

MAGIC+COOL

+++++ MALEREI DER JAHRTAUSENDWENDE +++++ 18.11.2023 – 25.02.2024

Philip Guston + Günther Förg + Albert Oehlen + André Butzer + Daniel Richter + Gert & Uwe Tobias +
Huma Bhabha + Jonathan Meese + Lily van der Stokker + Sylvie Fleury + Tal R + u.a. +++++



MUSEUM PENZBERG
SAMMLUNG CAMPENDONK

MUSEUM PENZBERG – SAMMLUNG CAMPENDONK

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MAGIC+COOL

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FEBRUARY 26th THROUGH MARCH 22nd 2024

curated by Annette Vogel and Kristina Lovaas

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Philip Guston + Günther Förg +++++

Albert Oehlen + André Butzer +++++

Daniel Richter + Hans-Jörg Mayer ++

Gert & Uwe Tobias + Huma Bhabha +

Robert Hawkins + Jonathan Meese +

Lily van der Stokker + Sylvie Fleury +

Tal R + Mike Kelley + Steven Shearer +

Andreas Hofer/Andy Hope 1930 +++++

John Tremblay + Thomas Houseago +

Dash Snow + Josephine Pryde +++++

Aaron Curry + Nick Mauss ++++++

Mehmet und Kazim + Anne Collier ++

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André Butzer, Ohne Titel, 2019 © 2023: André Butzer, Foto: André Butzer Archive

INTRODUCTION

The exhibition *Magic + Cool* presents a selection of artworks from 1969 to 2012, the majority of the work produced in the early 2000s. For this exhibition, the museum has close to a hundred works from more than 25 internationally renowned artists – such as Philip Guston, Jonathan Meese, Albert Oehlen, Daniel Richter, and Sylvie Fleury. *Magic + Cool* will look at the role of humor, popular culture, and how the post-medium condition was relevant to art made in the early 2000s. A period that is defined by the Information Age, the modern internet, and an increasingly globalized world. Within the period and scope of the exhibition, the artwork shows a broadening of artistic language and materials. Referencing the visual language from mass culture in subversive and often humorous ways. The artworks can be seen through an artistic mining of popular culture and modernist alternative traditions – which the artists as a means of both self and social examinations of their respective places and cultural epochs.

The exhibition is divided into three narratives and a respective focus on the three narratives is further expanded for each of the eight rooms of the exhibition. The first narrative is the rupture from abstract expression and return of the figure, as seen with Philip Guston, and the legacy of this departure can be seen in his contemporaries. The second narrative and conquest on the exhibition's floor look at how the practices of Dada developed in post-WWI to be understood as being used by contemporary artists in a post-9.11 context. Lastly, the third narrative explores the role of humor and postulation of the cool – a stance of alignment away from the center.

NEOEXPRESSIONISM, COOLNESS UND MAGIC

The exhibition's first room focuses on Philip Guston and the artistic departure from abstract expressionism and the return of the figure: as seen with Philip Guston and how the legacy of this departure can be seen in his contemporaries like Albert Oehlen, Günther Förg, André Butzer, and Jonathan Messe. Philip Guston's innovative approach to painting, characterized by bold strokes, emotion, and a departure from abstract expressionism, profoundly influenced artists like Albert Oehlen, Mike Kelley, André Butzer, and Jonathan Meese. His shift toward figurative art and the exploration of personal iconography can be seen in the more narrative and expressive style.

In 1969, Philip Guston was considered a first-tier abstract expressionist, departing and shifting his practice to include representational figures, which became known as neo-expressionism. The departure from abstract expressionism to neo-expressionism can be primarily credited to Philip Guston, with his use of inclusion of the figure in his paintings back into his painting in 1970s. Abstract expressionism was largely void of the figure and is an artistic moment that utilizes abstraction to express emotion. It was the most famous artistic movement in post-war America. Abstract expression is an artistic moment that utilizes abstraction to express emotion, often void of the figure. Philip Guston is considered one of the founders of neo-expressionism, a style of painting that revived the expressionist moment. Philip Guston's artistic evolution showcased parallels with the emotive and gestural qualities of German Expressionism, as seen in his bold brushwork, raw emotion, and exploration of psychological themes. Philip Guston's influence can be seen in the work of Günther Förg, Albert Oehlen, and Jonathan Meese; his influence was seen in his peers and the younger generations of artists.

PHILIP GUSTON

Philip Guston (b. 1913 Montreal, Canada) is one of the most important painters of the 20th century. Guston's reintroduction of the figure in his paintings at a time when abstract expression was the most prominent style in post-war New York changed the course of art history. In the late 1960's Guston started incorporating a lexicon of figures and objects into his painting. The paintings were rendered in a willfully slap-dash and cartoonish manner, a style that was antithetical to the refined and sensitive abstraction Guston had been producing for the past two decades. The hooded figure can be read as a Ku Klux Klan figure and was a commentary on the persisting racism in America.

MYTHEN UND ANTHROPOMORPHISMUS

In this room titled MYTHEN UND ANTHROPOMORPHISMUS, hang the works of Huma Bhabha, Jonathan Messe, and Thomas Houseago; all three of the artists use a combination of myths with modernist artistic techniques to explore ideas of humanities universalism, examining the role of myths in modern society. Anthropomorphism is common in myths from around the world; in these selected works, it is most predominantly seen in the drawings of Huma Bhabha, where the artist blends human and animalistic elements.

Huma Bhabha (b. 1962 Karachi, Pakistan) is a Pakistani-American artist making work that depicts the strangeness and vulnerability of the contemporary figure. The work probes the tensions between time, memory, and displacement; Bhabha combines references to science fiction, archeological ruins, Roman antiquities, and postwar abstraction as she transforms the human figure to hover between recognizable, human, and animal or alien forms.

Bhabha's references the abstraction tool of using caricatures in her work on paper. Caricatures were often used in racist and colonial contexts by colonizers to demonstrate that those non-white subjects were like »*animals*« and hence less. The aesthetic visual language is subverted with the agency, appropriating the animal-like caricatures to become fantastical and mythical and testify to the perpetual cycle of growth and collapse.

DADAISM AND PUNK IN POST-9/11: COLLAGE UND DER KRITISCHE BLICK

The room »DADAISM AND PUNK IN POST-9/11: COLLAGE UND DER KRITISCHE BLICK,« shows the influence and connection of Dadaism on the contemporary art being produced in the post-9/11 context. Connecting how Dadaism, often seen as the foundation of punk, similarly was adjacent to the artist and the artworks shown.

Dadaism was born out of the horrors and folly of WWI in New York, Zurich, and Paris; it was a rejection of all that was logic, reason, and antithetical of modern capitalist society – instead celebrating nonsense, irrationality, and chance. It could be argued that the Dadaists were the founders of collage and the ready-made. Performers as much as they were creators. Dadaism was the first artistic movement to divorce itself from the need to create an original image. Both 9.11 New York and a world gripped with WWI had an air of social disillusionment and expansion of the world omnipresent.

Three pillars of Dadaism that can be seen in the work of Dash Snow, Aaron Curry, Steven Sheerer, and Anne Collier are collage, objections to authority, and a fascination with the supernatural.

One was collage; if one were to place the collages of Hannah Höch from the early 20th century and Dash Snow's from the 21st century, it would be difficult to tell them apart.

ANNE COLLIER

Hannah Höch, a pioneering figure in the Dada movement, is known for her groundbreaking photomontages that challenged societal norms. Through collage, Dada artists »could attack the bourgeoisie with distortions of its communications imagery.« Dash Snow is similarly taken from tabloids.

Dash Snow's collages seem broad at first but ultimately point satirically regarding authority or the good ol' American values. Not dissimilar to some Dadaist collages. Through the collages, we can see Snow's rejection of structure, artifice, and cultural hegemony. The collages are an unveiling of the found images underlying darkness. Snow subjects all his materials to a scrupulous aging process that takes the works to the limits of their substance, underlining the object's finiteness. At the same time, his fragments from ancient sculptures and current sources seem timeless.

The Dadaists celebrate the abjection of authority and leniency towards chaos, and hence, this can be seen as the foundation of Punk. The punk scene is directly referenced in the worlds of Mike Kelley, Steven Shearer in his drawing of *Quorthonon*, and Robert Hawkins.

The third aspect of the Dadaist tradition that can be seen in this exhibition is the relationship between the supernatural and communication with the beyond. Raoul Hausmann, *Mechanical Head (The Spirit of our Time)*, 1920, is directly referenced in Steven Shearer's »*Fresh Garbage*.«

Anne Collier's *Crying Woman (Comic #16)*, takes comics from the 1950s to 1980s that are marketed toward adolescent girls, and cropping is playing with scale in a manner that the female figure subverts the male gaze and subsequently becomes almost castrating.

The close cropping of the »*crying women*« looks at the clinched narrative of the eternally suffering female subject, hysterical and limited agency. The image of the crying women, cropped and blown up, brings to question the cliché. *Woman Crying (Comic) #16* is knowingly referring to the early work of Roy Lichtenstein, iconographic comic paintings from the 1960s, where he would paint an enlarged comic in a manner that would show Ben-Day dots.

MAGICAL PRACTICES: MYSTISCHE SUPERHELDEN

The »MAGICAL PRACTICES: MYSTISCHE SUPERHELDEN« room explores how the artist Mike Kelley, Andy Hope 1930, and Tal R references occult practices and esoteric knowledge systems and the more pop culture references of Disney and Marvel comics. Both occult practices and popular comics entertain and revolve around magic but differ in their acceptance. The importance lies in the reinterpretation and subversion of these well-known symbols, allowing artists to explore complex themes, challenge societal norms, and critique aspects of popular culture.

Mike Kelley's »*Satan's Nostrils*« takes up the color and style of a Gucci scarf and emotive skull, and the title references an occult practice of satanic celebrations. His artwork was profoundly influenced by punk music, as he drew inspiration from its rebellious ethos and anti-establishment spirit. Additionally, he explored themes related to satanic practices, incorporating elements that reflected a fascination with the subversive and transgressive, further contributing to his art's provocative and boundary-pushing nature.

Andy Hope 1930's »*Composition Alogique*« from 2013, an ink drawing of cardboard, looks at the three belief systems in America that seem to exist both in harmony but in almost illogical opposition. The first belief system is that Christianity represented in the cross, the second is of astrology represented in a drawing of Saturn and stars, and the third is belief in an »American« freedom or the wild wild west and indicated in the dress of the figure who is sporting a cowboy hat and wearing nothing but underwear.

The drawings by Tal R, *Sisters of Roll* (B 20), from 2002, depict three women in a forest. A reference to witches, witches referencing the occult knowledge practice of women that raised suspicion in society. The contemporary understanding of witches is playful now, but its history is a reference to the witch trials, the largest femicide in Europe occurring between the 16th and 17th century that drew suspension of the powers of women and demonized ideas of women gathering together in the forest.

CUTENESS, FASHION, GLAMOUR UND DAS GEGENTEIL

What is the role of cuteness, fashion, and glamour in contemporary art? Within the context of the deceptively straight-forward visual vocabulary, the artists Sylvie Fleury, Josephine Pryde, and Lily van der Stokker investigate how the aesthetics associated with cuteness and insatiable consumer culture around glamour can be used to challenge the premises of power structures that situate what cuteness and glamour.

Sylvie Fleury, in the work *»Lolly Pop and Sunshine«* from a series of gouache works on paper looks at how Pucci appropriated early Modernist abstraction, showing the life span of one great artistic movement and appropriation of luxury consumer good. The appropriation of modernist gestures of the avantgarde to scarf shows the double language of appropriation going on, as it is appropriated a second time back into an artwork by Sylvie Fleury. Using iconography from luxury goods, the artist investigates the

Lily van der Stokker, in the cloud hanging off her drawing, employs the visual language of cuteness in her use of soft pastels to arrest neons and playful simplified forms, recurring cloud forms, and the object of the sofa. Seemingly innocuous spaces, the decorative ornamentation like the text, often refers to power structures. For example, in one of her drawings, there is the mention of other contemporary artists and critics.

Josephine Pryde is an English photographer and installation artist whose work explores the nature of image-making and display. Prydes work draws from various sources, including fashion photography, the natural sciences, and printmaking techniques. Often described as witty, the works. Her photographs are often seductive and discomfort in equal measure.

Scale is a series of Prydes comprising 36 photographs of guinea pigs in various made-up doll worlds. The staging and setting for guinea pigs for the photographs refer to glamour shoots, while technically, the photograph uses methods and techniques used in fashion photography. The work was produced for the *»Miss Austen Enjoys Photographs«* exhibition at Kunstverein Düsseldorf. Using the museum as a *»production company,«* Pryde hired an animal trainer and installation team, taking every precaution possible to ensure the guinea pigs were comfortable, including a lighting team to stimulate daylight at fear the flash photography would scare the animals. The resulting series is humorous as it is odd.

It is important to note that guinea pigs is used in English to refer to *Versuchskaninchen*. The etymology of guinea pigs refers to the *»guinea man,«* the slave trading ship that had brought animals on board.

GHOSTS AND SPIRITS: DER ERWEITERTE RAUM

Gert and Uwe Tobias are twin brothers from Romania who have developed a collaborative practice since the end of their studies in 2002. The Tobias brothers combine myths and legends from their Romanian Heritage and Eastern Europe with motifs from popular culture, abstract expressionism, and contemporary graphic design.

Abstract Expressionism and neo-expressionism can be seen as significantly influencing the contemporary practice of the Tobias brothers. The lyrical use of paint, so significant for abstract expressionism, is paired with recognizable figures, often done in a rough and violently emotional way, often using vivid colors that can key in neo-expressionism.

In a region that saw multiple regime changes in the 20th century, Eastern Europe, the oral and written folklore tradition has become a means of preserving culture. Traditions of preternatural in the region, the haunted landscape, and mythic tales embody larger means of production to cultural identity in the region. In the 21st century, the ghost has many meanings as the internet has embodied a largely invisible force.

The typewriter, a now non-existent technology employed by the artist, reminds us of the 19th-century awakening and the marriage of man and machine. The ghoulish and comical figures made using the typeface combine Eastern European legends with 19th-century technology as commentary on the ominous foreboding melding of man and technology.

EXPRESSIONISM AND AVANTGARDE

Tal R, Daniel Richter, and André Butzer, three artists who have defined a generation of European artists, all show homage to the European traditions of expressionism in a contemporary context. Daniel Richter and André Butzer are connected through their association with the art movement known as the »*Neue Wilden*« or »*New Fauves*« in Germany. Though each artist has developed a distinctive style, they share common roots in the influential painting scene that emerged in Germany in the late 20th century, characterized by a return to expressive, figurative painting and a rejection of conceptual art trends.

ENJOY THE EXHIBITION!



Philip Guston, Untitled, 1969, oil on wood, 61 x 67,5 cm © Philip Guston

Kontakt

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