
INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the millennium a new type of artist, the Urban Artist, has emerged. He has influenced the cultural scene as a creative thinker and leader of subcultural expressions taking on the role of album cover designer for progressive punk, electro or hip-hop bands, graffiti writing innovator, avant-garde fashion designer or street art activist. Today these same urban artists have become indispensable to the world of contemporary art, as many more make the transition from applied arts to the field of fine art. In addition to the alternative forms of presentations such as that of city streets, they produce art works for galleries and museums who are increasingly putting together shows of urban inspired pieces.

Some urban artists have engaged with ideas in an academic context, while others celebrate international success as self-taught practitioners. What these artists have in common, however, is the prevalence of an attitude absent in the academies. They are brimming with innovative spirit and radicalism - employing differentiating concepts, aesthetics and techniques that can only be incurred by the exposure to a subcultural tradition. The most immediately obvious departure from a more classical practice is the illegal use of the streets as medium, mediator and translator; providing the friction necessary to transform life experience into art.

The Urban Artist exhibition documents urban arts place today, bringing into focus its new directions and creating a dialogue between the practice, the artists and the audience. The panel discussion hosted in tandem with the exhibition will seek to define urban art and illuminate its potential for future development. The panel will host Dr. Ilaria Hoppe from the Institute for Art and Visual History at the Humboldt University of Berlin, the graffiti writer and artist Christian Awe and the exhibition curator Johann Haehling von Lantzenauer. The panel will be moderated by Jan Kage - presenter of 'Kunst Magazin art collector talks' and head of the 'Radio Arty' broadcast on MotorFM.

CHRISTIAN AWE



Beginning his painting career as a graffiti writer on the streets of Berlin in the early 90s, Christian Awe has transitioned through multiple spheres from street writing to calligraphy, design, architecture and finally painting. His painting work is a unique symbiosis of graffiti and abstract expressionism that uses flowing colors as transition, movement, and rhythm. Awe applied to study under George Baselitz unknowing of his professor's fame as one of Germany's most important contemporary artists and later pursued advance studies with Daniel Richter. Now he works from his loft in the Lichtenberg district of Berlin and shows his work in galleries around the globe. For 2011 Christian Awe was selected for the Princeton scholarship "Artist in Residence".

KATRIN FRIDRIKS

Katrin Fridriks is a conceptual painter living and working in Paris and Luxemburg. She produces hyperkinetic large-scale abstract works that fuse the natural energies of her native Iceland - fire, water, earth and air - with contemporary pop art, graffiti, and calligraphic references to create a unique visual and chromatically vibrant field. Fridriks presented at the Biennale in Liverpool in 2008 and has undertaken a small number of handpicked commissions for premium global brands.



MARCO "PHO" GRASSI



Marco "Pho" Grassi approached street art for the first time on Paris trains and walls. Influenced by those experiences and New York graffiti art, he set himself loose on the Italian street art scene during the early 90s, becoming one of the scene's major protagonists. In 1995 he attended Luciano Fabro's painting class at the Brera's Academy of Fine Arts in Milan. Extending his fine arts practice beyond the immediately academic, Grassi turned to the city to recover elements from daily life, such as torn manifestos and wooden panels, to incorporate into his artwork, securing its roots in the urban context. Grassi was born in 1976, Milan, where he currently lives and works.

GOULD

Gould is part of the artist duo Various and Gould, which has been working in close collaboration since 2005. Mutual interests like their love for paper, the enthusiasm for accidental beauty in the everyday life, collaborations, and above all working in the public space, is the basis for their teamwork. Together they playfully take on the otherwise serious themes of work, migration, (sexual) identity or social/political issues utilizing mediums such as screen-printing and collage. In 2002 Gould began gluing paper works in public spaces. He considers his silk-screen poster-figures completed only once they have acquired a successful connection with the space and their general picture becomes obvious. Gould lives and works in Berlin.



HELLE MARDAHL

With a background in avant-garde couture fashion Helle Mardahl has combined her knowledge of aesthetics, body movement, color and drawing to create her own technique. Her graphic and organic style encompasses a complex network of political and socio-critical themes. Staged photographs fuse together with drawn, painted, printed, and sewn features, blurring a viewer's perception of the fake and the real. Helle Mardahl was born in 1976. She graduated with a degree at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London. The artist lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark.



JAYBO MONK



He is a runaway, setting out and wandering along both in a physical as well as in a creative sense. In his youth, he ran away from his home in southern France, settling the Kreuzberg neighborhood of Berlin at the beginning of the 1980's. He busied himself as a graffiti writer, street actor and hip-hop musician. When he founded the street-wear label "Irie Daily" and the cultural magazine "Style" at the beginning of the 1990's, his influence on Berlin's youth culture and fashion scene could be clearly seen. Even today, urban subculture is the driving force behind his artistic activities.

STEFAN STRUMBEL

Stefan Strumbel incorporates into his artwork motifs associated with his place of origin, the Black Forest. On an abstract level, Strumbel utilizes these motifs to deal with paradigms of "home", while simultaneously questioning its concept and origin. His compositions encompass objects from folk-art that refer to clichéd notions of home, folklore and popular piety. But by exaggerating these objects of popular cult and cultural value, Strumbel rips them out of their contexts and provocatively infuses them with irony. Strumbel was born in 1979; he lives and works in Offenburg, Germany.



ANTON UNAI



Anton Unai personifies the creative philosophy represented by Joseph Beuys' legacy: a profound belief in the sanctity of spontaneity, the poetry of chaos, and the rejection of traditional academia. A self-taught artist, his installations are often the result of weeklong "actions", improvised, site-specific and created using mostly found objects, or "golden garbage", salvaged from the streets of Berlin. Using materials that reflect the urban landscape, ordinary detritus like rusty sheet metal or yesterday's newspaper, Unai's work resurrects and reinvents the discarded relics of the modern masses. Anton Unai was born in 1974 in Spain and lived in several European countries before moving to Berlin. His work has been exhibited internationally in London, Vienna, Berlin, Barcelona, and New York. Unai lives and works in Berlin.

XOOOOX

XOOOOX works with delicate stenciled works and installations in an "arte povera" style that consist of weathered and decaying materials. In these works XOOOOX distinctly contrasts the glamour of fashion culture with existentialist themes such as vulnerability and transience. Beguilingly beautiful, using transitory media such as exposed building facades, worm-eaten wood, rotting fabric, and rusty metal, XOOOOX grounds this apparently glamorous theme in the street, but the artist's aim is not to deconstruct fashion culture. XOOOOX pays homage to traditional haute couture while leveling criticism at the over-industrialization of fashion as a cultural artifact of our time. XOOOOX lives and works in Berlin.



JONATHAN YEO



Jonathan Yeo, born in 1970, is a British artist specializing in portraiture and collage. Although never professionally trained, he took up painting while recovering from Hodgkin's Disease in his early 20s. He became known as a contemporary portraitist in the late 1990s, exhibiting frequently at the National Portrait Gallery. His best-known work includes a world weary Tony Blair painted at the very end of his premiership and more recently familiar images of Prince Philip and Dennis Hopper. After a presidential commission was cancelled, Yeo instead made a collage of George W. Bush, which was unveiled in a Gallery in London, in 2007. Made entirely from pornographic magazines, it marked a new direction in his work, and subsequent subjects to receive the collage treatment include Hugh Hefner, Mary Whitehouse, Wyndham Lewis, Lucian Freud and Paris Hilton. Yeo lives and works in London.

THE URBAN ARTIST

PATHS FROM SUBCULTURAL CREATIVITY TO CONTEMPORARY ART

Circleculture Gallery presents a selection of progressive urban art from all over Europe at Soho House Berlin. The exhibition features large sized paintings by Jaybo Monk, Anton Unai, Christian Awe, Jonathan Yeo, Katrin Fridriks, Helle Mardahl, XOOOOX, Stefan Strumbel, Marco "PHO" Grassi and Gould. Curated by Johann Haehling von Lantzenauer.

EXHIBITION OPEN 24HRS UNTIL APRIL 1ST
AT SOHO HOUSE BERLIN - TORSTRASSE 1

WWW.CIRCLECULTURE-GALLERY.COM



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- 1 **KATRIN FRIDRIKS**
Stendhal Syndrome, 2010
Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180 x 10 cm
- 2 **XOOOOX**
Street piece, 2010
London
- 3 **CHRISTIAN AWE**
Red Splash, 2010
Acrylic spray paint on PVC on canvas,
161 x 161 cm
- 4 **JAYBO MONK**
Le Radeau de la Méduse, 2011
Mixed media on canvas, 160 x 140 cm
- 5 **JONATHAN YEO**
Love Heart, 2010
Collage and high gloss pain set in handmade
timber frame, 150x140x13cm
- 6 **ANTON UNAI**
Studio situation, 2010
- 7 **MARCO "PHO" GRASSI**
Untitled 1, 2011
Lightbox, Tar on plexiglass
- 8 **HELLE MARDAHL**
The Bouquet, 2009
3D collage, 210 x 125 x 10 cm
- 9 **GOULD**
St. Centrifigian, St. Redundus, St. Spekulatorius,
St. Pharma, from Sankt Nimmerlein series, 2010
Silk-screen paste-ups
- 10 **STEFAN STRUMBEL**
Holy Clock, 2010
Hand carved wood object, spray paint