

Romantic Idealists

Dreams — Utopias — Visions of Seven Exceptional Artists
August 28, 2019 — February 16, 2020

Julius Bockelt (*1983, lives in Frankfurt, Germany)

For many years, day after day, Julius Bockelt has been watching the skies and their changing cloud formations. He photographs some of these clouds in order to share them with other people and digitalizes them in his cloud archive. More than 27.000 photos have been digitalized, a multiple has been stored in his head. He is not interested in meteorological phenomena but in the fleeting magic and the poetry of these ephemeral spectacles. Julius Bockelt is equally fascinated by soap bubbles as the mysteriously magnetic film accompanying the exhibition shows. The fact that Bockelt also makes sound installations comes as no surprise given his passion for transient phenomena. His sound installations are in dialogue with his graphic work. He creates multilayered drawings where lines cluster into patterns or raster with moiré effects that recall representations of interferences in physics.

Urs Hanselmann (*1958, lives in Zürich, CH)

«I am what I am» is the leitmotiv that Urs Hanselmann adopted for his path as an artist and in life. These words are his reservoir of creative strength. Without eying the art market, he works with inferior materials — materials that mean a rejection of the idealization of our consumerist, throwaway society. In an increasingly digitalized world, news-papers have become a precious material to him. Rolled into small cylinders by the thousands, the papers are turned into large-format, relief-like objects or six-foot tall figures biding their time and instead of raising a storm, show more and more traces of deterioration, thus bearing witness to transience. Creation, life, survival, failure and decay, courage and disappointment are the subjects that inspire Hanselmann's work.

Julia Krause-Harder (*1973, lives in Frankfurt, Germany)

Julia Krause-Harder is convinced that the bones of the hitherto unearthed dinosaurs are calling her. This call is her life's work. Meticulously and in a scientific spirit, she looks for bones in international museums, pursuing her goal of building life-size copies of all 800 dinosaur species in order to save them for posterity. Two out of the 31 dinosaurs that have already been recreated are set up in the Musée Visionnaire, namely the rhamphorhynchus (2015) and the pteranodon (2013), one of Krause-Harder's very first copy.

On November 12, the dinosaur specialist Krause-Harder will impart her knowledge to an audience at the Musée Visionnaire and give an account of her mission to resurrect those creatures that died out 66 million years ago.

Parzival' (*1942, lives in Sonceboz-Sombeval, CH)

Parzival', peace activist and climate soldier, Ambassadeur du Soleil, Pharaon Green Shoe, or Monsieur Le Vert fights for nothing less than paradise on earth. Always clad in green from head to toe, he installed the "seat of world government" in Sonceboz-Sombeval (Jura mountains) and from there, he works incessantly for world peace. To him, Esperanto, the constructed international auxiliary language, is the cornerstone for understanding others and thus key to world peace. Therefore, he has been engaged in spreading this language for decades and set up an Esperanto class that meets every Thursday afternoon at 4 p.m. at the local Migros restaurant. He has invited powerful world leaders to join it. For free, of course. Money in the common sense of the word should be abolished in his view since it leads to war among financial powers. Instead, all countries should introduce the currency Espero that, in analogy to Esperanto, is the same in all countries and not based on political or cultural backgrounds. Hoping that one day Espero will set the tone and contribute to peace, Parzival' continues to laminate paper coins and bank notes and gives them out graciously to visitors at his "seat of world government" — visitors are always welcome.

Ilmari Salminen (1929–2008, lived in Helsinki, Finland)

At age 14, Ilmari Salminen, nicknamed «Imppu», was moved to his uncle in Petäjävesi, a village in the middle of Finland, to keep him safe from WWII which Finland had joined. At first, Salminen survived as a farm hand on his uncle's property. After his death, he took over the entire farm. In 1994, Salminen moved into a wooden hut in the woods of Metsäkulma, outside of Petäjävesi, that belonged to a friend of his, Pekka Strömberg. Over the course of time, he turned the whole hut into a Gesamtkunstwerk. Filled with treasures including a variety of telephones, photo cameras, transmitters and radios, he turned "Imppulandia", his home, into a form of outstation for interplanetary communication. Here, Salminen liked to receive guests and communicated with the terrestrial and

extra-terrestrial world.

Vanda Vieira-Schmidt (*1949, lives in Berlin, Germany)

At age 46, Vanda Vieira-Schmidt went through a severe psychological crisis that precipitated her work in the service of world peace. Since then, she has been painting and drawing against evil in this world. In one single day, she creates 10, 100, or even 1,000 watercolors as part of her "project to save the world", which is how she calls her work. 500,000 to 700,000 pages have been created thus far. Each page carries magic motifs, signs and numbers and, arranged into "paper batteries", i.e. large piles of paper, contributes to world peace. The artist believes that if a page is sent or faxed at the right moment to the right person, a military conflict could be extenuated or even forestalled.

Ben Wilson (*1963 in Cambridge, lives in London, UK)

What began tentatively in 1998, became a life's work. For the past 15 years, Ben Wilson has roamed the streets, mostly in London, as the chewing gum man. Equipped with a blow torch, tiny brushes and shiny acrylic paint, he wanders through the urban canyons. Day after day and in every type of weather, he looks for discarded chewing gums on the ground, picks out his targets carefully, and, in exchange for a small fee to pedestrians who watch him, he turns a gum into a daedal, colorful, unique miniature. This is how he makes his living. But even if he cannot find a sponsor, he stays the course. First, he heats the gum with his torch, smoothes it out and coats it, and then paints it according to the specifications of his sponsors, and finishes it with a clear seal. The process takes several hours. Over 10'000 small originals have thus been created.

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Proofreading: Gernot Mair

Translation: Françoise Dufey (Fr.), Dr. Nina Zimnik (Engl.)

Graphic Art: Afrika Design Studio, Florian Jakober & Michael Zehnder

Assistance & exhibition design and construction: Freddy Biniok, Meret Draeyer, Monika Egli, Irmelin Fischer, Norbert Günther, Sarah Lebeck-Jobe, Sinai Mutzner, Samira Nann, Mägi Rizzi

Art education: Manuela Hitz, Anna Ninck, Michèle Matthäus, Yvonne Türler

The following people, foundations, or institutions supported the exhibition «Romantic Idealists»:
Max Amman, Atelier Goldstein (Frankfurt), Beitragsfonds des Finanzdepartements der Stadt Zürich, Elisabeth Weber-Stiftung, Dr. Jörg Furrer, Spendenstiftung Bank Vontobel, Temperatio-Stiftung, Luc Volatier, and other anonymous donors and members of the Musée Visionnaire.

Thank you!

Special thanks to all the volunteers behind the scenes and at the reception as well to all people who support the Musée Visionnaire pro bono.

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