



LUTZ AND GUGGISBERG

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Swiss artists Andres Lutz and Anders Guggisberg have worked together since 1996, creating worlds of their own in interconnected works that combine installation, sculpture, photography, video and painting. At their recent exhibit in Kriens, canton Lucerne, they share their views on their careers to date, and the future paths they wish to take.

Lutz and Guggisberg undoubtedly have a wry sense of humour. Their work is full of visual illusion and wordplay, often with a note of irony and a lot of playfulness. Some of their best known pieces are Bibliothek (Library), a growing library of hundreds of fake books, and Brut (Brood), an installation of a flock of birds which they constructed from the wood of packing crates and then set on fire. The charred remains of the flock render them to something between completed and destroyed.

They have been described as makers and collectors, and are comfortable with this portrayal. They explain that they bring together found objects to “make a new whole”. This is also an apt description for their new exhibit at the Museum im Bellpark, Kriens which offers an intriguing compilation of old and new. They have taken some past works never on display before, and modified them for the installations. Of course, they have also composed many new paintings and abstract configurations in wood and concrete – a contrast between nature and urbanisation.

Born in Switzerland in the 1960s, the two have been collaborating for nearly 20 years, though they prefer to speak about their art rather than how their artistic partnership came to being. Despite their preference, seeing them interact, it is impossible not to ask how this friendship and creative partnership developed, and why it's still so strong today, two decades later.

After a tour of the exhibit in Kriens, we sit together and they explain where it all began. “We got to know each other one evening in a bar, where Andres was performing,” explains Guggisberg. “From there, we went on to make proper exhibitions together. They have no explanation for why the partnership works – it just does and therefore it isn't something they want to dissect.

Their talent was recognised early on, beginning with the award of a scholarship for art from the city of Zurich in 1999.

They have gone on to win a host of prizes, including the Swiss Federal Prize for Art. Today, they live and work in Zurich, where they are now an established part of the growing art scene. Their work is exhibited regularly in museums and galleries around the world.

Surprisingly, neither of them set out to be artists. “I never wanted to become an artist. I wanted to create things and it was not necessarily art – I could have just as easily worked with sounds or music,” says Guggisberg. “Andres was perhaps more into performance than wanting to be an artist. Later, it turned out differently.”

It is that chance meeting that turned them both towards a successful career in art, a milestone they don't take for granted. Every time they can exhibit or sell their artworks is a mark of recognition for them that fuels them to build on their significant repertoire. “To buy a piece of art is proof of confi-



Diver / Hole in the Mirror, 2011

dence in the artist,” Lutz explains. “We are very pleased to be in this position.” Time and recognition breed confidence. “We are now in the middle of our career and, personally, art critics now matter less to us,” Lutz says.

Their work sells regularly and they have become used to parting with their creations, seeing it as part of the artistic journey. “When I get the opportunity to see a piece of work that I have sold again after a couple of years, it is always a cool sensation, a reunion of sorts,” Guggisberg explains. “When we sell, it is not the end of our piece of art, but the beginning of its own journey.”

Recently, the artists showed up at the Bank’s Zurich head office to revisit their works now on display in the client zone. Over the past 13 years, the Julius Baer Art Committee has purchased 11 pieces from the duo. “It was fun for us to go to the reception of the Bank and explain that we are the artists of the current exhibit showcased in their client zone,” Lutz explains with a smile. The two enjoy being spontaneous, which is also reflected in their art. While they work hard to keep up their game, the way they develop their ideas is seemingly unstructured and natural.

There is, however, a certain degree of pressure that comes from being successful artists – the pressure to keep producing. “We are, of course, happy to be in a position to be able to survive with what we prefer to do. It also has the consequence that you have to keep on working all the time and reinvent,” Lutz explains. “We are happy with what we have achieved, but it is also hard work.”

The two of them meet at their Zurich atelier every morning, Monday through Fridays. They work separately, or together, but however they work on a given day, finding new sources of inspiration is not a problem. “We are in the wonderful position where we always have plenty of ideas,” Guggisberg explains. In fact, he says they are motivated by finding answers to many questions. “We ask ourselves what channels we want to go into. Where do we want to go? At what flow? At what speed?”

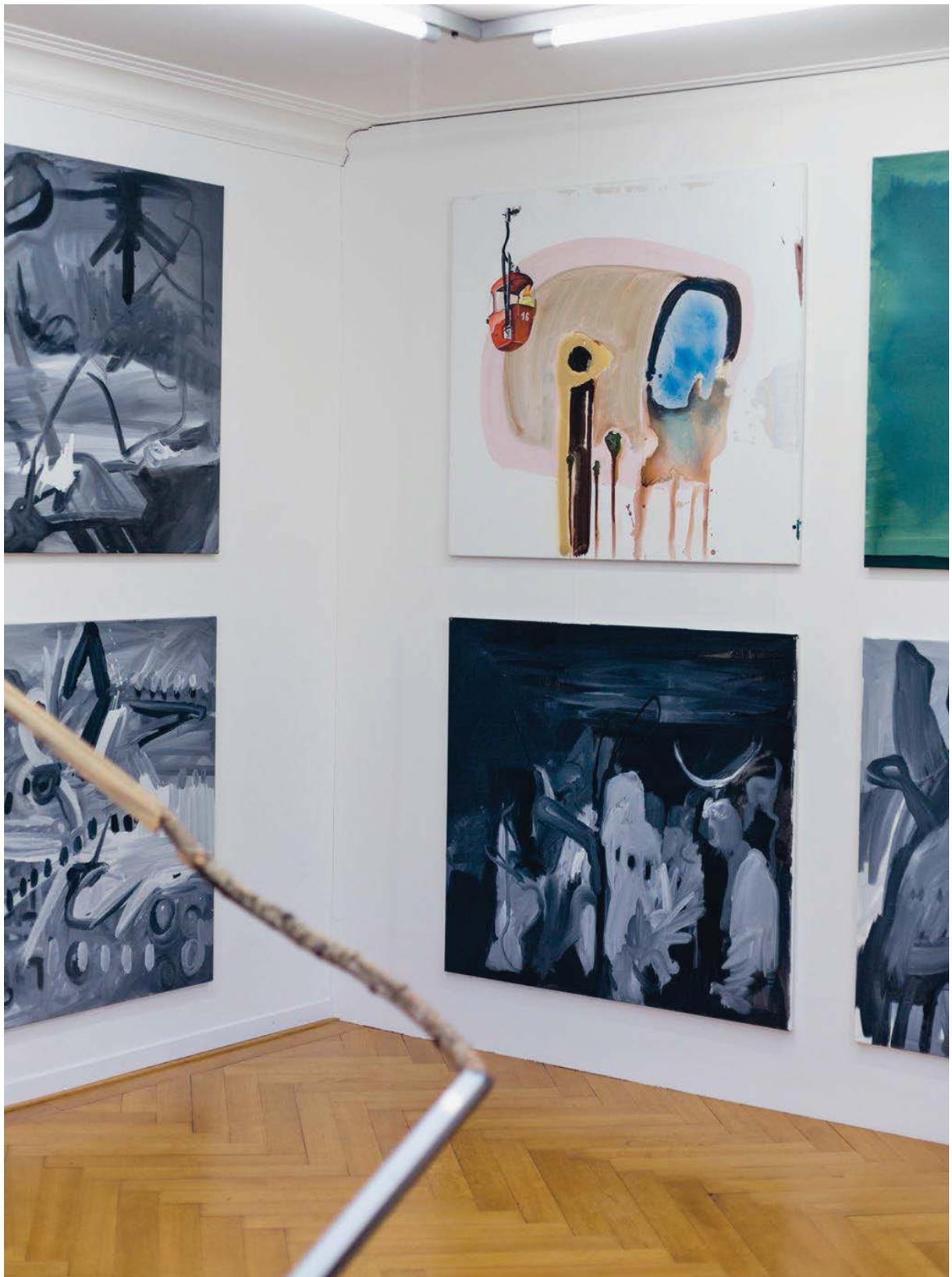
The diversity of Lutz and Guggisberg’s work to date is impressive. “Our work is really varied. We have had years where we worked mainly with the theatre, and others where our focus was primarily exhibitions. Currently, we are working on two major site-specific art projects. And we are pleased to be working with concrete again,” Guggisberg explains. “Working with concrete is so different from preparing exhibits. That is such a nice change.”

Whatever their current medium of choice, one can be certain that the outcome will be stimulating, imaginative and a great pleasure to view.



Cone, 2014

THE JULIUS BAER ART COLLECTION CONTAINS 11 WORKS OF ART BY LUTZ AND GUGGISBERG. THE COLLECTION FOCUSES ON SWISS CONTEMPORARY ART.



First floor exhibition, 2014
Museum im Bellpark, Kriens