

Jonas Burgert

Gift gegen Zeit

Blain|Southern

Potsdamer Strasse 77-87

10785 Berlin

28 April – 7 July 2012

Private View: Friday 27 April, 6-9pm

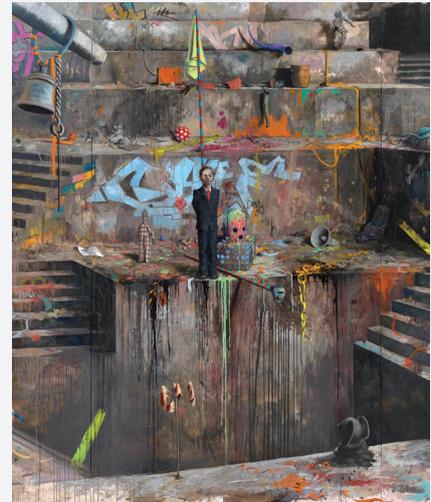


Photo: Lepkowski Studios

Luft nach Schlag (detail), 2012

For his debut exhibition at Blain|Southern Berlin, *Gift gegen Zeit* (Poison Against Time), German artist Jonas Burgert will unveil a series of new paintings, some monumental in scale, alongside sculptural works.

Burgert's paintings suggest a space in which time is suspended, once removed from our perception of the everyday. It is within this paradigm that the struggle for self-knowledge occurs; human beings are depicted as unique, contorted creatures in the midst of an inquiry into their own existence. They are both familiar and fantastical, creating an environment which is in flux, shifting and changeable.

The exhibition's two largest canvases exist in dialogue. *Suchtpuls* (Addicted to Pulse), 2011, envelops the viewer in an unrelenting whirlwind of activity, as characters of all shapes and sizes seem to jostle in a collision of religious rituals. Sacred cows are adorned with colourful patterns, and the yellow blossom scattered upon the ground brings to mind the steps at Varanasi, India. Within this dynamic composition, a sea of white-robed figures contrasts with the hubbub of colour; this complex place appears as one of pilgrimage, where people seek cures, enlightenment and solace, but also one that is potentially altogether more testing and unforgiving, as birds of prey swoop, and figures become submerged within a pool of poisonous water.

Its companion work, *Luft nach Schlag*, 2012, depicts the next chapter in this process; the calm after the storm, with a rich silence in which the beautiful mess of the past remains. This concrete, architectural form is a palimpsest, as the stains of yesterday colour the grey steps – a memory from the dynamism of the previous scene. Only one solitary figure remains, alone, centre stage. The last man standing, the authentic self that emerges after the deluge. One can clearly see the influence of Burgert's home city in this work, and indeed, Berlin, with its ever-changing urban spaces and graffitied walls, is intrinsic to the artist's oeuvre.

For *Gift gegen Zeit*, Burgert utilises Blain|Southern's newly refurbished, post-industrial gallery, which formerly housed the printing presses of *Der Tagesspiegel*. The scale of the paintings plays with that of the space itself, while the sculptures appear to emerge directly from the canvases, as if crawling into their three-dimensional form. Modelled in clay and cast in bronze, each is finished with Burgert's extraordinarily vibrant palette to form cohesiveness between the wall and floor-based works, which are experienced by the viewer as one and the same.

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Notes to Editors:

Jonas Burgert graduated from the Universität der Künste, Berlin, in 1996, and subsequently studied for a postgraduate title (Meisterschüler) under Professor Dieter Hacker in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include: Jonas Burgert: Enigmatic Narrative, Victoria H. Myhren Gallery, University of Denver (2008); Jonas Burgert, Arndt & Partner, Berlin (2008); Jonas Burgert: Hitting every head, Haunch of Venison, London (2009); Jonas Burgert: Lebendversuch, Kunsthalle Tübingen, Germany (2010); Jonas Burgert: Lebendversuch, Kunsthalle Krems, Austria (2011). Burgert lives and works in Berlin.