

BONN POP-UP

PETER SZALC AND STEFAN AUF DER MAUR



OCTOBER 6 – 15, 2022

CONVERSATION WITH PETER SZALC AND STEFAN AUF DER MAUR

SF: At first glance, the only thing that connects you, Peter and Stefan, as artists and painters seems to be the fact that you both are currently at home in Bonn. Peter Szalc moved many years ago from Poland to Bonn, Stefan Auf der Maur just recently from Switzerland. You also belong to different generations of artists.

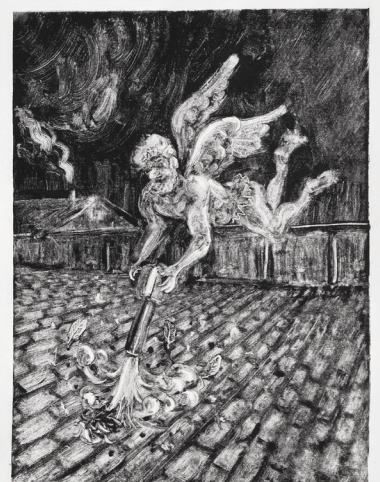
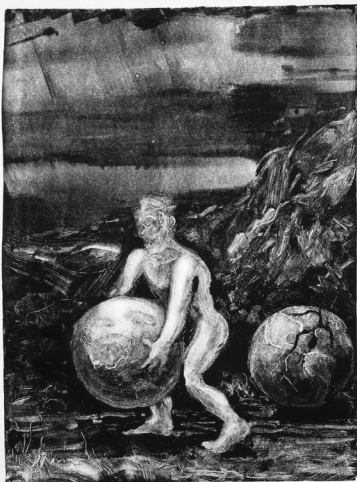
Despite all these differences, you embarked on the adventure of showing your current works in a duo show, also as an attempt to start a discourse between very different works and approaches.

I would be interested to know how you perceived this,

now that the exhibition has already closed. – Knowing that you have already expressed your thoughts in the artist talk with Christina zu Mecklenburg...

SAM: A group exhibition is always an adventure. What happens when the works meet? I think the combination worked well. We both share an interest in the painting process, which is also expressed in the works. The result was an exciting hanging, whereby formal and sometimes content-related aspects connected the work groups.

exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up*, Stefan Auf der Maur; *Titanomachie*, 2022, Monotype (oil on paper), each 42 x 57 cm, (from left to right) *Atlas III – Sebastian* – Äolos





exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up*, Peter Szalc, *Frau mit Pfeife* (engl.: *Women with Pipe*), 2022, acrylic on canvas, 100 x 140 cm,

PS: To be honest, as an artist I don't feel like I belong to a different generation than Stefan. When you suggested a duo exhibition with Stefan, I looked at his work he wanted to exhibit and realized that a joint exhibition could work. I found his paintings on the plastic bags *Human Legacy* particularly good and of course very different from my painting, especially in terms of technique. As it turned out in our artist talk, our approaches to painting are different. I go to work with a vision of an image. I basically have the picture I want to paint in my head and just put it on the canvas.

Stefan, on the other hand, goes cautiously step by step, as he said. Now that the exhibition has been taken down, I have to say that I took something very valuable with me from meeting Stefan. Stefan's work *Human Legacy* inspired me and gave me an impetus for a new series of works.

SF: I find it very interesting that the mentioned differences between you two are not perceived as such from both of you, but rather you discovered through the duo exhibition, that there is more that connects and mutually expands/complements your works.

Perhaps you could elaborate on that in a little more detail.

SAM: I think simplification is an important element in Peter's painting: in his new paintings he tried – as I understood it – to paint more like a child. I, too, often search – maybe on a different level? – a simplification in my painting, delete disturbing details, remove too concrete things with the spatula, wipe colored areas together. My work moves in this field of tension between omission/deletion and the need to reproduce an object.

In addition, we both have the need to deal with themes in painting that move us.

PS: The differences can be seen right away in the unequal techniques. The works that Stefan showed in the exhibition reveal his creativity. Apart from the image carrier, painting remains painting and drawing remains drawing. I paint my pictures conventionally on canvas and on paper. The planned series of pictures mentioned above will also be carried out on these classical carriers. In addition to the painting, what connects us is, I think, that Stefan's works are both serious and humorous at the same time, and I've always wanted to inject a little humor into my sometimes political engaged art.



exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up*, Stefan Auf der Maur, *Titanomachie*, 2022,
 Monotype (oil on paper), each 42 x 57 cm, (from left to right), Polyphemus –
 Kentaur – Phaeton – Atlas III – Äolos – Platon

Yes Stefan, in my opinion children are born painters, they lose their ability to paint over time. And now I need to get the ability back.

SF: Peter, you mentioned the humor that flashes up again and again in your work. A humor that seems to me to be broken one, one that sticks in your throat and at best seems cathartic, but not funny or light-hearted...

PS: The humor can definitely be found in my earlier political and socially critical works. 2022 with the war in Ukraine I lost my sense of humor...

SAM: ... on humor: I find this an interesting but not unproblematic topic in the context of art: If it becomes too superficial and one-dimensional in a work of art, it often gets

on my nerves. On the other hand, I find cheerfulness as a counterweight to a certain (thematic) heaviness interesting. The presence of seriousness in our works, mentioned by Peter, probably takes away some of the lightheartedness of the humor. Something humorous often creeps into my work and is not always planned from the beginning.

And to Peter's comments: Yes, the image carrier itself as well as experimenting with a wide variety of carriers is central to my work approach, but I also work on so-called conventional image carriers...

Personally, I don't think I can go back to the level of painting as a child. But maybe I can regain a certain uninhibitedness? – This question also drove me to work on the monotypes shown at DAS ESSZIMMER.

SF: Many probably lost their sense of humor already with the onset of the pandemic in 2020... and Russia's war against Ukraine is also very difficult to bear.

To what extent, directly or indirectly, do these distortions influence your work, your way of working, or is there a desire to react to it with work, or is the opposite the case?

SAM: ... I could have lost my sense of humor a long time ago, in view of the long-known threats such as climate change, species extinction, etc. ... For me, humor is also a strategy for not losing courage, for maintaining lightness; True to the motto *Humor is when you laugh anyway*. At the beginning of the pandemic, I responded to the topic. But that didn't work so well artistically in some cases, so I discarded it again. I don't necessarily want to react directly to the news situation with my work. – Sometimes, however, themes stick and they may reappear later in my work in a different form.

PS: I often bring important political and social issues onto the canvas. These are topics that move me as a person. Already at the beginning of the 2020 pandemic I created a series of works entitled *Isolation* and a later one entitled *Covid*. I also painted a few paintings of Russia's war against Ukraine and showed two of them: *Black Wave* and *Suffering* in our duo-show. Sometimes I paint representationally, sometimes abstract, so it's not always clear what my works are about.

Well, painting is a bit more complex and at least for me the focus is always on the color and the handling of it and not the motif.

SAM: That's what I like about Peters works: At the end of the day, it's always how you deal with the method of painting, bringing the painting process itself to the foreground. – And that is where our attitudes towards painting coincide.



exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up* (from left to right), Stefan Auf der Maur, *Birds and Bags*, 2019-2022, oil on plastic, different sizes and Peter Szalc, *Black Wave*, 2022, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm and *Golden Eye*, 2022, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm





Peter Szalc | www.peterszalc.de

* 1960 in Allenstein/PL, lives and works in Bonn/GER

Education

85/90 Studied drawing and painting in the studio of the WDK Allenstein/Poland.

Stipends

2020 Stipend of the Ministry for Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

Solo shows (selection)

- 85-89 WDK Allenstein/PL (several exhibitions)
- 1996 Polish Embassy, Cologne/GER
- 2001 Haus der Bildenden Künstler e.V., Bonn/GER, catalogue
- 2002 Kurfürstliches Gärtnerhaus, Bonn/GER
Galerie 50, Rheinbreitbach/GER
- 2007 Museum Ketrzyn/PL
Center for education and cultural initiatives (CEIIK), Allenstein/PL
- 2008 Denkraum Siegburg/GER, catalogue
- 2010 Denkraum Siegburg/GER, catalogue
- 2016 Denkraum Siegburg/GER, catalogue
- 2013 agency & aga Galerie, Bonn/GER
Denkraum Siegburg/GER, catalogue
- 2020 Retrospective, University Club Bonn/GER

Group shows (selection)

- 1998 Europe's artists in Reszel, Galerie Zamek, Reszel/PL
Noch zwei Jahre bis 2000, Stadthaus Bonn/GER
- 2001 fair participation, Art Basel/SUI
- 2003 Alt und Neu, KULT 41, Bonn/GER (with the group Bastarts)
- 2008 Artists help children in Sri Lanka, Denkraum Siegburg/GER
- 2011 Out of control, agency & aga Galerie, Bonn/GER
- 2015 fair participation, Art Karlsruhe/GER
- 2016 Speare Space, Fabrik 45, Bonn/GER
- 2019 Hommage to August Macke, Fabrik45, Bonn/GER
- 2021 art project PASSAGE, DAS ESSZIMMER – pace for art+, Bonn/GER
- 2022 Bonn Pop-Up, Duo-show with Stefan Auf der Maur, DAS ESSZIMMER – space for art+

Publications

- 2001 Peter Szalc in Conversation, Haus der Bildenden Künstler e.V., Bonn/GER
- 2013 Peter Szalc, agency & aga Galerie, Bonn/GER
- 2017 Peter Szalc - *On Canvas – 2014 - 2017*, self-published
- 2021 Peter Szalc- *Isolation*, Published on the occasion of a grant from the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, self-published

Peter Szalc's works are part of various private collections in Germany, Poland and Canada

Stefan Auf der Maur | www.stefan-aufdermaur.ch

* 1979 in Lucerne/SUI, lives and works since 2021 in Bonn/GER, 2004-2021 in Basel/SUI

Education

- 18-20 work stay in Montréal/CAN
- 00-04 Scientific Illustration at the College of Design and art Zurich/SUI
- 99-00 Preparatory course at the University of Applied Sciences for Design and Art, Lucerne/SUI

Awards, grants, residencies

- 2014 prizewinner Bulle. A city in focus, Musée gruérien, Bulle/SUI
Grant X. Plein air in the studio Otto Niemeyer-Holstein, Koserov/GER
- 2001 audience award of the Comixfestivals Fumetto, Lucerne/SUI

< exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up* (from left to right), Peter Szalc, *Black Wave*, 2022, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm and *Golden Eye*, 2022, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm

Solo shows (Selection)

- 2019 Human legacy, Galerie POPOP Gallery, Montréal/CAN
- 2018 KVA, Kreisel & Krokodil, Galerie Hilt, Basel/SUI
- 2015 Of birds and buildings, arthobler gallery, Zürich/SUI
Birds and Buildings, o Mato, Cucujães/PRT
- 2014 Radius Basel, Galerie Hilt, Basel/SUI
- 2013 Ausgeflogen, Galerie-f5, Luzern/SUI
- 2012 Tierreich, Galerie Hilt, Basel/SUI
- 2009 Kuschteltiere, Galerie Hilt, Basel/SUI

Group shows (selection)

- 2021 Today we paint, Villa Renata, Basel/SUI
10,000 years of Oslo, Salon Mondial and Ateliers, Basel/SUI
Oslo trifft Palermo, Summe 21, Ausstellungsraum Palermo, Basel/SUI
- 2020 Des herbes folles, Regionale 21, CEAC Centre d'art, Strassburg/FR
100 + 100 ≠ 400. Regionale 21, FABRIKculture, Hegenheim/FR
Tiere/Animaux/Animali/Animals, Galerie Hilt, Basel/SUI
- 2018 Stefan Auf der Maur/Sara Gassmann/Attila Wittmer, Galerie Kriens, Kriens/SUI

exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up*, Stefan Auf der Maur;
Titanomachie, 2022, Monotype (oil on paper), each 42 x 57 cm,
(from left to right) Aphrodite – Atlas I – Satyr – Pax mundi – Polyphemus
– Atlas II – Kentaur – Phaeton – Atlas III – Äolos – Platon – Laokoon –
Prometheus – Melancholia



- 2018 Salon der Gegenwart, Villa Renata, Basel /SUI
- 2017 Northwest Switzerland, positions of contemporary art, Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal/SUI
Salon der Gegenwart, Villa Flora, Winterthur/SUI
- 2016 Annual exhibition of Central Swiss artists, Kunstmuseum Luzern/SUI
entrée & hommage 2016, M54, Basel/SUI
Salon der Gegenwart, Salzhaus, Brugg/SUI
Aktuelle Kunst 2016: Luzerner Landschaft, Sankturbanhof Sursee/SUI
soul shelter, Galleria Wolf, Ascona/SUI
- 2015 At the Rhinefalls, Galerie Reinart, Neuhausen am Rheinflall/SUI
- 2014 Annual exhibition of Central Swiss artists, Kunstmuseum Luzern/SUI
approach to architecture, Regionale 15, Kunsthaus Baselland, Muttentz/SUI
Bulle. Eine Stadt im Fokus, Musée gruérien, Bulle/SUI
- 2013 Homies, Regionale 14, Kulturhaus Palazzo, Liestal/SUI
Regionale 14, M54, Basel/SUI
Sleeping Room, Affaire 46, Zürich/SUI
Ernte'13 – expansiv –, Kulturhaus Palazzo, Liestal/SUI
- 2012 Von den Rändern her; Regionale 13, Kulturhaus Palazzo, Liestal/SUI
- 2008 Regionale 9, Kunsthaus Baselland, Muttentz/SUI
- Publications*
- 2021 catalogue Salon der Gegenwart– Intensiv Figurativ exhibition catalogue Des Herbes Folles, Strassburg
- 2014 Kunstkredit Basel Stadt 2013–2014 Jahresrückblick
- 2013 Homo Neanderthalensis – Homo Sapiens: Annäherung in Bildern, Hrsg.: Marcia S. Ponce de León; Christoph P. E. Zollikofer
- 2012 catalogue of the griup show jungkunst, Winterthur/SUI
- Purchases*
- Kunstkredit Basel-Stadt | Kunstkredit Baselland | Artphilein Foundation

exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up*, Stefan Auf der Maur, *Birds and Bags*, 2019-2022
(oil on plastic), different sizes



front page:

exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up* (from left to right), Peter Szalc, *Stilllife with Lime*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm and Stefan Auf der Maur, *Birds and Bags*, 2019-2022 (oil on plastic), different sizes

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exhibition view: *Bonn Pop-Up* (left wall), Stefan Auf der Maur, *Titanomachie*, 2022, Monotype (oil on paper), each 42 x 57 cm, (from left to right), Polyphemus – Atlas II – Kentaur – Phaeton – Atlas III – Äolos – Platon – Laokoon – Prometheus – Melancholia and (right wall), Peter Szalc, *Frau mit Pfeife* (engl.: *Woman with Pipe*), 2022, acrylic on canvas, 100 x 140 cm

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