

Hildebrand Collection

Permanent Exhibition
G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig

Alvaro Barrington

Alvaro Barrington (*1983) frequently uses materials closely connected to his own past, transforming objects such as milk crates, plastic bottles, and acrylic nails into symbols that preserve and share memories. At the centre of this work are three basketball players from the Chicago Bulls, with the words "Dream Team" written above in neon lettering. The depicted players—Michael Jordan, Dennis Rodman, and Scottie Pippen—formed the key trio of the Bulls team that dominated the basketball world in the 1990s. Barrington, who spent much of his childhood in Brooklyn, New York, was deeply influenced by the iconic "Dream Team" and speaks about the important role that sports played in his socialisation. Barrington: "You got a milk crate, cut a hole underneath and you practiced in your backyard, if you had one."
—JK

Norbert Bisky

The large-scale work *Unrest* by Norbert Bisky (*1979) depicts a scene of unfolding chaos: In the foreground, a young man throws a Molotov cocktail; in the background, two additional male figures, a falling helicopter, and an explosion destroying a high-rise building. The associations evoked by this image—turmoil, revolution, destruction—stand in contrast to its idealised representation. The emphasised perfection of the central figure, posed heroically, recalls works of Socialist Realism, a visual language likely familiar to the artist, who grew up in the former GDR. The radiant, warm colour palette reinforces this sense of idealisation, lending the scene an almost heightened beauty.

The diagonal composition and the fluid texture of the background, created with broad brushstrokes, add dynamism and convey a sense of instability. The title, *Unrest*, aligns with the content of the painting—unrest as a state of dissatisfaction and resistance. However, the scene is aestheticised, and the expressionless face of the foreground figure introduces an element of emotional detachment.

—AK

Stephan Balkenhol

Stephan Balkenhol's (*1957) *König auf Thron* embodies neutrality: his face appears indifferent, almost expressionless, and his formal attire—a white shirt and black trousers—lacks individuality. Similarly, the golden crown atop his head serves merely as a symbolic marker of his kingship. Yet, his relaxed, unexpectedly informal posture gives the figure a distinct character. This subtle discrepancy between features creates an open narrative space. In his work, Stephan Balkenhol explores the representation of human figures. While sculptures have historically tended to depict mythological, religious, or ruling figures, Balkenhol transfers this tradition to a more mundane level. As a result, *König auf Thron* shows neither more nor less than a seated man wearing a crown.

—AK / CL / JAC

General Idea

The artist collective General Idea, consisting of Felix Partz (1945–1994), Jorge Zontal (1944–1994), and AA Bronson (*1946), portrays itself disguised as dogs in the work *P is for Poodle*. The poodle, a recurring motif in General Idea's practice, embodies both the domesticated human companion and the instinct-driven animal. General Idea repeatedly takes on various roles, playfully appropriating them. The poodle, often associated with bourgeois conformity, is reclaimed by the collective, transforming into a symbol of autonomy. In doing so, the poodle represents the subversion of traditional and societal norms, advocating for sexual freedom and self-determination. The group's activity came to an end in 1994, following the deaths of Partz and Zontal from complications related to HIV/AIDS.

—LW

Gregor Hildebrandt

Gregor Hildebrandt (*1974) frequently incorporates analog sound carriers, such as cassette tapes or vinyl records, into his work. In *Elliptische Platten Target*, Hildebrandt expands the cassette spool into a radial tape winding with a diameter of 93 cm—almost 40 times thicker than a standard cassette spool. By stripping the material of its auditory function, he imbues it with visual significance. The piece simultaneously evokes the cross-section of a tree trunk. Just as tree rings serve as indicators of past time, the tape, as a storage medium, preserves time within itself, raising questions about the significance of data preservation in an information-saturated world.

—LW

Sebastian Hosu

Sebastian Hosu's (*1988) painting technique in many ways resembles that of a sculptor. Having chosen an idea from which the image is to emerge, the primary focus lies in uncovering the composition beneath by the building up and scraping away of paint. His gestural figuration—often consisting of little more than broad bands of color—is filled with vitality through its carefully considered composition. While abstraction dominates the painting, it is the interplay between subtle figuration and materiality, as well as the playful application of paint—with a spatula, sometimes applied directly from the tube—that creates harmony in some areas and drama in others.

—JK

Melike Kara

Melike Kara (*1985) finds a central source of inspiration for her work in Kurdish culture. She has started creating her own photographic archive to document this heritage. Traditional patterns and ornaments from handwoven or knotted wall tapestries frequently find their way into her art. In the piece *Dersim*, brushstrokes appear to intertwine like threads, creating a woven structure. This texture reflects both the beauty and fragility of Kurdish culture and identity—serving as a symbol of memory, resistance, and the ongoing engagement with heritage and history.

—JK

Alicja Kwade

Like a fungus, rust seems to consume the mirror in Alicja Kwade's (*1979) work *Trait Transference*, obstructing much of the reflective viewing experience. Here, Kwade orchestrates a transformation of materiality that preserves and makes time visible. Rust signifies an aging process, typically associated with the porosity and fragility of metal surfaces. However, in the case of the Corten steel used by Kwade, the opposite occurs. A dense barrier layer forms between the steel's surface and the rust, protecting it from further corrosion. In this way, Kwade plays with the tension between destruction and preservation.

—LW

Inna Levinson

Inna Levinson (*1984) explores digital perception processes in her painting. Her distinctive technique, in which she applies thick layers of paint with a palette knife, makes the texture of the canvas visible and integrates it as an essential compositional element. This results in a tactile surface that evokes associations with digital pixels. The imagery oscillates between abstract, spherical light phenomena reminiscent of screen glitches and figurative body forms that distort and appear to be in a state of formation. Through this interplay, Levinson's work conveys the tension between body and mind—between physical presence and digital fragmentation.

—LW

Rosa Loy

In her fantastical pictorial worlds, Rosa Loy (*1958) explores a new understanding of femininity. In doing so, she creates mystical compositions in which women and their relationships to one another and to nature always stand at the centre. Her iconographically charged motifs evoke associations with fairy tales and myth; yet beyond this familiar surface, the female figures—often conceived as twins or sisters—unfold a complex web of relationships based on a female-shaped vision of nature and society.

Fischerin shows two women fishing on a riverbank. The stillness of the scene, the intimacy between the figures and their surroundings: all of this condenses into an image of peaceful self-sufficiency—a respectful harmony with nature that stands in clear contrast to modern fishing facilities. Here, too, a closer look raises the question of the relationship between women and the world, which Loy continually re-explores.

—JAC

Conny Maier

Conny Maier (*1987) explores the relationship between humans and animals as well as societal power structures, where hierarchies are often ambiguously defined. In her work *Klammern*, these relationships remain unclear: Does Maier depict the human attempt of two figures trying to tame the muscular horse's animalistic force, or is the mounted figure fleeing from the person grasping at the horse's hindquarters? Perhaps these interpretations are not mutually exclusive but rather coexist, intertwining different narratives. Maier's bold, intense approach—a combination of oil paint and the expressive use of her self-made oil pastels—emphasises the power and, often, the violence embedded in the everyday tensions of social power dynamics.

—LW

Matt Mullican

In *Untitled (Tintin Lines over Colors)*, Matt Mullican (*1951) works with excerpts from a *Tintin* comic, shifting the focus from the narrative to its fictional world. The artist examines the world created within the comic by breaking it down into small fragments, isolating individual objects and details from their narrative context. The upper half of the image is colourless, while the lower half is rendered in colour. This interplay between colour and its reduction creates a sense of structured incompleteness. The colours in the work are intense and striking, yet detached from their function as representations of real objects.

These two techniques—the distortion through colour alteration or absence, as well as the extreme enlargement of fragments to the point of unrecognisability—cause the depicted elements to verge on abstraction.

—AK

Murat Önen

Théo is sleeping and I am thinking of abstraction by Murat Önen (*1993) portrays, as the title suggests, the sleeping Théo, partially covered by a white blanket. The title also draws attention to the artist himself, creating the impression that both are present in the same space, even though no second figure is explicitly visible. Behind the bed, an abstract blend of limbs and floral elements emerges. At least three arms seem to extend from the sleeper, resting on his body or the blanket. This could suggest a disturbed and restless sleep. However, since the overall composition feels harmonious and peaceful, with the room depicted in bright light, it might also represent the final moments before waking up.

—JK

Neo Rauch

In the enigmatic, dreamlike scene typical of Neo Rauch, the work *Zoll* depicts an inspection taking place. It unfolds in front of an aging customs house in a rural setting, with an undefined brutalist structure in the background.

The inspecting customs officers wear black uniforms that strongly recall those of the former GDR. They obscure their identities with peaked caps pulled low over their faces as they lean over the opened suitcases of a nearby couple to examine their contents. The luggage reveals a bizarre interior, one that seems almost to attack one of the uniformed figures: the crystal-like structure growing out of the red suitcase resembles a pillar of salt.

This evokes the Old Testament story of Lot, who flees the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with his family, while his wife is turned into a pillar of salt. As a result, *Zoll* conjures associations with themes such as flight and displacement. The dilapidated customs building, whose “Z” appears to be on the verge of falling from the façade, leaves open the interpretation that the officers may represent an already bankrupt authority. In light of the GDR-style customs uniforms, this can be read as a commentary on the end of the socialist dream.

—CL

Neo Rauch

In *Die Pumpe* by Neo Rauch (*1960), we observe a gathering of figures in an urban outdoor setting. Rauch's stage-like compositions are animated by his signature cast of characters. A recurring motif in his work is the fire-starting figure, here embodied by the woman in the red dress. The potential for a sequence of events—triggering and intensifying new processes in a kind of chain reaction—can be interpreted as a metaphor for sociopolitical developments and dynamics. Rauch's compositions consistently open up a vast range of allegorical reflections and associations, inviting the viewer to imagine diverse narratives.

—LW

Daniel Richter

Daniel Richter's works are often shaped by mass media and popular culture and frequently contain political undertones. With *Natti Dread*, he introduces viewers to an extraordinary mountainous landscape. The neon green and black figure carrying a torn flag over his shoulder could represent the Natti Dread mentioned in the title, a Rastafarian wearing a cap that holds his dreadlocks together. It is unclear whether his gaze is directed toward the vast landscape or toward the yellow figure not far from him. Although the physical distance between the two is not very great, the deep gorge between them renders it insurmountable.

The tension that arises from this situation opens up a narrative space that viewers can fill with their own interpretations. With his tattered flag and the skull on his back, *Natti Dread* resembles a warrior or adventurer, worn down by his many experiences—standing in clear contrast to the title, which is associated with harmony and peace.

—CL

Tomás Saraceno

Tomás Saraceno (*1973) approaches his work through an interdisciplinary lens, merging art, science, and architecture. His piece *M82/M+I* evokes associations with microscopic chemical structures like molecules, biological formations such as honeycombs, or geological patterns like rock formations. Through its mirror system, the work continuously reconstructs its surrounding space, merging interior and exterior. Saraceno's works explore new perspectives on the world, repeatedly questioning and redefining key themes of contemporary discourse.

—LW

Andreas Schmitt

Andreas Schmitt (*1980) uses display cases not merely as a medium but as integral sculptural objects. Their mirrored exterior surfaces reflect the surrounding space, making the cases visually dissolve into their environment. In *Spectators Choice*, the artist presents a collection of L-shaped models reminiscent of chairs. Here, Schmitt reverses the roles of subject and object: the surrounding space becomes the stage, while the contents of the display case take on the role of the observer. At the same time, the chairs evoke a wide range of associations, from intimate domestic settings to political debate arenas. Schmitt invites viewers into his carefully staged compositions, which, by detaching familiar objects and spaces from their usual contexts, trigger primal and instinctive responses. This interplay creates illusions and ambiguities, opening up allegorical and philosophical reflections on perception, presence, and meaning.

—LW

Kristina Schuldt

The work *Verzehr* by Kristina Schuldt (*1982) depicts the profile of a female figure. The face is composed of an arrangement of abstract elements, lacking eyes, mouth, nose, and ears. Despite its geometric forms, for the viewer it feels natural to perceive the entirety as a human face. The hand rendered in graphic design holds a cigarette, which could be a reference to the meaning of the title. The impressionistically styled straw hat dominates the image, and its dynamically curved brim contrasts with the more static-looking facial elements.

—JK

Dana Schutz

Dana Schutz's (*1976) works often depict stories of fantastical, surreal, and humorous events. In this piece, *Optometrists* are seen attempting to reinsert an eye into their patient. Hopefully, they have chosen the right one from a not-so-small selection—especially as they also reach for a medicine ball that matches the size and shape of the available eyes. In an ironic twist, the very experts of vision themselves have their own ability to see called into question.

—JK

Marina Perez Simão

Through the extraordinary softness of transitions and the long brushstrokes that merge into streams of colour, the viewer's gaze is guided across the canvas. Inspired by landscape painting, the flow of colour moves predominantly horizontally across the canvas, forming shapes that evoke associations with mountains, rivers, fields, lakes, and other figurations. This unleashed dynamism can experience surprising accelerations and decelerations. The flowing currents of color shift between the foreground and background of the pictorial configuration. The composition of surfaces and colours, which has been carefully developed over time, creates a sense of vitality that makes the painting appear slightly different with each viewing.

—JK

Wolfgang Tillmans

Wolfgang Tillmans (*1968) is renowned for his keen observational skills, capturing the world around him with remarkable precision. His works create a nuanced portrait of contemporary life. In *indian corn & pomme granate*, the artist presents what appears to be a casual snapshot of a kitchen table. However, upon closer inspection, the careful and deliberate composition becomes evident. The image is structured with contrasting vertical planes (table and floor), a radial element connecting both surfaces (plate), and intersecting diagonals (corn and knife). Tillmans transforms an everyday, seemingly spontaneous moment into a constructivist study of form and balance.

—LW

Georg Weißbach

The work *Trouble* by Georg Weißbach (*1987) unfolds a multi-layered structure of contradictions. The viewer is confronted with an abstract figure reminiscent of an air dancer—wearing a joyful grin and enclosed within a beige frame. At the center, the word *Trouble* is prominently displayed. Presented in a bold and schematic manner, the minimalist figure conveys a sense of lightness, spontaneity, and carefree joy. However, the intense red hue dominating the composition disrupts this mood, drawing attention and subtly evoking a sense of unease.

The text, positioned as an independent compositional element, creates an additional layer of contrast—*Trouble* contradicts the cheerful figure. Weißbach frequently incorporates text into his works, often giving it a naïve, optimistic quality. Here, the text not only acts as an accent but also as a tool for shifting meaning, guiding the viewer's perception and opening up new spaces for interpretation.

—AK

TEXT E

AK: Anna Kuzmina

CL: Charlotte Looß

JAC: Josephine-Anne Carey

JK: Johannes Kämper

LW: Leo Wedepohl

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