décor it is also an aesthetic, which is a product, an expression of society. I can't see it any other way.

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

Interview: Dr. Sylvia Metz

### Monica Bonvicini

is represented by  
Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich  
KÖNIG Galerie, Berlin  
Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan  
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

#### CURRENT SHOW

*I CANNOT HIDE MY ANGER*  
Belvedere 21, Vienna

UNTIL 27 OCT 2019

Christine König Galerie  
Schleifmühlgasse 1A  
1040 Vienna

**ALONA  
RODEH**

Galerie Jochen Hempel  
Spinnereistrasse 7  
04179 Leipzig

art  
berlin

Fair for Modern  
and Contemporary  
Art

12–15  
September  
2019



Photo: © Franziska Rieder

**Johann, you have just turned 38 and have already published your first autobiography, entitled *Blind Gallerist*. Why was it so important to you to share your story?**

**JK:** The idea was first suggested to me ten years ago, when I had spoken about my accident, that it might be interesting to clarify its occurrence and what it has inadvertently caused to be brought about. At first, I didn't think that people would find it interesting, but as time grew from the founding and ensuing success of my gallery, my doubts dispersed and I realized that it may have a motivational effect on people to put trust in daring things that they may otherwise be reluctant to undertake.

»Johann was the one who went out and made discoveries, and I often noticed that I could share his interest.«

**Do you collect primarily from a gut feeling, or do you consider resale value and possible price increase when you buy?**

**JK:** We buy independently of the market. We own a still life by Nicolas Party that we bought together. I once posted it on Instagram, and immediately received hundreds of requests to buy it. I didn't even notice that it had suddenly become so expensive because of the demand that had developed.

Interview: Dr. Sylvia Metz



St. Agnes, Photo: Courtesy of KÖNIG GALERIE, Photo: © Anna Ker Ignant

**Does art have a similar meaning to each of you?**

**JK:** There is a strong exchange between us and numerous connecting interests in art.  
**LK:** I no longer can imagine us without art. We met through it, in the art context. I was personally very interested in art. But, at the time, I had a very different profession. Johann was the one who went out and made discoveries, and I often noticed that I could share that.

**Do you actually separate the private collection and the acquisitions for the gallery?**

**JK:** Intuitively, I realize I always separate when I ask what Lena thinks of it or when Lena asks me what I think of it. The other day, I bought an Albert Oehlen, I did it just like that, but it is also merchandise.

**Do you always coordinate as a couple when you buy works for your collection? Or do you bring each other surprises from a fair?**

**LK:** It is both. In Oehlen's case, we received an invoice at some point, and I was a little surprised, because we had looked at the auction catalog together, but hadn't talked about this work. I think, Johann, you buy a lot of things without me knowing, don't you (*laughs*)?

**JK:** That's true ... But, I think it's more like one of us likes it and shows it to the other and asks directly how he or she likes it. Now, that we talk about it, I don't really know if I would call myself a collector at all. We have small thematic groups that harmonize with each other, but the purchase may lie more in the past. I believe we are better advisors than collectors. I advise my clients how to make decisions, but I do not apply this level of planned approach to our own collection.

**The artists you represent at KÖNIG GALERIE are for the most part very successful and often not affordable for many, especially younger collectors. How do you see the need to inspire new art lovers and introduce them to collecting?**

**JK:** Well, I've always warned against buying editions and throttled myself in the process. But now I realize that editions are enriching because they allow a collector to afford a piece of an artist's entire work. And that's a good way to begin collecting.

**To fund the rebuilding and restoration of St. Agnes, your gallery space, you had to divest parts of your private collection. Including a picture that meant a lot to you, Johann: On Kawara's date picture (*October 4, 1976*) that he gave you when you were a child. Do you regret selling this work today?**

**JK:** In retrospect, you're often smarter, but the problem is that at some point you simply reach your financing limits and the banks no longer give you money and then you just have to sell. While it was certainly hard to part with the work back then, without On Kawara I would not have this great gallery today. Nevertheless, it is a sacrifice you make. But if you buy art you have to be allowed to resell it. You have to do that responsibly. I also have no problem with collectors who resell works they bought from us. The question is: how they do it, in what time and in what way.

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

*Blinder Gallerist* by Johann König  
has appeared at  
Propyläen Verlag this summer

**viennacontemporary**

**International Art Fair  
26–29 September 2019  
Marx Halle Vienna**



#viennacontemporary

[www.viennacontemporary.at](http://www.viennacontemporary.at)





Photo: Courtesy Toni R. Toivonen

which my own presence was retained. It received a lot of attention in a show in Helsinki. After this I wanted to leave that “last” presence.

**What is your relationship to the animals you are using in your work?**

I have met most of the animals when they were alive. What's very important to know is that I never kill animals for my practice. They either died a natural death or they had to be put down because they were ill or suffering. I also use my own pets when one of them dies naturally, as was the case with the family cat. We have chicken downstairs, they are a rare completely black breed, even their meat, bones, and internal organs are black. They all have names and I am particularly fond of one rooster. When he dies, I will make a work of him as well.

»You need to see death to understand life.«

**Toni, we are out here in the Finnish countryside, in the middle of a forest. What led you to seek this solitude?**

There is one reason which is obvious when you are doing what I am mostly preoccupied with, which is working with rotting animals. It is something I couldn't do within the city limits of Helsinki. But also I want to be secluded and to isolate myself in order to be really close to the artistic process. I can always choose to go to New York or Helsinki, but I actually like being alone.

**The area around the barn in which you have your studio is surrounded by tarped boxes which contain rotting animals. You chose to live just a stone's throw away from it. Doesn't this feel depressing?**

I don't believe in dividing work and life. There is a self-portrait by van Gogh that is titled *The Painter on His Way to Work*. I don't think that an artist can ever be “on his way to work.” An artist is always working. I want to keep my process close to me and I work as much as possible, often sixteen hours a day. It's a lifestyle you choose. I cannot separate work from life.

**When and how did the idea develop to place a dead animal on a plate of brass?**

When I was still studying we had an open studio day and rather annoyingly some visitors touched the works leaving marks from the oils in their skin on the plate and I saw their presence permanently conserved. A bit later I slept on a sheet of brass for a certain period on



Photos: © Florian Langhammer

**How would you describe the artistic concern that is represented in your practice?**

One thing I am concerned with is the realism of the material. For example, this brass work here is not an image of a cow, it is the cow. It is a conservation of the cow's presence by way of its own liquids, salts, grease, and blood. I believe in the reality of materials, even in a painterly context. Another aspect is the duality of life that I believe in. You need to have shadows in order to understand the light. You need to see death to understand life in a way.

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



Interview: Florian Langhammer

**Toni Toivonen**  
is represented by  
Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki/Stockholm

**CURRENT SHOW**

*Madness Invited*  
Collectors Agenda  
Franz-Josefs-Kai 3/17, Vienna

UNTIL 12 October 2019



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Photo: © Liz Seabrook

The London-based art duo Revital Cohen and Tuur Van Baalen are occupied with broad meanings of material and production. Their experimental projects traverse the worlds of design, film, science, sociology and politics, and have been snapped up by MoMa and Hong Kong's M+ Museum.

**Revital, Tuur, do you have a way of describing your work in your own words?**

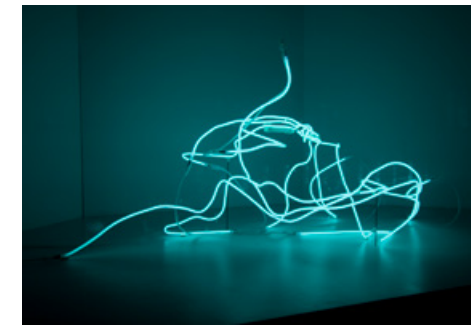
**R:** We make installations, sculpture and film that look into systems of production. We look for the social, political and cultural veins within the existing capitalist system. Our work tries to show the processes that make the work and we always use very different materials to do this.

**T:** The process of making a sculpture or film is almost as important as the resulting film or sculpture.

**An iconic work of yours is *Leopard, Impala* that you created in 2016. Can you explain**

**how your artistic practice concretely manifested itself here?**

**R:** This work started with taking examples of historical taxidermy from the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren (Belgium) to be X-rayed at a local hospital. The steel structures that the radiography revealed inside the tableau vivant of a leopard killing an impala were re-created in rare earth, neon, mammoth ivory, and



*Leopard, Impala* (2016), Courtesy the artists

natural rubber; reconstructing an imaginary interaction between two animal skins in materials including those of contemporary mining practices. By exposing the handmade steel rods, the colonial object questions whether what is perceived to be natural history is as much about culture as it is about science.

**T:** Our practice here can be found in the bringing together of materials from the archives of a historically contested museum, which also holds personal memories, and working with (a team of) medical technicians using radiographic equipment. We chose to translate its sculptural form using materials that have current geopolitical implications and mythologies (rare earth and mammoth ivory) and are themselves full of traces of culture, politics, technology and folklore.

»Our work looks into systems of production.«

**How did you first start working together?**

**T:** We became a couple really quickly after meeting in art school. For about six years we worked separately. We were always really supportive of and involved in each other's work. When you live together and you share your whole life, and your studio, I think gradually the works start growing towards each other. I felt that the moment at which we decided to start working together, didn't feel like such a big step.

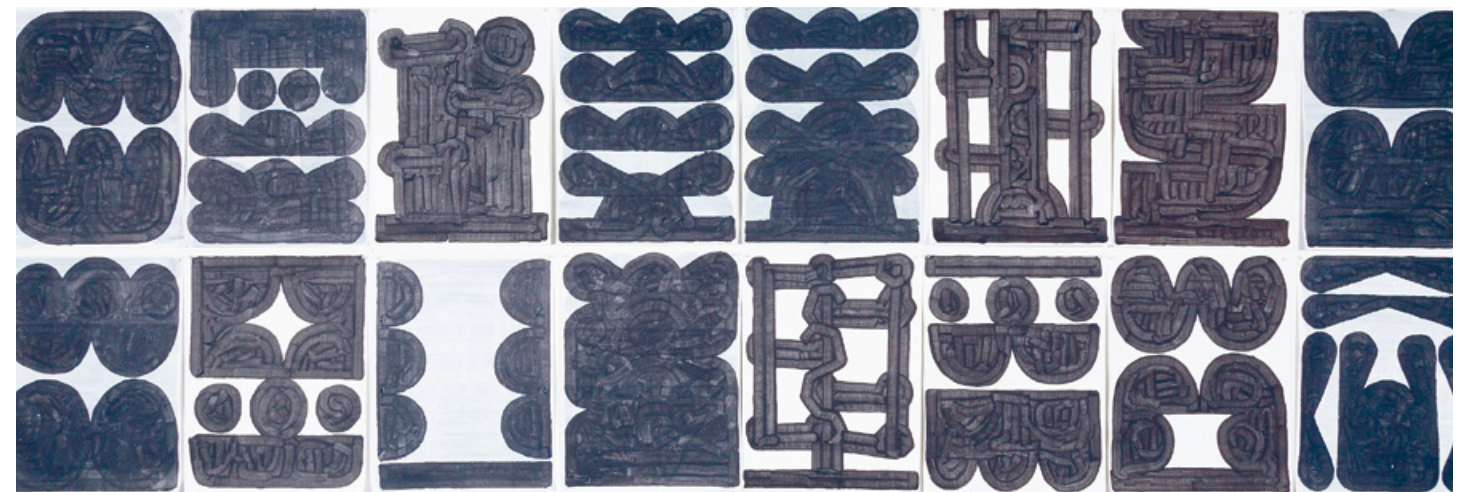
● read the full story on [bit.ly/\\_RevitalCohenTuurVanBaalen](http://bit.ly/_RevitalCohenTuurVanBaalen)

**UPCOMING SHOWS**

*The Drowned World*  
Toronto Biennale of Art

21 SEP – 1 DEC 2019

*Energy*  
MoMa, New York  
FROM 21 OCT (Museum reopening)



Bastian Muhr | Form Cowboy

Opening: 12. September 2019

Ausstellungsdauer: 13.09. – 19.10.2019

**unttd**  
contemporary

Schleifmühlgasse 5, 1040 Vienna, Austria  
[www.unttd-contemporary.com](http://www.unttd-contemporary.com)



Thilo Jenssen



Smooth Operator, 2019

UV-print on aluminium on perforated metal frame construction optional; spatial mounting devices are available on request and at a surcharge  
40x30 cm (15.7 x 11.8 inches)  
Series of 10 unique pieces + 3 AP  
800 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

6 [more on bit.ly/\\_ThiloJenssenEdition](#)

Toni R. Toivonen

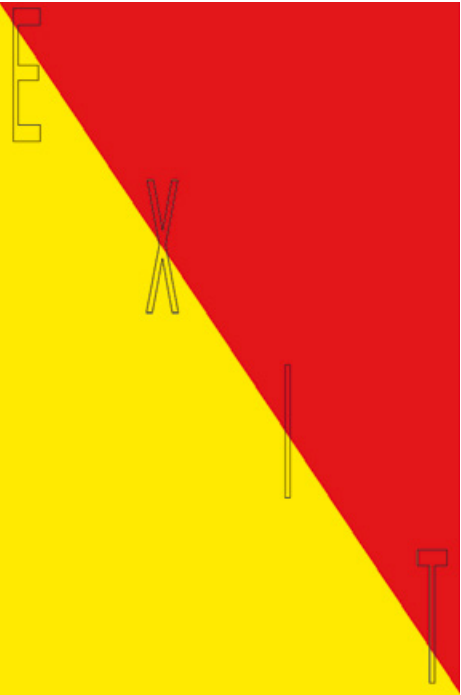


Portrait of a Hare (15), 2019

Brass, original substances of a dead animal (no animals were harmed or killed)  
38.5 x 32 cm (15.2 x 12.6 inches)  
4 unique works  
2.700 Euro (excl. VAT)  
A series consisting of 10 smaller sized works of mice and other small animals are also available  
1.600 Euro (excl. VAT)

[more on bit.ly/\\_ToniRToivonenEdition](#)

Nick Oberthaler



EXIT, 2019

Combination of lithography, embossed typeface and monotype in grey wooden box frame 30x20 cm (11.8 x 7.9 inches)  
Series of 8 unique pieces + 4 AP  
650 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

[more on bit.ly/\\_NickOberthalerEdition](#)

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](#)

Martin Lukáč



Free trial today!, 2019

Risograph on paper in white wooden box frame 42x29.7 cm (16.5x11.7 inches)  
10 different sujets  
Edition of 11 (of each sujet)  
600 Euro (incl. 13% VAT)

[more on bit.ly/\\_MartinLukacEdition](#)

Top 10

Artists from Central and Eastern Europe

1 Marina Abramović \*1946, Serbia

2 Anri Sala \*1974, Albania

3 Alicja Kwade \*1979, Poland

4 Christo † & Jeanne-Claude \*1935, Bulgaria

5 Laszlo Moholy-Nagy \*1895 †1946, Hungary

6 Roman Ondák \*1966, Slovakia

7 Artur Żmijewski \*1966, Poland

8 Nedko Solakov \*1957, Bulgaria

9 Sanja Iveković \*1949, Croatia

10 Victor Vasarely \*1908 †1997, Hungary

Order by ArtFacts Artist Rank based on number of exhibitions and institution reputation

In collaboration with ArtFacts.Net

ARTFACTS.NET

In the Studio Fabian Seiz, Vienna



Viennese artist Fabian Seiz creates art from materials that others may not deem worthy of consideration. In his hands parts of everyday objects, old wood and, more recently, his own early works are turned into skillfully conceived sculptures.

»There is nothing in my work that excludes anyone.«

Fabian, a big theme in your work is what remains when time has passed, in other words: memory. Can you explain why it is such an important source of inspiration for you?  
It is about organizing. Memory is constantly changing because it is something that you create yourself. My memories of ten years ago are certainly different from those I have today. I have created a work with the title *Biography* for which I organized chronologically all the first

names that I could recall, of people I have known, and cross-referenced them with the names of those through whom I knew them. This took me approximately ten years during which my memory had certainly changed again. When I look at the work now, I have to renew my memory of who this person actually was at the time.

What is the fascination of sorting diffuse masses of memories for you?  
Apparently organizing is part of my nature. There is something hierarchical about it, because one certainly omits or stresses things. Something is first and something is last, and something disappears altogether. You can see in my studio that I like to keep order, although there is actually a chaos phase right now! I regularly clear out things and optimize the order – especially because one has a storage problem with sculptures. At the same time, I don't do much with this optimization mania. If things are too perfect, it becomes stuffy.

The storage space represents an important part of your studio, because you also utilize own artworks as the basis for creating new works.  
For some years, deconstructing and rebuilding has been a big theme in my work. I have already produced three-dimensionally my early graphic work using papier-mâché. The next step is to do something similar with my three-dimensional work. I still have to find the right solution for how to implement this well and therefore I go quite often to the storage space. And there are a series of remakes where I have created an improved version of an old work and make the original disappear. I use my sculptures like materials or tools. When I dismantle a piece of sculpture its parts reappear in my material collection. In this way, themes reappear.  
Can you tell us in a few sentences about these themes that you wish to convey?  
Everything that has a form reflects the spirit of a certain time. Everything that surrounds us has content: How is it produced? Why does



it have this particular design? What frame of mind is revealed? All ideas can be seen in the form. I play with that. How that looks concretely varies from sculpture to sculpture.

What motivates you to keep working with used material in your art?  
When I use old pressboard, I am interested in the fact that this is a material and an aesthetic everyone knows from their home. It is actually a very familiar material that has been rebuilt into a sculpture but has a very different appearance. And it's also about availability. In the past, more furniture was discarded on the street. By examining the type of veneer used one could recognize the level of quality of the furniture being thrown away, one can read a lot from it. That's why, when I am faced with the choice between elite and democratic material, I always choose democratic material.

Do you choose this democratic material with the intention to make your art more accessible?  
As far as I know, my sculptures appear accessible. My intention is to show, that it is possible to create art from these materials from which anyone can make something. In my works there is nothing that excludes anyone.

[read the full story on bit.ly/\\_FabianSeiz](#)

Fabian Seiz

is represented by

Unttld Contemporary, Vienna

STREET.LIFE.PHOTOGRAPHY

Street Photography aus sieben Jahrzehnten

11.09.19-16.02.20

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Alona Rodeh is one of Israel’s best-known contemporary artists. She works in various disciplines, including video, sculpture, wall mounted works, light and sound installations, theater design, public art, and art publications.

**Alona, when did you know you wanted to be an artist? When did everything start?**  
It started very early. At the age of 12, I took my first after-school professional art class. At the age of 15, I already had a studio. At that time, my parents and I did not get along very well, and they decided to renovate a little building originally used for beekeeping in the yard behind our house. With one room for sleeping and one room for working, I had a studio from that point on. That was my sanctuary... and since then, as my father loves to tell, we got along much better! I took art in high school, and straight after the Army I went to the art academy. No questions asked...

**Since you live in Berlin you have been working on your famous series *Safe and Sound*, in which you deal particularly intensively with the themes of “security” and “public space”. Is there a connection between the city of Berlin and this work?**  
Looking back, many things before were also related to these subjects, but the series started after moving to Berlin. The project has to do with expressions of personal and public safety in Western Europe and Berlin is the base, but not exclusively so.



**Darkness plays a central role in your recent works and exhibitions. Why do you like working with it so much?**  
I would like to answer with an example. Once I was visiting a friend who was studying electronic music, and preparing for the end of the year critique. When each piece created by a student was performed, the fluorescent lighting in the classroom was dimmed, leaving only a small pink spotlight. I thought that’s funny. But it’s a very simple example of how the less you see the more of your imagination opens up, in this case – to the music. Even to think of dreams as something that happens when you don’t see. That’s where my fascination with darkness comes from. This fascination is also mixed with fear.

**»I am an observer and an entertainer, not an educator.«**

**You worked with the Berlin fire department for almost one year. How did this project come about?**  
My first studio in Berlin was very close to the Wedding fire station. I kept seeing them go in and out, and one day I just went there and knocked on their door. In Israel, this profession is really underrated. Germany is very advanced in terms of rescue technologies and techniques. Much of the production of fire trucks and apparel comes from Germany and Austria, and I grew fascinated by it. So in Wedding, I met a very nice firefighter, who was showing me all around. Later, I heard about ZK/U – Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik’s “Artist Dis-Placement” project, in which they connected artists to organizations which are not situated in the classic context of the art sphere. I came back to Wedding as a home base and later on joined many other stations. Two days a week for full 24-hour shifts. At a certain point, I started doing only nightshifts, since that part was always more interesting for me.

**How did this project change your work?**  
During the fire station residency, a lot of things came together. As a result, I published *FIRE: Safe and Sound* (2017, ZK/U Press), the second of my *Safe and Sound* artist publication series, on the subject of urban fire. I made a film with and about the fire brigade: *To the Moon and Back* (2017); the Friedrichshain fire station invited me to create a sculpture for the entrance of the station that we hope will be installed in 2020. In Israel followed a public artwork on the grounds of the Jaffa fire station, *The Curves of Jaffa* (2017). But besides the outcome, for me, the experience with the firemen was of seeing the city inside out.

**You call your installations “performances without performers”. What exactly does that mean?**  
My work usually has a time span, and a theatrical presence in space, but then there are no people who perform, so one can really focus on space and time, instead of on a performer. Once there is a human presence, everything else becomes a backdrop. So I am interested in the performance, but I leave the human presence to the visitors.

**Are there other prejudices or misunderstandings about your art that persists and that you would like to get rid of?**  
The only situation that pops up in my mind is when I exhibited *Above and Beyond* (2013) at the CCA Tel Aviv. It was a large-scale cardboard mockup of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, dark with only rays of light passing through the cracks. The work was more about pilgrimage, club culture, Judaism and its symbolism, visual culture... People were trying to push me to the political direction, looking for answers when there were none. But that’s ok, it was a slippery slope and I enjoyed the risk. But I am an observer and an entertainer, not an educator. Putting a spotlight on things makes one think of them differently and that’s already a lot, from my point of view.

[read the full story on bit.ly/\\_AlonaRodeh](#)

Interview: Dr. Sylvia Metz

**Alona Rodeh**  
is represented by  
Galerie Christine König, Vienna  
and Galerie Jochen Hempel, Leipzig

She has a solo presentation with a  
joint booth at Art Berlin 2019.

UPCOMING SHOWS

*In the Spotlight of the Night:  
Cities never Sleep*  
(group show)  
KAI10 | Arthema Foundation Düsseldorf

25 OCT 2019 – 9 FEB 2020

*In the Spotlight of the Night:  
Life in the Gloom*  
(group show)  
Marta Herford

26 OCT 2019 – 9 FEB 2020

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An exhibition at the MAK in context of the  
VIENNA BIENNALE FOR CHANGE 2019

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**ERSTE**

A large, pixelated yellow smiley face with a wide, toothy grin and closed eyes, resembling a digital or artificial intelligence character.

Wien | Tuchlauben 8 | [www.akris.com](http://www.akris.com)

**A-K-R-I-S-**





Photos: © Christoph Liebentritt

Tillman Kaiser's language of form is characterized by symmetrical compositions and reduced color. His interest in the rhythmical element in music is felt equally in both his photographs complemented with painting and collage and his utopian sculptures.

## »Professionalism and art are a contradiction.«

**Tillman, most of the time you listen to music when you work in your studio. Does that have an impact on your artistic creation?**

Music doesn't influence my work directly, but its essence most likely enters my work. My picture compositions are often based on repetitive elements, translated into music they would be extremely rhythmical songs. Rhythm cannot only be found in music, but also in the fine arts, literature, and poetry. I am interested in the psychological effects that repetition can trigger.

**So far, what has been the greatest challenge in your artistic career?**

The greatest challenge is always the beginning of a new work, and it never becomes easier.. Every new work challenges me to be aware of not repeating myself. I certainly have my routines, but routines can be dangerous. If someone refers to himself or herself as a professional artist, this triggers an alarm for me; because in my opinion professionalism and art are a contradiction. To me a professional is someone who does something extremely well and approaches it with a precision that requires an adherence to routines. But as an artist, one should not adhere to one thing, but should always be looking for a new approach, at least successively.

**How much explanation does your art need or do you want the viewer to address it intuitively?**

I find it very good when works function without explanation. But I also like to provide an explanation if it helps. I also respect art that does not function without explanation. The fantastic thing in art is that everything is allowed – as long as it is well made. Basically I find it very exciting, when viewers have their own associations and the works function on the basis of reflection.

**Is beauty in art a criterion for you? What distinguishes beauty in your eyes?**

In my opinion reflecting on aesthetics and

beauty is important. I believe that people are in search of beauty. That is really universal. Like in the animal kingdom, in which birds are often beautiful because of their grandiose colors. One can reflect on art as one reflects on philosophy. The aesthetic aspect is very important to me. The German author Herta Müller has said something on this subject, which I consider very true: Beauty is not just a medium of style or an ornament; beauty is substantial.

**Is it your goal to create something that is beautiful?**

Not in the sense of being appealing or nice, I want to create something that has depth. When you hear complex music you sometimes don't really find it beautiful right away, at times you may not even be able to endure it. You have to listen to it repeatedly so that it can unfold. It is like learning a language. It is similar with my work.

**Your works are very color reduced, mainly black and white. Why is that?**

This is because the forms that I use are very strong. If they were at the same time colorful it would be too much in my view. But lately I have been missing color. Who knows what is still to come... Perhaps I'll manage to become a bit more colorful. My hope is that I won't stand still, but continue to develop further and further.

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

Interview: Gabriel Roland



**Tillman Kaiser**  
is represented by  
Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna

CURRENT SHOW

*Im Dom*  
secession, Vienna

UNTIL 10 NOV 2019



Photo: © Kristin Loschert

Julius von Bismarck is internationally known for his often extreme, art interventions. In his works he deals with human perception and the relationship between man and nature.

## »There are so many ways to see the world.«

**Julius, how did you come to creating art?**

I found quite a number of things interesting – and in the beginning I thought if I were to study art, then I ought to abandon all of my other interests. Having studied visual communication, digital media, explored film and experimental work, having some technical proficiency, and having completed my first projects, I realized that an artistic aspect was inherent to them. Then, after the first successes with my projects I noticed that people were

Interview: Dr. Sylvia Metz

paying attention to my work. It occurred to me that as an artist I could do everything I wanted to do without limiting myself, and in doing so realize what I wanted to do and to simply call it art.

**You were once at the nuclear research center CERN at Meyrin in Switzerland. What did you do there?**

I was interested in what happens with our perception when we look at research results. As human beings we think that we perceive the world as it is. But we perceive the world as we have constructed it, on one hand culturally and on the other hand as we have constructed it, inasmuch as it is possible to perceive it at all. That is a very specific way to see the world. There are so many different ways to see the world which are no less correct, and in some instances, more correct.

**You often seem to play with Greek mythology for example in the title of your work *The Mimic of Tethys*, a buoy floating freely in space, which until recently could be seen in the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.**

The title occurred rather by chance, but I really liked it, because I also explore the relationship between man and supposed nature, which is presently strongly personified becoming almost a kind of deity again. Therefore, I introduced this God again, who seems to be so far removed from such an industrial buoy made of steel. Actually, the oceans have long been considered



defeated. These buoys, which help navigation, are a symbol of this. Shipwreck is one thing that nowadays happens almost exclusively to refugees, for political reasons. It is no longer the human being losing against nature, but refugees drown, because they have no other option in their urge to migrate to Europe. On the other hand, the oceans suffer from our pollution, from overfishing, and from rising water levels. There is the suffering sea! It has so many new meanings, this sea. Many people tend to personalize it. The Mediterranean represents the European wall against the refugees.

**In your earlier work *Punishment* you physically whipped the sea referring to it as a deity. How are these two works connected?**

*The Mimic of Tethys* is a reference to *Punishment*. I have whipped the sea as a reenactment of Xerxes, who had the sea whipped after a thunderstorm at Hellespont had destroyed his newly built pontoon bridges. This is another personalization in which the sea was punished. I am very interested in this personalization or deity that is seen in it, because I believe that it is relevant to how we locate ourselves in this system between man and his environment. Nature actually no longer exists, because nature as a term is something that functions only without man. That's why this term no longer makes sense. There is currently a great transfiguration that is still being pushed further instead of clarifying it. After the Enlightenment, we find ourselves again in a phase of transfiguration. That is the background against which many of my works must be seen.

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

**Julius von Bismarck**

is represented by  
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Marlborough Contemporary, New York  
Sies + Höke Galerie, Düsseldorf

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Photo: © Kristina Kulakova

**Johanna, upon your arrival in Vienna, what were your initial impressions of the city's art scene?**

Even before I moved to Vienna the city's contemporary art scene struck me as vibrant and at times ambitious, particularly in terms of discourse. Vienna basically has it all: renowned institutions, a well-respected gallery scene with a striking number of female gallerists, remarkable young galleries, off-spaces which underscore the experimental character of a young scene, the Academy, and a solid number of collectors who I would like to involve and activate more. Bridging past and present perfectly the art scene has a lot of potential for the city itself which in my view has however not yet been fully leveraged.

**What position does viennacontemporary hold in the art fair landscape in your view?**

In its 9th year viennacontemporary (vc) has become the region's leading fair through its focus on quality, cooperation and its special attention

to galleries and artists from CEE, which is definitely one of vc's key characteristics that distinguishes us from other art events. To foster and further boost this position I am continuously researching and traveling through CEE to meet our partners and to further new collaborations. I consider vc as a platform for collecting and exchanging, of contact and experience. In combination with the local art scene and the city itself vc has a unique experience to offer as more and more people are striving for individual experiences and finding their niche and the avoidance of mass products, a feature we need to embrace even more.

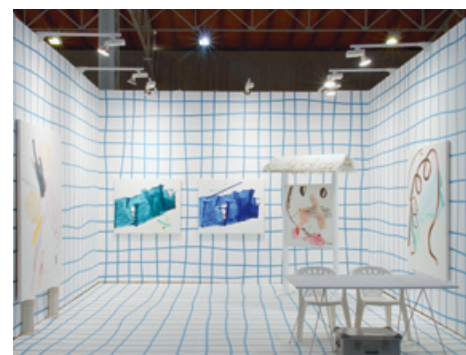
**Where do you see vc going as this "platform for exchange" with you at the helm?**

For our core clientele – midsize and young galleries – we aim to provide a fruitful setting to successfully use the fair as a tool. Therefore, it will be crucial to further sharpen the profile, be a potential partner throughout the year, work even closer together with other events taking place in the city to increase the appeal of September in Vienna for international visitors. To make the fair more accessible and attractive we will strengthen our not-for-profit part of the program with talks, special guided tours, and other events, as well as add art editions into the fair's profile to lower the entry point for potential collectors. We also work towards further enhancing our social media and online presence to keep up with our audience not only during the four days of the fair but also continuously throughout the year.

**vc will again feature ZONE1 and Explorations as supplementary formats to the core fair activity. Can you talk about how they will enrich the experience for visitors to the fair?**

We create a curated experience for collectors to navigate through the fair: What both categories have in common is the precision and density in the presentations which are conceived in close collaboration between gallery, artist (mainly ZONE1) and its curator, Fiona Liewehr, and Harald Krejci, who curates Explorations. ZONE1 is all about discovery, with a focus on artists up to the age of 40 with a connection to Austria, represented by young galleries, while Explorations encompasses works created between 1945–1980 providing a framework for examining ZONE1. If you will we are returning to an idea of contextualizing Vienna as a city that is bridging the gap between the historical and the contemporary.

[viennacontemporary.com](http://viennacontemporary.com)



Charlotte Klobassa at ZONE1 in 2018  
Photo: Courtesy Zeller van Almsick

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Kazuo Shiraga, *GI (Das Spiel)*, 1991, 73 x 60.5 cm,  
€ 240,000 – 280,000, Auction November 2019