

# VERTIGO

## David Schnell

# G2

G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig

October 15, 2026 — January 31, 2027

With VERTIGO, G2 Kunsthalle presents a solo exhibition by the artist David Schnell (\*1971), featuring new paintings as well as a site-specific work that will be installed on the glass panes of the G2 Kunsthalle's glass cube and will be visible both from within the Kunsthalle and from the city.

David Schnell's painting is characterised by an intense engagement with space, form, colour, and light, as well as with their cohesion and construction. Schnell uses clear geometric forms to construct complex urban architectures or dense, natural landscapes. The interplay of individual fragments condenses to a spatial scene. Formally, Schnell's compositions move between systematic order and intuitive disorder. A decisive role is played by the dynamic perception of Schnell's scenes, which oscillate between construction and deconstruction. Viewers are drawn directly into the pictorial space. At times, the gaze appears to be directed towards the scene from a static perspective; at others, there is a sense of falling or tilting, while the landscape itself seems to be in a constant state of movement and transformation.

The title of the exhibition, VERTIGO, refers in a medical context to a state of dizziness, a subjective perceptual experience triggered by the sensation that one's own body or the surrounding environment is moving. The ambivalence between stability and instability of both the viewpoint and the scene lends Schnell's works a physical quality. At the same time, the physical experience of Schnell's works, characterised by a search for stability and orientation within his cosmos, points towards a fast-paced, volatile present shaped by crises.

Schnell continually explores the relationship between the urban and the natural, the synthetic and the organic, as well as their connections, interactions and symbioses. In *Festung* [4] and *Vertigo* [6], he focuses on the contemporary urban metropolis. Two large-format paintings depict a city from an aerial perspective.

Schnell's characteristic compositions of colour fields, with their varied shades and contrasts, create the illusion of buildings of different heights and deep architectural canyons into which barely any light seems to penetrate. The city takes up almost the entire pictorial space and seems to keep expanding. Only at the upper edge of the image, pushed to the margin, does a horizon with a mountain range appear. The urban pushes the natural from view. These fragmentary depictions of the metropolitan area can be understood as an allegory of a complex world undergoing rapid change. The city serves at once as a catalyst and a seismograph for the effects of new ideas, both positive and negative, and links progress, society, politics and the environment. Schnell's architectures do not appear fixed and stable, but seem to disintegrate in one place and re-form in another. The pictures describe a state of flux whose outcome is uncertain and whose unifying force remains unclear.

In a new series, Schnell broadens his view of the present and shows uninhabited industrial complexes, some of which take on the dimensions of small towns and are each subordinated to a particular function. His concrete model is the Leuna Works, a chemical plant that emerged from ammonia synthesis in the early twentieth century and, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), was among the largest sites of the chemical industry. Various chemical companies are still based in Leuna today. For these pictures, Schnell adapts his

colour palette. It appears synthetic, garish, at times glowing toxically. In doing so, he draws a link to the technical process of painting, which to this day is also a chemical one. Different substances are combined, give rise to something new, and determine hue, viscosity and intensity. At times the works seem menacing and sinister. In *Checkpoint* [5], for instance, a heavy, dark sky towers over the brightly glowing factory and seems to swallow it up. Once again, Schnell's work can be read as an emblem of the ambivalence between the positive possibilities of progress and its negative consequences.

Alongside the present, Schnell also turns his gaze to the past, in adaptations of Italian Renaissance painting. This dialogue across time and space highlights the treatment of perspective and space in painting and once more opens up a view of the relationship between nature and human influence. In *Allegorie* [9], Schnell adapts Giovanni Bellini's *Sacred Allegory* (c. 1490/1500), a work whose interpretation remains contested to this day. Schnell takes over the terrace in the foreground with its distinctive tile pattern, thus using a template from the late fifteenth century to reflect on the relationship between nature and culture in the twenty-first. In doing so, he removes every human presence and leaves only its traces: the terrace overlooking river and mountains, the cultivated tree in contrast to the natural woodland, and isolated buildings in the background that merge with the mountain range.

With his adaptations, Schnell joins a genre of painting that shaped the visual arts of sixteenth-century Italy and engaged with the function of perspective and architecture. Some of his compositions, such as *Ensemble* [11], are particularly striking in this regard, and not solely because of the Renaissance-style architecture in the background. The slightly off-centre vanishing point, the strictly perspectival order of the street space and the monumentality of the buildings create a sense of depth that emphasises the spatial dynamism of the picture. The architecture thus assumes an ordering function within the composition.

For the first time, an artist is making use of the glass cube of G2 [14] in addition to the first two rooms of the G2 Kunsthalle. The windows are covered with films designed by Schnell which, in his characteristic style, partly block or allow the view from the cube onto the Thomaskirche. At the same time, the cube is illuminated by daylight from outside during the day, and in the evening the work can be seen from the city, lit by the light inside the Kunsthalle. The glowing windows recall painted church windows and thus draw a link to the stained-glass window Schnell designed in 2009 for the Thomaskirche opposite G2. The so-called Peace Window (*Friedens-Fenster*) was created on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution. The bustle of the city adds a further layer to Schnell's work: reality merging with the layer of the artificial.

## WORKS

- 1 VERTIGO, 2026  
Etching  
69,5 × 48 cm
- 2 FRÜHSCHICHT, 2026  
Oil on canvas  
115 × 200 cm
- 3 LABOR, 2026  
Oil on canvas  
65 × 85 cm
- 4 FESTUNG, 2026  
Oil on canvas  
270 × 200 cm
- 5 CHECKPOINT, 2026  
Oil on canvas  
65 × 85 cm
- 6 VERTIGO, 2026  
Oil on canvas  
300 × 230 cm
- 7 FLÜGEL, 2026  
Egg tempera on canvas  
70 × 55 cm
- 8 DIORAMA, 2024  
Oil on canvas  
220 × 170 cm
- 9 ALLEGORIE, 2026  
Oil on canvas  
220 × 300 cm
- 10 KONGRESS, 2024  
Oil on canvas  
180 × 460 cm
- 11 ENSEMBLE, 2026  
Egg tempera on canvas  
70 × 55 cm
- 12 KLAUSUR, 2026  
Egg tempera on canvas  
100 × 80 cm
- 13 EXIL, 2026  
Egg tempera on canvas  
100 × 80 cm
- 14 TRANSIT, 2026  
Foil cut

## DAVID SCHNELL

(\*1971 in Bergisch Gladbach) studied painting at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig (Leipzig Academy of Fine Arts) from 1995 to 2000. He then was a master student of Prof. Arno Rink from 2000 to 2002.

For his artistic work, Schnell received, among other honours, a scholarship from the Deutsche Akademie Villa Massimo in Rome. His works are held in the collections of, among others, the Denver Art Museum (Denver, USA), the Kunstfonds des Freistaates Sachsen (Dresden), the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig (Leipzig), MOCA – Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles, USA), the Sammlung Frieder Burda (Baden-Baden), the Rubell Family Collection (Miami, USA) and the Milwaukee Art Museum (Milwaukee, USA).

### V E R T I G O

David Schnell

October 16, 2026 — January 31, 2027

### G2 KUNSTHALLE

Dittrichring 13, 04109 Leipzig

[www.g2-leipzig.de](http://www.g2-leipzig.de)

### OPENING HOURS

Wed 15–20 h / Fri–Sun 12–17 h

### PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS

Do 16 Uhr [EN]

Registration via [www.g2-leipzig.de](http://www.g2-leipzig.de)

### ADMISSION

G2 Kunsthalle: 8 / 4 \* €

G2 Schaulager (Tour): 8 / 4 \* €

Combined ticket: 10 / 5 \* €

\*Reduced admission for school pupils and students, members of IGBK and BBK, holders of the Leipzig-Pass, and people with a severe disability card (*Schwerbehindertenausweis*).

Free admission for children under 12, students of art studies, art history, art education and fine art, and ICOM members.

# G2

# VERTIGO

David Schnell

G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig

October 15, 2026 — January 31, 2027

14

Hildebrand Collection

Hildebrand Collection

10

11

9

12

8

13

7

6

2



5

3

4

1

G2

G2 Kunsthalle  
Dittrichring 13  
04109 Leipzig

[www.g2-leipzig.de](http://www.g2-leipzig.de)