

**kuratiert von André Butzer**

**Philipp Schwalb  
Marcel Hüppauff  
Daniel Mende-Black  
André Butzer**

15.07.2014 – 16.08.2014

Presstext

Die Galerie zeigt eine Gruppenausstellung, kuratiert vom Künstler André Butzer.

Alle 3 Künstler, die Butzer neben seinem eigenen Beitrag in der Ausstellung platziert, sind für ihn wichtige Weggefährten aus den letzten 30 Jahren.

Marcel Hüppauff (geb. 1972 in Stuttgart, lebt in Hamburg) ist bereits als Schulkamerad und als einer der ersten frühen künstlerischen Kooperateure für Butzer sehr bedeutend gewesen, u.a. gehörten dann beide Freunde in der Mitte der neunziger Jahre zu den Gründern der einflussreichen Künstlergruppe bzw. Kunstschule "Akademie Isotrop" in Hamburg. Hüppauuffs Malerei zeigt in besonders nachdrücklicher Art und Weise diesen historischen Referenzraum auf und erneuert diesen fruchtbaren, wiederkehrenden Ansatz beständig, einst im Zusammenhang kollektiver Praktiken entstanden, durch sein hartnäckiges Verteidigen und immer wieder neu auslotendes Suchen. Er begegnet dem schöpferischen Moment, dem Herausbilden von Wesen und Bild, täglich neu.

Phillip Schwalb (geb. 1984 in Filderstadt, lebt in Basel) ist ein herausragender Vertreter der jüngeren Generation und radikalisiert, was unmöglich erscheint, nämlich jenen Freiheit stiftenden Anfang, der im niederen "zeitgenössischen" Spektrum alleinig durch Stile, Moden und Trends bzw. Strategien verdeckt wird. Seine Bilder sind dem Bildgemäßen Untertan und er muss nun erst in Welt und Stoff investieren, um freizuräumen, was bildnerisch verstellt bleibt. Schwalb, als eine Art Klee des 21. Jahrhunderts, begeistert mit seiner hohen Sensibilität.

Daniel Mendel-Black (geb. 1966 in Los Angeles, lebt in Inglewood) war lange Zeit Butzers wichtigster Kontaktmann in den USA, mit ihm hat Butzer nach dem Jahrtausendwechsel, auch in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Konzeptkünstler Thomas Winkler, prägende Reisen, Vorträge und Veranstaltungen im Großraum Los Angeles durchgeführt. Mendel-Black gilt als Strippenzieher kalifornischer Avantgardekunst der Nullerjahre und hat widerständig und riskant in seinem Werk künstlerische Kategorien zur Disposition gestellt, unter welche das akademisch-autoritäre Amerika ganze Generationen bis heute bitter versklavt hat. Jenseits von bloßer anerkannter Aneignung und komplizierter Gefolgschaft hat er ein bewegtes, flächiges Bild-Auge entwickeln können, mit welchem er nun selbst sieht, bzw. mit welchem er sich wiederum vom Bild anblicken lässt.

Jedes Objektverhältnis wird zur endlosen Vernichtung wohlwollend preisgegeben.

Steffen Krüger, Direktor, FRIEDENS-SIEMENSE CO.  
3. Juni 2014



von links nach rechts: Daniel Mendel-Black, André Butzer, Thomas Winkler, Tonopah, Nevada, 2003

### **Beyond The Wall Of Sleep**

For my generation it is hard to imagine painters so entrenched in an idiosyncratic position that they would come to blows over a disagreement about the way a picture was organized. It is difficult to comprehend a surge in blood pressure brought on because a canvas was painted flat on a floor or table, the artist hunched over, or whether it was made on an easel or wall, the noble practitioner standing upright and erect. The significance of the mark vs. the desire to eradicate the presence of the hand and a lot of the rest of the sort of issues that dominate a documentary such as Emile de Antonio's 1972 *Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene 1940-1970* are a little baffling to artists who have come of age at a time when it is difficult to sympathize with the negative results of years of past ideological conflict. Why would one need to choose between poles? Would it not be better to have a picture, say, painted both horizontally and vertically, that is to say, a canvas where both of these divergent points of view are united rather than at each other's throats?

Already during the early years of last century, the German Art Historian Theodore Hetzer realized the hegemonic approach that had previously characterized his profession got in the way of the focused attention necessary to properly study his subject matter. Instead, he chose to conceive his practice as the examination of changes and shifts in our temperament and spirit. In "The Creative Union of Classical and Northern Elements in the High Renaissance", written during the NAZI ramp-up to World War II, his main concern was to dispel the notion that the Gothic style, born as it was as an antithesis to antiquity, must also have existed in opposition to the movements which followed. While a great deal of Hetzer's motivation was to promote the ongoing

importance and influence of Medieval attitudes as the dynamic motivational driver at work in later art, in so doing he offered one of his more significant contributions to the overall discussion of aesthetic development: the surprisingly intuitive insight that styles do not exist as fixed oppositional polarities, but constantly influence and live through one another. There was, he reminded us, no Gothic expression without the corollary he describes as Classical inertia.

In so doing, Hetzer significantly departed from earlier northern European art writers such as Great Britain's John Ruskin who, less than a half century earlier, sought to equate Christian, social, ideological and ethical positions with specific cultural styles. Ruskin, particularly in *The Stones of Venice*, exerted a notable effort in his attempt to establish the moral superiority of the Gothic influence over the classicism of southern European art. It is not that Hetzer was immune from Ruskin's flashes of patriotic, nationalistic, ideological fervor. Hetzer, himself, made ample reference to "the impassioned outbursts of the Germanic world." Northern European art was described as a "raging movement", or as the "ecstatic vision" of the "free-playing force" of a barbaric spirit. It is repeatedly referred to as a sense of "infinite space" where everything is constantly "bursting" forth and "shimmering". By contrast, in a typical example of his chauvinism, Italian art was for Hetzer a "great beauty" that "exudes something very quiet, devout, and even dreamlike and remote."

For Hetzer, the importance of the term "High Renaissance" was that it represented the period where antiquity was rediscovered through the aid of the restless Gothic temperament and these two powerful forces were fused into one extra powerful meta-force. We do not have to believe, as he did, that the Northern spirit is the great motivator behind every subsequent progressive aesthetic shift to appreciate the notion put forth that history is not made up of a linear succession of ideas in which one period such as the Baroque, say, is eclipsed by the onset of the next (here the more morally driven righteousness of the Neo-Classical or Enlightenment period), but is a much more complicated and nuanced tangle of influences that perpetually remain in some kind of aggressive, direct negotiation with each other.

Northern European attitudes may or may not singularly account for the shift from the placid stasis Hetzer locates in antiquity to the ever more complex evocations of nature and psychology brought about by the use of the increasingly dynamic forms which boldly asserted themselves over the course of the Renaissance. Such oblique meanderings, in any case, get in the way of any worthwhile takeaway from Hetzer who had so much more, in terms of formal acuity, to offer on the subjects he excelled at, including Raphael and Dürer. Art historical styles, he wanted us to know, are not somehow the product of immaculate conception. To anyone

who cares to look a little more closely —whether you are examining a church, sculpture, painting, movie, vernacular architecture, comics, kitsch decoration, antiques of all sorts, or, as far as cultural objects are concerned, anything else imaginable— whichever direction you turn, elements from previous periods are always amply present and on display.

If only Hetzer had conceived of a more secular version of “spirit” that could have transcended old world occidental politics to include the possibility that it is the creative force that distinguishes powerful art wherever we may find it, but it is, unfortunately, a particularly wild “temperament” he advocates as supposedly alien to the proud monuments of Mediterranean antiquity, not to mention art in the rest of the known universe. Ultimately, Hetzer's overall critical philosophy fails to take the next expected step, to see that the most charming edifice is ugly if you look too closely, and hence, terms such as “beauty” and the corollary roller-coaster terror of the “sublime”, although their affects are very different, are not necessarily, except in the most abstracted academic sense, opposing positions, but, fortuitously, the one is, at least as often as not, more accurately complementary to the other.

One of the more striking features of *Painters Painting*, the documentary about the New York School mentioned earlier, is that the various movements that make up that period are presented alongside each other without the accompanying antagonism you might expect from such a diverse group of practitioners in such close quarters. With a little foresight, the subtitle could easily have been “Classic U.S. Abstraction”. Abstract Expressionist, Pop, Minimal, and Color Field painters, among other canonical players such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, are featured separately, still in the pink of their youth, without the least bit of dissonance between them. Clearly they all have different opinions about art —different dogs in the fight, so to speak— and are all separately dedicated to their respective allegiances, but what emerges are the similarities among them rather than their differences. Rauschenberg can (as he drinks himself into a stupor) generically criticize Abstract Expressionist painters for wasting time feeling sorry for themselves, but what quickly becomes apparent are the shared terms of endearment.

If the problem Abstract Expressionism faced was that the epic, Romantic space it created was always undermined by the accompanying discussion of the way paint was applied —whether the marks were expressive, or automatic, etc.— it became difficult not to see the movements which followed as a response to exactly these same issues, albeit in different ways. In each, there was presented a possible alternative to mark-making and its relationship to scale. Whether with Wilhelm de Kooning's use of ridiculously large brushes as a

distancing mechanism, or Warhol's silkscreen, in each, it was partly a problem of how to reconsider the hand in a highly industrialized culture. In other words, a problem of how and for what reason to apply paint. Rather than the expected clash of polemical camps, what you get is a bit of mild quibbling over the theatrics of Duchamp's legacy from the most expected quarters (read: Clement Greenberg's aversion to anything Pop, even Claes Oldenburg!), thankfully, largely overshadowed by what are otherwise revealing first hand accounts of the various biases toward space and application held by some of the main artist practitioners from that period.

The more we give up on historical categorizations, the apparent irony is how much more liberally the terms get tossed around. Even a good Art Historian like Hetzer, I am guessing, would have had a difficult time keeping up with the subtle shifts in the predominance of one stylistic impulse over another. And the same should be said for those of us who call ourselves artists. Like classic rock, the works and attitudes documented in *Painters Painting* are already all considered "classic". These days, in fact, we use "old school" (hip hop), or "classic" all the time. And, not only to designate a prior period that represents a high-water bench mark or gold standard, but also to describe the kind of approach we take in our own work. We can say "my work is old-school" (in fact, favor "old-school" over "new-school") or casually call anything that vaguely alludes to a certain style/period we like as "classic". If we want to show off a little we can even claim our own work displays Baroque, Gothic, or Rococo attributes, perhaps all three at once. We know that there are Romantic and classical (e.g., Palladian) aspects to modernity. If you look, the evidence abounds. The trick, as I see it, is not to attempt to work within some notion of the existing context (postmodern mishmash must follow classic U.S. high water mark by totally relativizing the painting surface, say, based on specious academic and ideological claims), but to try and get entirely past a notion of progress and rediscover the power of art —that is to say, what art is actually capable of and good at (which is not everything).

—Daniel Mendel-Black, Los Angeles, CA, June 2014

TOyo - Bilder Gang im Ghetto Begegnung in Farbe in Innsbruck in Farbfluss (Inn) in Farbmeer (Schwarzes)

Getto ist venezianisch und heißt so viel wie: der Wurf, das Werfen, der Strahl; *Metall*: der Guss, *Metall*: das Gießen, *Botanik*: der Spross, der Trieb, *Bauwesen*: die Schüttung. Als Ghetto (auch Getto) wird ein abgesondertes Wohnviertel bezeichnet. Als solche Bezeichnung stammt Ghetto vom venezianischen Gettore ab und bezeichnete volkstümlich jenen Stadtteil Cannaregio, in dessen unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft sich eine Gießerei befand (Dialektbegriff *ghèto* von *getto* = Guss), die aus Gründen des Brandschutzes vom Rest der Stadt abgeriegelt zu sein hatte. Große Geräte mit leistungsstarken Verstärkern und oft auch abnehmbaren Boxen wurden umgangssprachlich als *Boombox* oder *Ghettoblaster* bezeichnet. Das leitet sich zum einen ab von Englisch *to blast*, hier: „Krach machen“, zum anderen von *Ghetto* als den Wohngebieten meist sozial

benachteiligter Afroamerikaner und Hispanics in den USA. Der Ghetto-Blaster spielte eine bedeutende Rolle in der Entwicklung des Hip-Hop und seiner oft straßenzentrierten Kultur (vgl. Breakdance Graffiti).  
Gang in das Ghetto, als abgesonderter Ort, an dem die Farbe, das Bild, die Form und die Fläche ihren Äther besitzen, um vor allem vor dem, was ihr als Kunst bezeichnet, bewahrt zu werden, bringt zu nahem Leben und zu grundlegenden Gesetzen, um den Wunsch zu erzeugen ein Sein zu stiften, ohne das, was ist, nötig zu haben, sondern notwendig zu sein. Eine neue Weise für Bilder ist ihr Dasein als dreifacher Generator.  
Unserer Begegnung war B.U.N.T.o./die Dornenkrönung der Sixtinischen Madonna 2007; ist Bild und wird der weiteste Spalt im Äther sein.  
Mit Gang aus Ghetto in Farbe, um den grünen Raffael beim Pizzaholen aus der violetten Pizzeria Tiziano in der Bronx zu sehen, behüten Weizen beiseite die orange Seite bei jedem Wetter. Das ist das Einzige.---  
?&%\$!!%/(/)?UhjRTSDSCDZ'\*Q ---- Virtuelle (Virtus – Engel - Weizen japanische Tanz- und Kampfkunst), das als solches möglich ist.

Wir werden in den nächsten Jahren nichts anders können, als das Gleiche zu machen. Eine kleine Gruppe wird jetzt schon nach Basel zusammen ziehen, um das Gleiche zu machen.

Ihr zittert wie Laub, ihr Diener der Hierarchie habt Angst und könnt deshalb aufhören.  
Wir sind verwandte Tannennadeln und grüne Blätter. Alle das gleiche Holz für des Bäckers Backofen.

In ewiger Liebe zu einem Gang zu einem eigenen Sein.

Da Killuminati - PSickiavelli - Philipak Shwalbkur

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtvUlbj27PM#t=12>

Übernehmen Sie das Steuer  
Um die Welt im Sekundentakt,  
Kurs auf Tungusia  
Ritt über Mustang,  
Absturz in Shambalah  
Was scherzt es? mich?  
Verscherz es nicht!  
Begleite mich.

A.C.

