

TO THE OTHER SIDE

JONAS HOHNKE



JULY 09 – SEPTEMBER 04, 2021

CONVERSATION BETWEEN TILL-MARTIN KOESTER AND JONAS HOHNKE

TK: What fascinated you as a child or what was your particular passion?

JH: So many things. Simply that you can discover the world. That just fascinated me in all areas. And soccer too!

TK: So basically you were interested in all areas, wanted to discover the world, and football.

JH: (laughs) Yes.

TK: Okay, that gives a deep insight. Looking back: Were there tendencies in your childhood that indicated that you would deal with art in this way, or that you would become an artist?

JH: You should probably ask my parents that.

TK: That would be dangerous.

JH: Yes. But I also believe that children paint or do handicrafts or knead...

TK: But that doesn't necessarily mean that you want to be an artist.

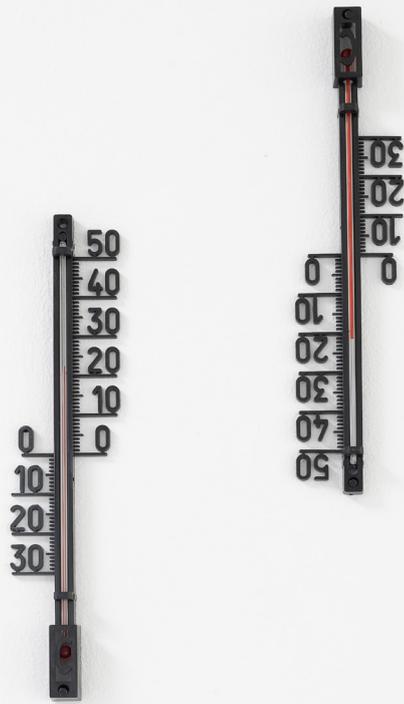
JH: But in this sector, of all the things you do, I've probably received the most recognition over time. And then it was actually very clear to me that what I did for myself was the most fun. And that's still the case.

TK: That means through painting and handicrafts, just like any

from left to right:

Untitled (curtain), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, printed curtain; *untitled* (concrete block), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, concrete sculpture with receiver (part I of the work)





untitled (thermometers), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, 2 thermometers, suspension adapted to room temperature

I

other child, you ultimately became an artist.

JH: (Yes)...I think it's pretty natural to do that (as a kid) and some get used to it over time and a few carry on.

TK: Well, for you that would be the stringent development up to the objects that we are about to see here, or the ideas that we are seeing here, that is, as you said, the fascination for the world, the discovery and also that you simply painted and did handicrafts as a child...

JH: And the media which came along over time and you then discover, that there are more and more, which you use and can use more and more and maybe get an enthusiasm for it.

TK: I just said you should ask your parents and I said that's dangerous. In retrospect, parents are often glorifying.

JH: That's right! You too!

TK: So, the next question fits quite well: Were there any questions from your parents about your art that made you feel embarrassed?

JH: (thinks)... Certainly. But I don't know now. Maybe not embarrassed. I can definitely understand if they don't really understand what I'm doing.

TK: But that didn't make you embarrassed...

JH: Nope. Well, my mother probably always wanted me to be a banker or have a „job“. (Laugh)

TK: Your art or works seem very tidy. Was that in trait of your character or did it develop with difficulty?

JH: I think that's what it always came down to. In the past, when we got to know each other in the orientation area at the art academy, you wanted to be a wild artist. Or you have the idea of it. But the work I was satisfied with was always very tidy. I'll say, privately I'm more the opposite...

of tidy. My desk looks like the pens are all neatly sorted and then everything has to be next to each other, but my kitchen is quite the opposite. And everything in between gets mixed up.

TK: I find that very exciting. If we're going to talk about the work now, it's an important part: Art and everyday life, that everything mixes together. That we can no longer define it precisely, that we have an art space here and there is everyday life. That you are very separate on the one hand, that you have your art area that is very tidy and your other area that is very wild and chaotic. But then there are grey areas where that meets... Where is the living room on that scale?

JH: The desk, for example, is just the studio area. When there were guests, it is often very chaotic afterwards and it stays that way for a long time, but when it becomes a work area again, it is totally tidy. As clean as possible, I would say, so that I can see the work for myself.

TK: So it's not just something that has developed as a quality of your work. That it's not just something, which you liked; the work you do or have done that had this better quality, but that it's also part of your work in principle.

JH: Yes, I realized that at some point, not really consciously either; it just developed in such a way that when I imagine something and it turns out exactly the same way, then I was always satisfied. And if I just started to paint a picture and I didn't know what it should look like, then it won't work. If I knew it had to look like this and then did it like this, then it became something.

TK: I vaguely remember that you also painted once (at the art academy), but that also seemed strange to me... So either I dreamed it or it was like that. But that also raised the question, how did you get to the point that you decided to study at the art academy?

JH: That was actually the only possibility. So I did community service and after that... I don't know what else I should have done. I also didn't have a high school diploma and heard that you can apply to the art academy without a high school diploma and then I did it. I was about at the level of knowledge... I just knew Andy Warhol, David Hockney, Picasso and Cezanne, etc... I used to like going to the museum, but it wasn't like I got to know the current names there, who are making art now. Then I slowly got to know the Becher School, which somehow appealed to me but also repelled me at first, but over time it appealed to me more

Die Welt (engl: The world), 2016, Jonas Hohnke, inkjet print, framed





untitled (Australia), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, carpet (custom-made)

and more. And then I gathered the insights in the course of my studies, because you dealt with them more and more. And that's when I started painting, I really had the opinion that you just have to paint. That was such an expectation I had from when I was in school; that you just have to paint and in our year everyone painted somehow.

TK: So you were one of those people who always enjoyed art, because if you don't have a high school diploma you can also become a carpenter. But did you want to study?

JH: Yes, I think I noticed that when I was doing community service.

TK: So you already wanted to go to the academy and do something intellectual...

JH: I don't think it was about the intellectuality at all. I wasn't even aware that this counts as intellectual.

TK: But maybe it was about the freedom...

JH: Yes exactly! In other words, to have such a freedom that you think you can do it best or that you want to discover something or that you want to continue.

TK: When did you feel like you found your style or your way or your expression? Was there even a point or is this a permanent development that is not finished?

JH: Somehow it's already a lasting development, on the other hand I had already reached a point where I knew that even if only two out of a hundred people think what I'm doing is good, that it's good. And I had that at some point. Because I can go on and nobody says, „Is that supposed to be art?“ I didn't do it for people anymore, I did it for myself.

TK: That was while you were studying..

JH: Yes.

TK: You lucky (laughs). By dealing with everyday phenomena and integrating them into art, the classic concept of art is being dissolved. Familiar perspectives, terms and contexts are questioned. Contexts, associations, concepts and the involvement of the viewer come to the fore. Genres and styles are transcended. Many of these characteristics are combined in the term conceptual art. Which in itself is already difficult because it can hardly be grasped. But looking at your exhibition now, would you be completely off the mark if you try to classify it in the haze of conceptual art?

JH: No, I don't think so. Everything always has to be classified. So I don't think you would be completely wrong. Sure, based on the terms how you define it, it goes in that direction.

TK: Well, if you were asked what you think of these classifications, you would say you have to classify them, but you personally...

JH: Yes, I think the definition is unnecessary in principle. Because it stays what it is. Whether it is called that now, it still remains what it is.

TK: That means a title or a linguistic classification, or a limitation, a categorization, to put that in a drawer, would not change the work itself. Now, speaking of contexts, wouldn't it change the context of the work if it were classified differently or weren't even classified?

JH: Different or not are two different things. If it were classified differently, it would (change the context). But if it didn't need to be classified, it would be what it is. So if I have now placed a postcard stand in the public space and everything that is depicted can be seen inside the postcard stand. What is behind is on every single postcard in front of the point you see that is behind. Whether people perceive it as conceptual art, or just what is there... I think if you classify it as conceptual art, then it puts up more of a barrier for the viewer that might be happening in such an unspectacular place where you go by every day... And then all of a sudden there is a postcard stand with motifs that are in the area... And if you tell him that this is conceptual art, he would probably say „mh yes.“ But if he just does that now sees and just perceives, I think it has more meaning to the people who perceive it than if it's categorized in the first place.

TK: If you now use the concept of conceptual art or art as such... You also said that you would rather describe it as ideas or perhaps visualization and that the concept of art



untitled (concrete block), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, concrete sculpture with sender (part 2 of the work)

or artworks themselves or conceptual art is not really your thing or that you might even reject it...Then don't such terms appear in your thinking while you are doing your work?

JH: Absolutely not while I'm working. In order to transport it somewhere later, of course, since it also takes place in institutions and everything moves in the field of art, it is also called that and of course it needs terms in order to transport it.

TK: And these shelters in a museum or gallery, or art space like here, what does that mean for your work? You don't categorically exclude that when you say you are doing works in public spaces where the art context is missing...

JH: Nothing to little. Even less. I work with it... one thing is a carpet, but to what extent the motif transports content, or because it is a carpet, together with the motif, what does it transport within the whole context of all the objects that are there, or how everything can absorb each other;

I find that interesting. In this case it's more of a conceptual exhibition. You have to use that term then...

TK: You don't have to! But the question is: Will it help...

JH: It helps to describe it like that, I just don't think it really needs to be called that. If you wouldn't say it now and you just look at it like that, it doesn't have to be a (conceptual exhibition), but for me I would describe it like that because the works in this case relate to a specific topic.

TK: It was interesting for me now whether in your work... I just call it shelters... because when you deal so intensively with everyday life and everyday phenomena and put them into everyday life, then those are surprising moments, when you perceive them, it is always a little different that forms in people's heads... but as soon as you place it in these protective spaces of museum or exhibition space or art space or gallery, then it has a direct contextualisation and is immediately protected because what you put there...

on the left: *Untitled* (ballons), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, balloons, helium, air, cord; on the right: *Die Welt* (engl: The World), 2016, Jonas Hohnke, inkjet print, framed





Exhibition view, back space



JH: I think it's the other way around, that it's not protected, it's a completely different expectation. The people who perceive, they might say „I can do that too“. But that's what you work with. The expectations in the museum are different than when you walk across the street and you perceive an idea.

TH: Is that what you specifically look for in order to demand a different dimension of your work in the sense of confrontation?

JH: If it makes sense. For example, the flag on the roof here now, if for example neighbors see it, it provides an idea. ...For example, in the Gelsenkirchen Art Museum, there used to be a toilet in the hallway, but the restroom no longer existed, it was just a storage room... There I installed a sink on the floor below and a urinal on the ceiling. And whether that is perceived as art or not, that doesn't really matter to me, but it's just an idea that provides something.

TK: In your daily work of reinterpreting mostly less relevant everyday phenomena into significant ideas and art forms... I would be interested in how you develop the necessary relevance for you in the infinite number of encounters that are there with these phenomena in everyday life, where you decide, that's crucial for me now or I make something out of it or it's not just a waste product that I ignore. Can you tell me something about the mechanism? How to develop a form for yourself from this multitude of possibilities.

JH: One perceives all the time. All day, all the time and you need those moments of boredom, well I need those moments that are just before boredom. Well, there is no such thing as boredom for me, because from the moment you could get bored, you start thinking and then it's absolutely not boring anymore. Those are moments when I use things that have been noticed and then I sketch them in an incredibly bad sketch. That looks totally amateurish at first, and then people make fun of it from time to time.

TK: So the sketches are visible...

JH: Yes, I won't show them around. I just need it to hold on to it. I've got a couple of books full of that, and then it'll be sorted and evaluated over time. Some ideas are six years old and only then they will be implemented. And when I do an exhibition like this, I think „...that could be implemented differently..“, and then it is often adapted to the exhibition and the circumstances accordingly.



Single-cloud (flag), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, video still of a flag in Castlemaine/Victoria/

AUS

TK: That means there is such a cosmos that is also represented or collected through sketchbooks and this cosmos is permanently banned in the sketchbook but also for you at the same time...

JH: It keeps evolving.

TK: So, it is always a process of discovery. A longer contemplation about something, but at the same time is accompanied by the surprise effects of finding and meeting of...

JH: Yes.

TK: Or intuitive or rather not intuitive?

JH: I don't know

TK: Given the multitude of your ideas and your work, which is very heterogeneous... would you say that there is a common thread that pulls it all together? Or do you not care or, on the contrary, do you want that not to be the case. There are artists like Gerhard Richter or Thomas Schütte,

where one could rather say that they don't want that, but that it spreads out, so to speak, so that you have to research very intensively and for a very long time in order to then see the common thread... Or that rejected directly by the artist, that it is so classic, that there is such a canon or do you say, your brain as such, or the perception of your brain - that is the common thread...

JH: I'll put it this way, since I no longer claim that there has to be a common thread, I've only started to work like this or to be satisfied with my work the way it is. And I'm always happy when someone says „There's a common thread.“

TK: You have to tell me that again. Do you create special conditions for yourself or do you need special conditions in order to enter into a poetic observation of the everyday world and to make this fertile for your work?

JH: Well, in the best-case scenario, it's that moment just before boredom. Another problem is that there is always something to do in front of the computer and you rarely get this moment when you write or sketch and then create a link

untitled (two photographs), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, 2 inkjet prints



between things. There is no specific method, thank God, not for me.

TK: Now, at the end, I would basically come to a question that still interests me. When I look at the works now, I would say they are very „clean“ or influenced by the ideas that you see there... For me they are rather less impulsive or dramatic. Emotions such as sadness, anger or lust, or despair are not so clearly visible to me in your work. Of course you're someone who has these emotions... you're not a sterile guy. But these emotions don't really have a place in your work. Do you extract that from your work process?

JH: Yes, that turns out to be the case, I can't do it any other way.

TK: So the works that we see here are also an expression of your emotionality insofar as these extreme forms remain outside?

JH: Sometimes people say they have a certain sense of humor...

TK: Definitely they have, humor plays a big role...

JH: ...and I do think that there is something of the personality in the work, just like in my kitchen, so rather untidy. One probably leads to the other...

TK: We talked about humor, I definitely think it's a very important part of your art, I don't think it can be overlooked. I think there's a lot of irony in that too. Do you have the need for truthfulness or does it always remain in this lightness, in this game, in this irony, in this ambiguity?

JH: I don't know, you know that better than I do... (laughs) what truthfulness is supposed to mean. So for me maybe it's truthful enough or that! is for me truthfully. Now, if I think about it for a moment, I would interpret truthfulness as „without hesitation“. Reduced to the essence.

TK: It is perhaps also rigid and strives for permanence...

JH: And brittle!

TK: ...And brittle. And maybe that's why it's also not typical for the condition of human perception. So maybe the human and the typically human is not the brittle thing, the desire for truthfulness...

JH: The brittle transports something, if it has a kind of truthfulness or is reduced to its essence, then perhaps it is the more interesting thing from a human point of view. A tree, one grows like this, the other grows like that, at first glance it has a rather chaotic structure and in my work it's not like that. Focusing on things as they are, or what transports a piece of the essence of the things that people use, that people make. That's what I'm interested in.

TK: That would be your truthfulness, in which you...

JH: ...well, you brought in the truthfulness, I wouldn't say that at all now ...

TK: As a contrast to irony or this ambiguity this mannerism in a certain sense, that you always question something and open up a ground again, but this never makes you sure, but always has the feeling "Ah, there's something else hiding". That there's still a joke behind it and something else that makes everything questionable. Then the counterpart is truthfulness. But also as a wish that you accept something as absolutely universally valid and then you agreed on that and then there is no further ground.

JH: I don't want to say that you have to agree on that, but that I can agree with myself to let it be like that, because this truthfulness can only ever come from one perspective. ...

TK: Thank you!

JH: Thank you!

TK: Hope nothing is left to be desired. I hope that the hour was bearable after all.

JH: One and a half. (Laugh)



single cloud (flag), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, flag (costum-made), flagpole

Jonas Hohnke www.jonashohnke.com

*1983, lives and works in Wolfsburg/DE

Education

2005 Kunstakademie Münster

2007 Prof. Cornelius Völker

2009 Meisterschüler bei Prof. Guillaume Bijl

2011 Meisterschüler bei Prof. Ayse Erkmen (Meisterschüler)

2013 Akademiebrief (Diplom)

Awards/Scholarships/Residencies

2013 Stipendium - Internationale Salzburger Sommerakademie
Arbeitsaufenthalt New York

2013 ERASMUS-Stipendium - Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien
Prof. Heimo Zobernig

2016 Mitgründung RAUM2-INTERVENTIONS, Grölle pass:projects

2017 Stipendium - Künstlerhaus Edenkoben, Artist in Residence

2019 Stipendium - Stiftung Künstlerdorf Schöppingen, Artist in Residence

Exhibitions

2020 DIE GROSSE 2020, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf
surface under ground, Accton arts Foundation, Art site of Railway Warehouse, Hsinchu City (taiwan)

Somewhere in between, (Ausstellung mit Renate Löbbecke) Galerie ins Blaue, Honsberg

2019 male dilabuntur male parta – Jonas Hohnke & Special Guests, NEULAND
– Projektraum, Bochum

FABRIC OF ART, Space for 51 international Artists, 701 e.v., Kaiser & Dicke, Wuppertal

Raum & Objekt Teil XV Raum-Orientierung, Kunstmuseum Gelsenkirchen, Gelsenkirchen

IN THE BOX, Neuer Kunstverein Wuppertal, Wuppertal

- IN SICHTWEITE, 34. Ausstellung Westdeutscher Künstlerbund, Städtische Galerie Iserlohn
- Printemps de l'art Contemporain | le édition, LE FLUX, Marseille
- PLATFORMS PROJECT, Independent Art Fair, Athen
- Open House, Speicher II, Münster
- ACHT ZEHN NEUN ZEHN, Von-der-Heydt Kunsthalle Barmen, Wuppertal
- Lugano, Galerie F6, Stiftung Künstlerdorf Schöppingen
- MIMIKRY, Photo Weekend Düsseldorf, Antichambre Hotel Friends, Düsseldorf
- MUR BRUT I 3: Jonas Hohnke ‚starting point‘, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf
- aequilibrium vivat, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz
- WAS IST WAHR, Städtisches Kunstmuseum Singen, Singen
- NORDWESTKUNST 2019 – Die Nominierten, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, Wilhelmshaven
- 2018 Bobby Objekt, Atelierhaus Studio Licht I & bartnikprojectroom, Osnabrück
- WAS IST WAHR, Morat-Institut, Freiburg
- nichts ist ohne Raum ist nichts, Wollboden der scheidt'schen Hallen, Essen
- standort senden, Artists Unlimited, Bielefeld
- PANIKRAUM, Darmstädter Sezession, Skulptur/Installation, Künstlerhaus Ziegelhütte, Darmstadt
- transfer, Kunstverein galerie januar e.v., Bochum
- ichduduwir, Galerie groelle pass:projects, Wuppertal
- 2017 C/O, Neue Kunst im Hagenbucher, Kleiststrasse 17, Heilbronn
- Lokale Gruppe. 38. Jahresausstellung der Darmstädter Sezession, Kunsthalle Darmstadt
23. Karlsruher Künstlermesse, Karlsruhe
- 7UP, Gruppenausstellung, Galerie Grölle pass:projects, Wuppertal
- 2016 edition 24, Galerie Grölle pass:projects – RAUM2-INTERVENTIONS, Wuppertal
- Mehr als Farbe / Beyond Colour, Kunstverein COLOUR.21, Köln
- PESTALOZZI, (mit Philipp Röcker) Ausstellungsreihe, Wuppertal
- C.A.R. contemporary art ruhr, Förderfläche, Medienkunstmesse, Zollverein, Essen
- Pact Zollverein, Atelier; Plattform für neue Kunst und Choreographie, Essen
- 2015 Kahnweilerpreis-ausstellung 2015, Bildhauerei, Plastiken und Installationen, Museum Pachen, Rockenhausen
- Kunst im Stadtbild Wolfsburg – KiS 2015, Kunstverein Crearte Galerie, Wolfsburg
- Wahlverwandtschaften, Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg
- Wild und Sanft, Förderausstellung der WGZ Bank, Düsseldorf
- Downtown Boogie Woogie (mit NARTUR Kunstgruppe), Offspace, Belm
- have had done, Ausstellungsraum der Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf
- rtfm (read the f*cking manual), Kunsthalle Münster, Münster
- TAPE IT, european tape art exhibition, Heyne Kunst Fabrik, Offenbach
- 2014 –rest–, Stadtgalerie Osnabrück, Osnabrück
- Diamonds and Pearls, Galerie Evelyn Drewes, Hamburg
- JUST – episoden in der Calwer Passage, Raum G, Stuttgart
- attentionattention , Speicher II, Münster
- Doppeltgemoppelt, Kunstverein Gelsenkirchen, Gelsenkirchen
- cluster.fm 96,0 mhz (mit René Hausteine), Wewerka Pavillon, Münster
- 2013 Interaction, Retour de Paris no. 81 (mit Helmut Dietz u.a.), Institute Français, Stuttgart
- KUNST JETZT!, Ida Gerhards Preis 2013, Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid, Lüdenscheid
- NEW KIDS OF THE BLOCK, kuratiert von René Block & Ayse Erkmen, Tanas, Berlin
- Förderpreisausstellung, Kunsthalle Münster, Münster
- 2012 i like this.. Cité Internationale des Arts Paris, Paris
- intervall, WOGA, Wuppertal
- Update (mit nartur Kunstgruppe und David Rauer), Winkelhausenkasernen, Osnabrück
- 2011 uitwisselingstentoonstelling, KASK, Gent
- Höhlenforscherprojekt, Performancenacht, Wuppertal
- 2010 Förderpreisausstellung, Ausstellungszentrum für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Münster
- 2009 Was machen wir mit Jonas, Galerie Rathaus, Lippstadt
- 2008 liebe.freiheit.alles., Kunsthaus Essen, Essen
- 2007 second to win, first to loose, Wewerka Pavillon, Münster
- Publications:*
- 2019 aequilibrium vivat, Ausstellungskatalog, Ludwigmuseum Koblenz
- 2018 WAS IST WAHR, Ausstellungskatalog, Erzdiözese Freiburg
- 2016 C.A.R. contemporary art ruhr, Ausstellungskatalog, galerie / agentur 162
- 2015 KiS – 2015, Ausstellungskatalog, Institut für Städteplanung und Zeitgeschichte, Stadt Wolfsburg
- 2015 Wahlverwandtschaften, Ausstellungskatalog, Lehmbruck Museum Duisburg
- 2015 Wild und Sanft, Ausstellungskatalog der WGZ Bank Düsseldorf
- 2015 cluster.fm 96,0 mhz, Ausstellungskatalog, Wewerka Pavillon
- 2014 Doppeltgemoppelt, Ausstellungskatalog, Kunstverein Gelsenkirchen
- 2014 Interaction, Ausstellungskatalog, Retour de Paris 81, Institute Français Stuttgart
- 2013 Kunst jetzt! Ausstellungskatalog, Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid
- 2013 new kids of the block, Ausstellungskatalog, Tanas
- 2012 Update, Ausstellungskatalog, Update Osnabrück (mit u.a. Nartur Kunstgruppe)
- 2011 twisted rodeo, Klassenkatalog, Klasse Prof. Ayse Erkmen, Kunstakademie Münster
- 2008 was machen wir mit jonas, Ausstellungskatalog, Galerie im Rathaus Lippstadt
- 2007 liebe.freiheit.alles., Ausstellungskatalog, Kunsthaus Essen



detailed view: *Untitled* (two photographs), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, inkjet print

front image:

Exhibition view back space: *Single-cloud* (flag), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, video still from a flag in Castlemaine/Victoria/AUS; *untitled* (postcardholder), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, postcards, postcardholder; *untitled* (Australia), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, carpet (costum-made)

back image:

Exhibition view front space: *untitled* (ballons), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, ballons, helium, air, cord; *untitled* (concrete block), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, concrete sculpture with receiver (part I of the work); *untitled* (curtain), 2021, Jonas Hohnke, printed curtain

Imprint:

Editor: Sibylle Feucht, **DAS ESSZIMMER** – space for art+gUG (limited liability), Mechenstrasse 25, D-53129 Bonn/GER
www.dasesszimmer.com | 2022

Design: Leonie Ludwig, Bonn

Images: ©das_esszimmer

Translation from

German: Liam Krönung and Leonie Ludwig

