

JONAS BURGERT

ZEITLAICH

29 April — 29 July 2017

Vernissage: Friday 28 April 2017, 6-9pm

Blain|Southern
Potsdamer Straße 77-87
10785 Berlin

For Gallery Weekend Berlin 2017, painter Jonas Burgert returns to exhibit in his hometown, presenting his largest work to date: a 22m landscape painting that spans almost the entire length of the gallery. This vast psychological drama is faced by full-length portraits of figures on the opposing wall, who stare into the scene, posing the question whether they are passive observers or instigators of the chaos.

Jonas Burgert aims to personify human psychology through figurative painting. Astutely observing the minutiae of daily life, he bears witness to the entire range of human emotion. Loneliness, hatred, revenge, vanity and excess – a parade of human expressions feeds his imagination - giving form to the characters within his tableaux.

Dominating the gallery at 22 metres in length, this latest work teems with fantastical figures and obscure objects of every kind. With this size of canvas, Burgert forces the viewer's perspective so they become immersed in the detail of individual vignettes within the larger painting. Physical and mental effort is required to comprehend the picture in its entirety. This approach to scale offers the artist space in which to unfurl expansive pictorial dramas and explore non-linear storytelling. Having previously worked on canvases up to 8 metres in length, Burgert describes his need to paint on a large-scale as 'not wanting to shrink the themes I'm interested in' and sees his smaller paintings as extracted details of these expansive worlds.

The studies of individual subjects on the opposite wall are characters removed from the heavily populated scene facing them. Works like *Dachte Sie* (2016), where a serene countenance stares towards the viewer, have a quiet stillness that contrasts with the frenetic panorama facing them. The space between each work echoes a sense of isolation in the characters. Each seemingly possesses a highly individual inner world, but is inseparably connected to the mass. This idea is further expressed through the disconnection between the figures in the large landscape, who never make eye contact with one another.

Writing in the catalogue for the artist's recent museum show at MAMbo Bologna, the renowned curator David Anfam writes, '*It is hard to think of another contemporary who manipulates colour with a legerdemain comparable to Burgert*'. As with his choice of objects and costumed characters in his scenes, his vivid tones are neither attributable to a particular time or location. As Burgert says: '*the concept of time is really open in my work. I try to create settings and events that cannot be easily assigned to particular times; that stand between times. In fact what I find interesting is the subtext of things and what exists in between.*'

These ideas of time, other dimensions and emotional undercurrents are also reflected in the ruptured layers of Burgert's environments. Often breached by characters and architectural features, these tears in the pictorial plane reveal various levels existing simultaneously. It is his dedication to the painterly exploration of colour, form and character, alongside more existential and sociological studies, that make Jonas Burgert such a unique presence amongst contemporary artists.



Jonas Burgert, *Dachte Sie*, 2016, 240 x 180 cm
Courtesy the artist and Blain|Southern
Photo: Lepkowski Studios

Notes to Editors

About the artist

Jonas Burgert (b.1969, Berlin, Germany) graduated in 1996 from the Academy of Fine Arts, Berlin and consecutively studied for a post graduate title (Meisterschueler) under Professor Dieter Hacker in Berlin. Burgert is a pivotal figure within the Berlin art scene, who renovated an abandoned factory into a complex of studios for himself and fellow artists. Together they launched an exhibition of over 100 international artists, which was informally dubbed as Berlin's *Artist Weekend*, attracting thousands of visitors during Gallery Weekend Berlin 2015.

Selected solo exhibitions include: *Jonas Burgert: Lebendversuch*, Kunsthalle Tübingen (2010-2011); *Jonas Burgert: Lebendversuch*, Kunsthalle Krems (2011); *Gift gegen Zeit*, Blain|Southern, Berlin (2012); *Schutt und Futter*, Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover (2013) and *STÜCK HIRN BLIND*, Blain|Southern, London (2014) and *Lotsucht*, MAMbo Museum, Bologna, IT (2017).

About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an international roster of contemporary artists and is the world-wide representative of The Estate of Lynn Chadwick. The gallery's recent exhibitions include Tim Noble & Sue Webster, Nasan Tur, Chiharu Shiota, Ed Moses, Bruce Nauman, Abdoulaye Konaté and the critically acclaimed group show, *Revolt of the Sage*.

Blain|Southern
Potsdamer Straße 77-87
10785 Berlin

Monday to Friday: 10am - 6pm
Saturday: 10am - 5pm

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Jonas Burgert, *trag früh*, 2017, 240 x 180 cm
Courtesy the artist and Blain|Southern
Photo: Lepkowski Studios