

PRESS RELEASE

Jonas Burgert
Lotsucht / Scandagliodipendenza
curated by Laura Carlini Fanfogna

Istituzione Bologna Musei | MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna
26 January - 17 April 2017
Opening: 25 January 2017 h 6 p.m.

Jonas Burgert's first solo show in Italy, *Lotsucht / Scandagliodipendenza*, opens at MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna on 26 January. Curated by Laura Carlini Fanfogna, the exhibition will fill the vast space of the Sala delle Ciminiere with 38 mostly large-format paintings created by the German artist over the last decade.

A master of imaginative figurative painting, with each brush stroke Burgert creates carefully constructed scenes filled with complexity. His works depict his vision of the theatre that is human existence, examining the instinctive need for humans to give sense, direction and purpose to their lives. This exploration encompasses realms of reason, imagination and desire, generating monumental landscapes crowded with fantastic figures of different proportions: monkeys and zebras, skeletons and harlequins, Amazons and children.

These dynamic pictorial dramas generate a strong sense of unease in the viewer: the subjects depicted wear masks and costumes, walls and floors split open to reveal piles of bodies or liquids, while an inexplicable darkness looms everywhere.

Referenced in the exhibition's title, the **plumb line** is a symbol of inner balance and a motif that appears frequently in Burgert's paintings. Compulsively plumbing our reality is something of an obsession for the artist. He chooses to examine existential questions with his paintings and does not shy from venturing into dark corners to explore our emotions, obsessions and demons. The viewer is confronted with a chaotic world that echoes the confusion and anxiety of current events and leaves them without any grounding. His aim is to push at the limits of personal knowledge in order to strengthen our reasons for being in the here and now and restore one's centre of gravity.

According to Laura Carlini Fanfogna, curator of the exhibition, *"His works show neither violence nor blood, yet their imminent presence shows through. Burgert's paintings have the power of bringing to the surface and absorb our ancestral fears, freeing us from them. In this clear creative flair and in his vibrant interpretation, Burgert includes a specific element to be found throughout his work: the female figure. Mysterious and decisive women stand out on the can-*

vas, instinctively conscious of their faith. The sorceresses know those secrets and truths man is frantically looking for. The sibyls come from afar, united in divination. The Michelangiolesque turbans and mannerist colors reinterpreted in a postmodern key play with the delicate chiaroscuros. They evoke the oracle virgins, the imperturbable caryatids and perhaps symbolize the archetypal almightiness of the Great Mother while dipping her into the moods of the Raben Mutter, the degenerate mother, she who disregards her offspring. Jonas' plumb bob relentlessly plumbs the deepest depths of the abysses".

The works that are on display at MAMbo consist of both monumental canvases which provide space for sprawling narratives of compositional complexity and smaller paintings which focus on the study of individual subjects, portraits that push the figures portrayed into the foreground, as if under a microscope.

As written by David Anfam, author of one of the critical texts included in the extensive **catalogue** published by Edizioni MAMbo and accompanying the exhibition " (...) *Burgert defies the logic of realistic images in a way that places him in a (far more) up-to-date context. Poetically speaking, many of Burgert's titles eschew commonplace meaning and are elusive/allusive rather than explanatory. When I asked the artist as to why, even with my modest command of the German language, I found these words hard to grasp, his disarming answer was that they are mostly untranslatable and even baffling in the original. Similarly, rather than assume Woringer's loaded concept of "empathy/Einführung", Burgert instead speaks of Empfindung, thereby opposing a cooler, more objective attitude lacking in overt emotionalism, kitsch and the like. Visually, too, there are the disorientating changes in scale between one part of a painting and another; the oft-remarked fact that his figures, hominoids and other protagonists almost never seem to make eye contact (or any other kind of emotive contact for that matter) with each other; and especially the idiosyncratic use of color. It is hard to think of another contemporary who manipulates color with a legerdemain comparable to Burgert".*

The exhibition is part of the **Polis** section of fifth edition of **ART CITY Bologna**, an institutional program of exhibitions, events and cultural initiatives developed jointly by the **Municipality of Bologna** and **BolognaFiere**. During **Arte Fiera**, it offers new opportunities to discover and learn about artistic heritage through a dialogue with contemporary art.

We would like to thank **Blain | Southern** for their kind cooperation and precious support.

SHORT BIO

Jonas Burgert was born in 1969 in Berlin, where he lives and works. His principal solo exhibitions include: Jonas Burgert, *STÜCK HIRN BLIND* at Blain | Southern in London (2014); *Schutt und Futter* at the Kestnergesellschaft in Hannover (2013), *Gift gegen Zeit / Poison Against Time*, at Blain | Southern in Berlin (2012); *Jonas Burgert Lebendversuch*, at the Kun-

sthalles in Krems and at the Kunsthalle in Tübingen (2011 and 2010); *Zweiter Tag Nichts* at the MCA in Denver, Promenade Space (2008)

General information: www.mambo-bologna.org

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Sunday and Festivities h 10.00 am - 6.00 pm

Thursday, Friday and Saturday h 10.00 am - 6.00 pm, closed on Mondays

OPENING HOURS DURING ART CITY Bologna 2017

Friday 27 January h 10.00 am - 8.00 pm; Saturday 28 January h 10.00 am - midnight; Sunday 29 January h 10.00 am - 8.00 pm

TICKETS

Exhibition full ticket € 6. Exhibition reduced ticket € 4 (Card Musei Metropolitani Bologna and others)

Exhibition + MAMbo and Museo Morandi Permanent Collections full ticket € 10

Exhibition + MAMbo and Museo Morandi Permanent Collections reduced ticket € 8

Free for ARTE FIERA ticket holders (only during ART CITY Bologna)

Press information:

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The complete exhibition's press kit is available for download, after registration, from the MAMbo website: <http://www.mambo-bologna.org/en/ufficiostampa/cartellestampa/>

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LIST OF WORKS

Graufeld / Camprigio, 2003

graphite on paper

320 x 630 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Vertrauter / Il Confidente, 2008

oil on canvas

150 x 170 cm

Private Collection, San Sebastian, Spain

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Sand brennt Blatt / Sabbia brucia Foglia, 2010

oil on canvas

240 x 240 cm

Private Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Lotsucht / Scandagliodipendenza, 2007

oil on canvas

300 x 400 cm

Hamburger Kunsthalle

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Kaltlauf / Prova a freddo, 2010

oil on canvas

300 x 240 cm

Burger Collection, Hong Kong

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Stück Hirn / Pezzo di cervello, 2009

oil on canvas

380 x 495 cm

Olbricht Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Gifter / Velenatore, 2009

oil on canvas

250 x 220 cm

Private Collection, Basel

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Falle / Trappola, 2010

oil on canvas

240 x 240 cm

Collection Thuault-Lemogne

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Ohne Titel / Senza Titolo, 2008

oil on canvas

60 x 50 cm

AmC Collezione Coppola

photo © Rainer Iglar

Schutt und Futter / Macerie e Mangime, 2012

oil on canvas

380 x 600 cm

Private Collection, Basel

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Stückfrass / Corrosione, 2013

oil on canvas

240 x 300 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

puls führt / guida di polso, 2014

oil on canvas

240 x 280 cm

Private Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Luft nach Schlag / Boccheggia, 2012/13

oil on canvas

400 x 690 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

immer Kopf / sempre Testa, 2012

oil on canvas

220 x 200 cm

Private Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Leiblaub / Corpi caduchi, 2014

oil on canvas

220 x 200 cm

Roxana and Marwan Karam

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Euchmeute / Brancoavoi, 2013

oil on canvas

240 x 300 cm

Private Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Licht lügt / Luce bugiarda, 2014

oil on canvas

240 x 220 cm

Collection of Anna and Philip Beatty

photo © Lepkowski Studios

licht und nicht und sticht / luce, ombra, traguardo, 2014

oil on canvas

280 x 440 cm

Private Collection, Berlin

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Haltstand / Tenuta eretta, 2012

oil on canvas

300 x 200 cm

Olbricht Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Hälfte Schläfe / Metà Tempia, 2014

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Berlin

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Feinschaft / Fini legami, 2012

oil on canvas

120 x 100 cm

Private Collection

photo © Lepkowski Studios

immer / sempre, 2014

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Gutlaub / Buonfoggia, 2014

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

laubt sich / si sfoggia, 2016

oil on canvas

300 x 220 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Vieche / Bestiana, 2016

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Austria

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Schliefe / Dormina, 2016

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Berlin, Germany

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Schwinde / Sparria, 2016

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Hamburg, Germany

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Fänger / Accalappiatore, 2014

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

leis / liebe, 2016

oil on canvas

280 x 220 cm

Private Collection, Switzerland

photo © Lepkowski Studios

scheucht / scaccia, 2014

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Schmiege / Stringia, 2016

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Berlin

photo © Lepkowski Studios

tarnt / camuffa, 2016

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Switzerland

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Winden / Avviluppa, 2016

oil on canvas

300 x 220 cm

Burger Collection, Hong Kong

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Leugne / Negalia, 2016

oil on canvas

300 x 220 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Neige / Clina, 2016

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

bleibleib / restacorpo, 2016

oil on canvas

300 x 220 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

ihr Schön / suo Belmondo, 2016

oil on canvas

400 x 690 cm

The Artist

photo © Lepkowski Studios

Hellwild / Selvaggina, 2013

oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm

Private Collection, Brescia

photo © Lepkowski Studios