

ROTWAND

Sabina Kohler & Bettina Meier-Bickel

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Filib Schürmann

Documentation



unsorgfältig aufgeräumtes schlachtfeld meiner gedanken (1), 2016
Acrylic, spray and ink on paper
150 x 324 cm (59 x 127 1/2 in)

*doppelte hilflosigkeit (verursacht durch fast hunderterlei
gedankenstromschläge), 2015*
Acrylic, spray paint, paint and ink on paper
200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 in)
Photo credit: Conradin Frei





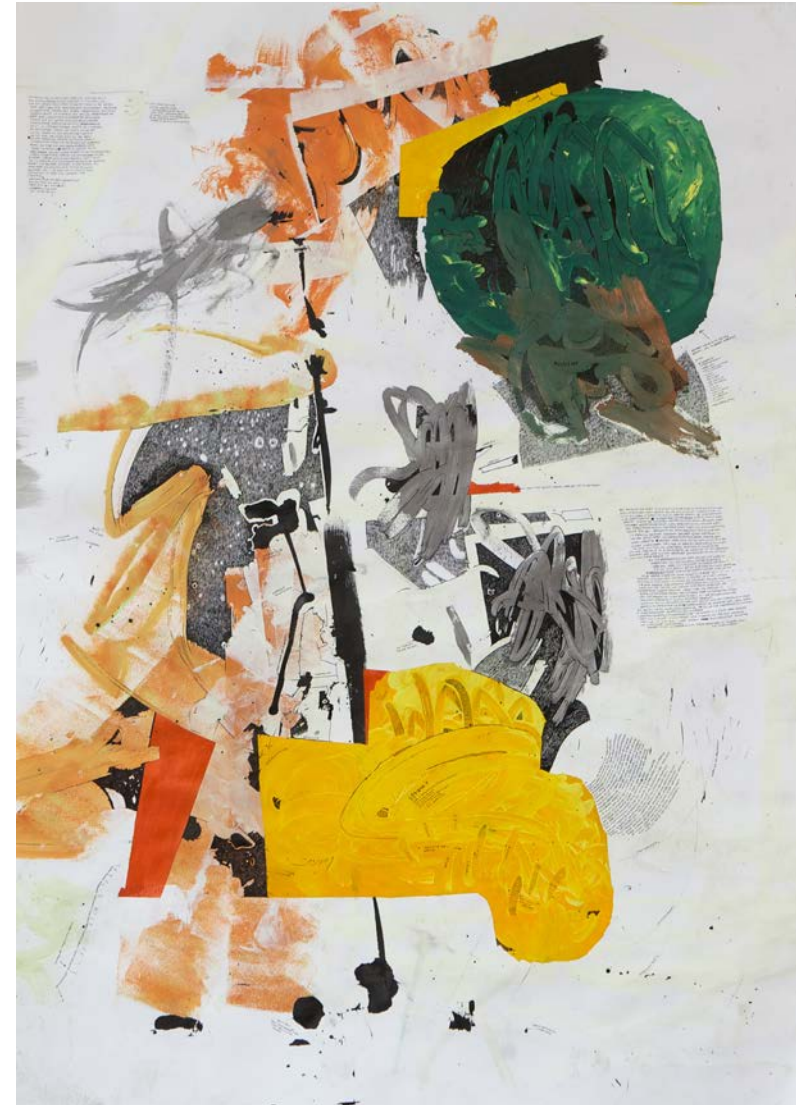
Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2015
Photo credit: Conradin Frei

eingeklemmt zwischen gegenwart und zukunft, 2015
Acrylic and ink on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)





*in den seilschaften temporärer beobachtungspos-
ten (hängend) 2*
(aus; „zwischenmurks“), 2015
Acrylic, spray paint, paint and ink on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)



*anleitung wie ich aus dem schatten der aussicht-
losigkeit treten könnte (nämlich trennen und einzeln betrachten)*, 2015
Acrylic, paint and ink on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2015
Photo credit: Conradin Frei



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2015
Photo credit: Conradin Frei



aufgeblähtes ich im schatten meiner existenz
(aus; "trügerische rahmenbedingungen"), 2014
Acrylic, spray paint and ink on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)



perspektiven der angst (3), 2014
Acrylic, spray paint and ink on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2015
Photo credit: Conradin Frei



Ohne Titel, 2015
Black and white photography from Super 8 mm colour film
22 x 31 cm (8 5/8 x 12 1/4 in), framed
Unique
Photo credit: Conradin Frei



Ohne Titel, 2015
Black and white photography from Super 8 mm colour film
31 x 22 cm (12 1/4 x 8 5/8 in), framed
Unique
Photo credit: Conradin Frei



Ohne Titel, 2015
Black and white photography from Super 8 mm colour film
31 x 22 cm (12 1/4 x 8 5/8 in), framed
Unique
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Black and white photography from Super 8 mm colour film
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FILIB SCHÜRMAN

October 22 – December 19, 2015
Opening: Wednesday, October 21, 6-8 pm

It is with great pleasure that we announce our third solo exhibition with Filib Schürmann (*1976) at Rotwand.

It is no surprise to know that Filib Schürmann is a great admirer of Samuel Beckett's work and, he says, the writer is more of an inspiration than the great artists of the past. In fact, it seems that the essence of Beckett runs through the pulsating veins of Schürmann's works, from his early intimate works on paper to his most recent larger abstracts, although they have also absorbed a rich mix of sources along the way, including art brut, Greek mythology, Russian literature, William Blake, Egon Schiele, Francis Bacon, Robert Walser and the mystical writings of Jakob Lorber. 'My art has always been about existential questions,' he says. 'To search for meaning, for boundaries between reality and insanity.' And Schürmann does this by starting from zero. He never plans his work but puts his pen on the paper and begins to draw. This process expands outwards in the way he marks the surfaces with determined lines – with swirls, swipes, blots, lines, brushes, scrapes – all executed in various ways from pen to brush to finger. It is an instinctive, unconscious process that involves the construction of many layers of imagery, the results of which are the elaborate and delicately balanced results, as seen in works such as for example *the unnameable* (2013). 'The pens bring forward the unknown, the mysterious, the nameless,' he says. 'They breath life into the subconscious.'

Text has always been an integral part of Schürmann's work. A keen writer who has written poetry for years, he regards these inclusions as integral to the works – and he considers the words to be as visual as the marks he makes. Are they an expressive language of the bodily gesture? Schürmann isn't bothered whether people read the text or not. In that respect, the dynamism of his lines in both word and gesture blurs the boundaries between what is image and what is meaning. In this he perhaps shares with other existentialists the idea that words, for all their power, don't make the idea of reality any more understandable, and the inherent failure of these words (and here we can include images, too) to reflect a sense of self.

Take a look, for example, at his series *the unnameable*, the title of which is taken from the third section of *The Beckett Trilogy*. Gone are the spidery, inky black lines; in their place he has introduced a cacophony of colours and gestural techniques that battle with each other across the picture plane. Schürmann makes these works on the floor, again not knowing how he will start. But in each of them, he builds layers of robust lines, squiggles and wide strokes of colour across the paper. These are intensely rendered marks, each revealing the physical act of their execution. The marks are raw and have nowhere to hide. Free but exposed. Some are thin and frenetic, others are wide arcs of colour that penetrate the layers.

Within Schürmann's formless improvisation are the echoes of the past. There are suggestions of Henri Michaux's late coloured abstracts done at the end of his life; the lyrical abstractions of the Tachist Georges Mathieu; the seemingly child-like energy of Art Informel artist Pierre Tal-Coat or the performative abstraction of Japanese Gutai artist Kazuo Shiraga.

And what of the colours themselves? Some of the colours Schürmann uses seem to blend well with each other. We might see a subtle purple shade set amid a crisp light blue, the whole set against black. But then, into this palette he will drop toxic greens and sickly oranges. What is going on? Schürmann intentionally chooses lurid colours in order to subvert the predictability of how the eye might view this type of abstraction. He is not re-doing classic Art Informel or Tachisme but making his own path by injecting an element that threatens the harmony of the picture and adds to its identity.

And the result? Schürmann says that he likes the painting if he is 'irritated' by it. This wish to present the irritation on the surface of the work reflects an honesty in his work – he wants us to see his weaknesses, because they show that he is human. It is a display of vulnerability and, as he says, part of a drive to 'peer into every corner of human existence, to enter uncharted territory. To vanish. To lose myself. Every line a breath of air.' His words echo Beckett's own in *The Unnameable*: '...dying, living, being born, without any progress, without being able to yield, not knowing where you come from, where you are, where you are going, and whether it is possible to be somewhere else, to be different, without suspecting anything, without asking yourself anything, you can not, you're there, you do not know who, you do not know where, that thing remains clear where it is because one day you started to listen, because you can not stop anymore...'

Excerpts from "Starting from Zero" by Simon Grant, Collection Cahier d'artistes 2015 Pro Helvetia, Edizioni Periferia

In the exhibition at Rotwand, a number of photographic works and short films will be presented for the first time in addition to new drawings. Using his Super 8 camera, Schürmann filmed a number of his drawings and then selected segments of these images, which he subsequently enlarged and printed on photo paper as unique works. With the black-and-white photographs on view, Schürmann emphasizes individual details in the drawings that would otherwise go unnoticed. After enlarging these selected sections of the images, he then scratched the film emulsion blank - an approach that he incorporates into his short films. On these "fresh," transparent Super 8 film rolls, Schürmann uses ink and pen to draw short scenes suggesting interaction or reflection. Often a silhouette is used as a symbol for the human figure. Text and references to the work of Samuel Beckett can also be found in his films. Through the use of the photo booth as a presentation format, Schürmann creates a highly intimate viewing situation for the viewer, thus enabling an intensified experience of the work.

Ladina Hurst



an der schwelle der ewigkeit, 2015
Acrylic, spray paint, paint and ink on paper
200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 in)



aufgeblähtes ich im schatten meiner unsicherheiten (aus; trügerische rahmenbedingungen), 2015

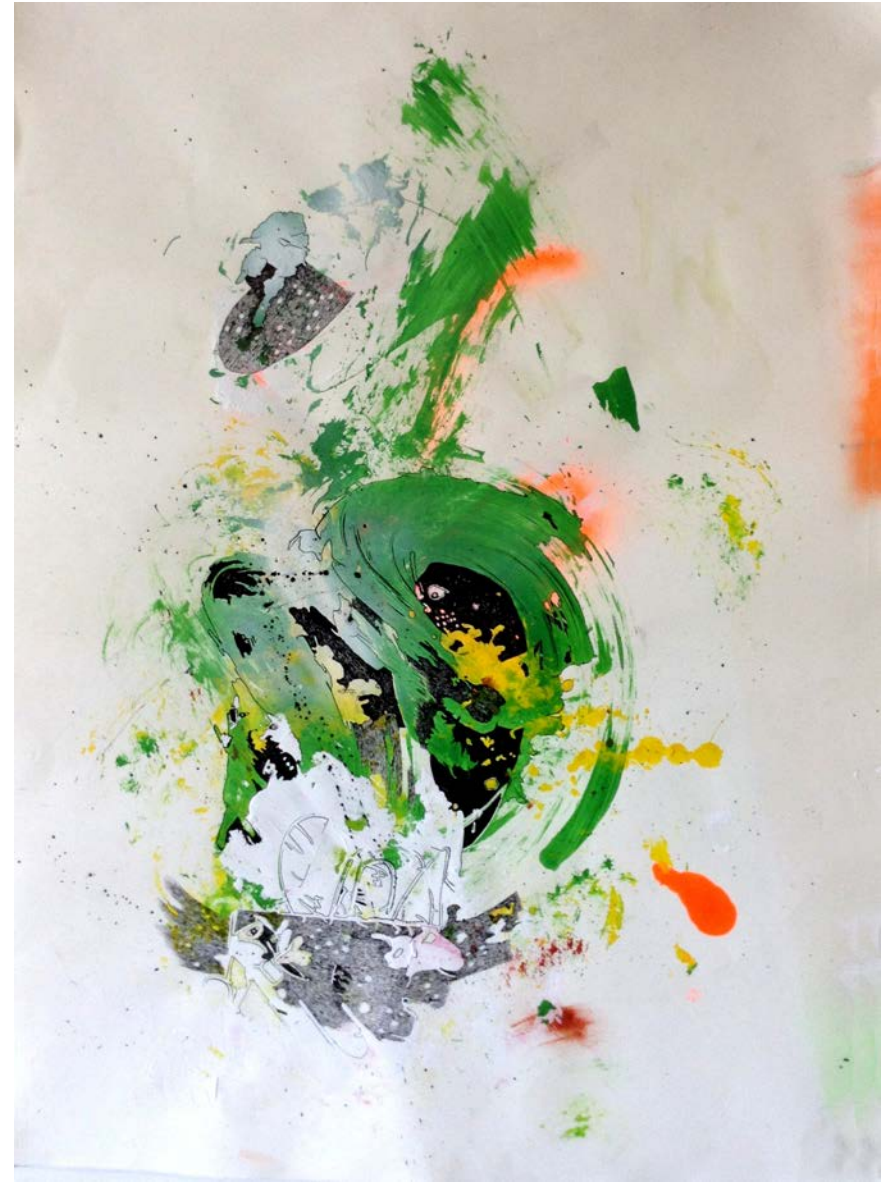
Acrylic, spray paint and ink on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)

Ohne Titel, 2014
Acrylic, spray paint, paint and ink on paper
200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 in)





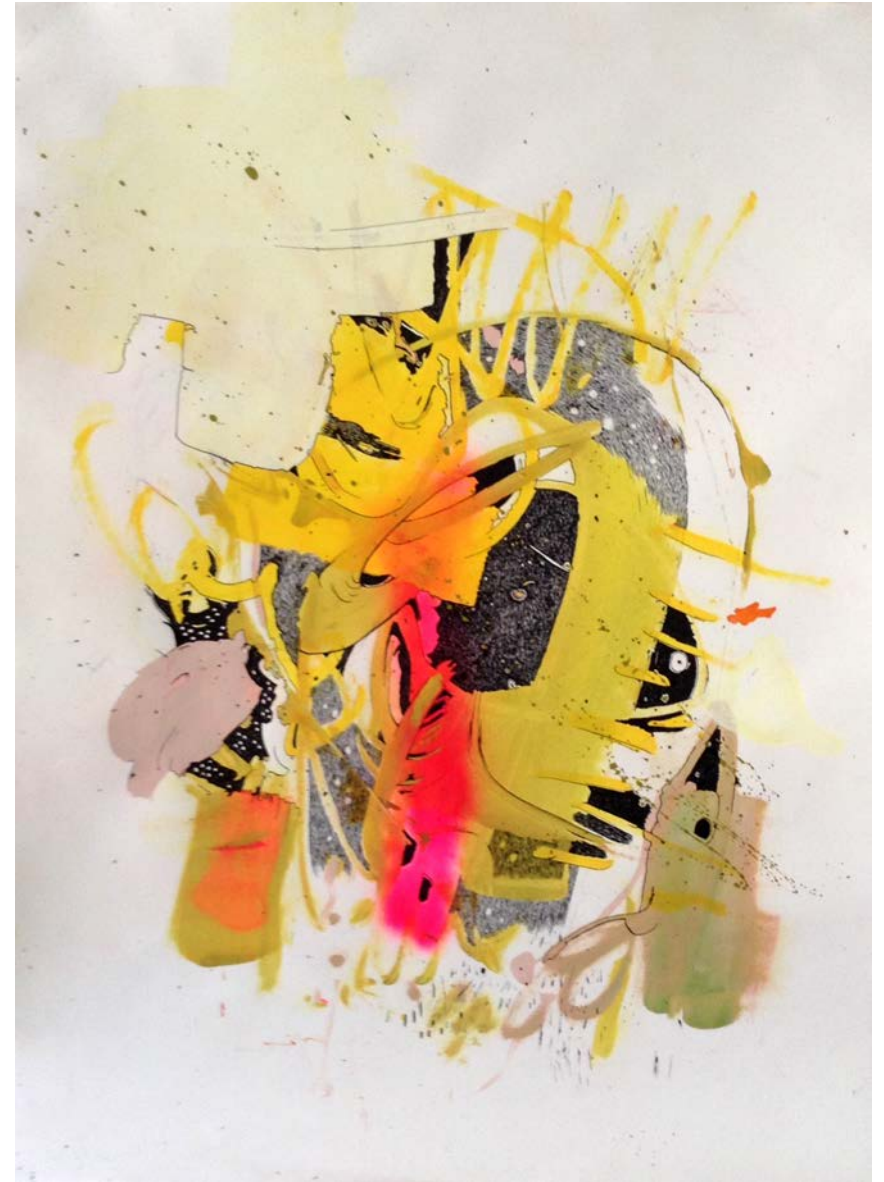
Ohne Titel, 2014
Mixed media on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2014
Mixed media on paper
106 x 78 cm (41 3/4 x 30 3/4 in)



aus; das namenlose (5), 2013
Mixed media on paper
140 x 100 cm (55 1/8 x 39 3/8 in)



aus; das namenlose (7), 2013
Mixed media on paper
106 x 78 cm (41 3/4 x 30 3/4 in)



aus; das namenlose (1), 2013
Mixed media on paper
200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 in)

aus; das namenlose (11), 2013
Mixed media on paper
139 x 97 cm (54 3/4 x 38 1/4 in)





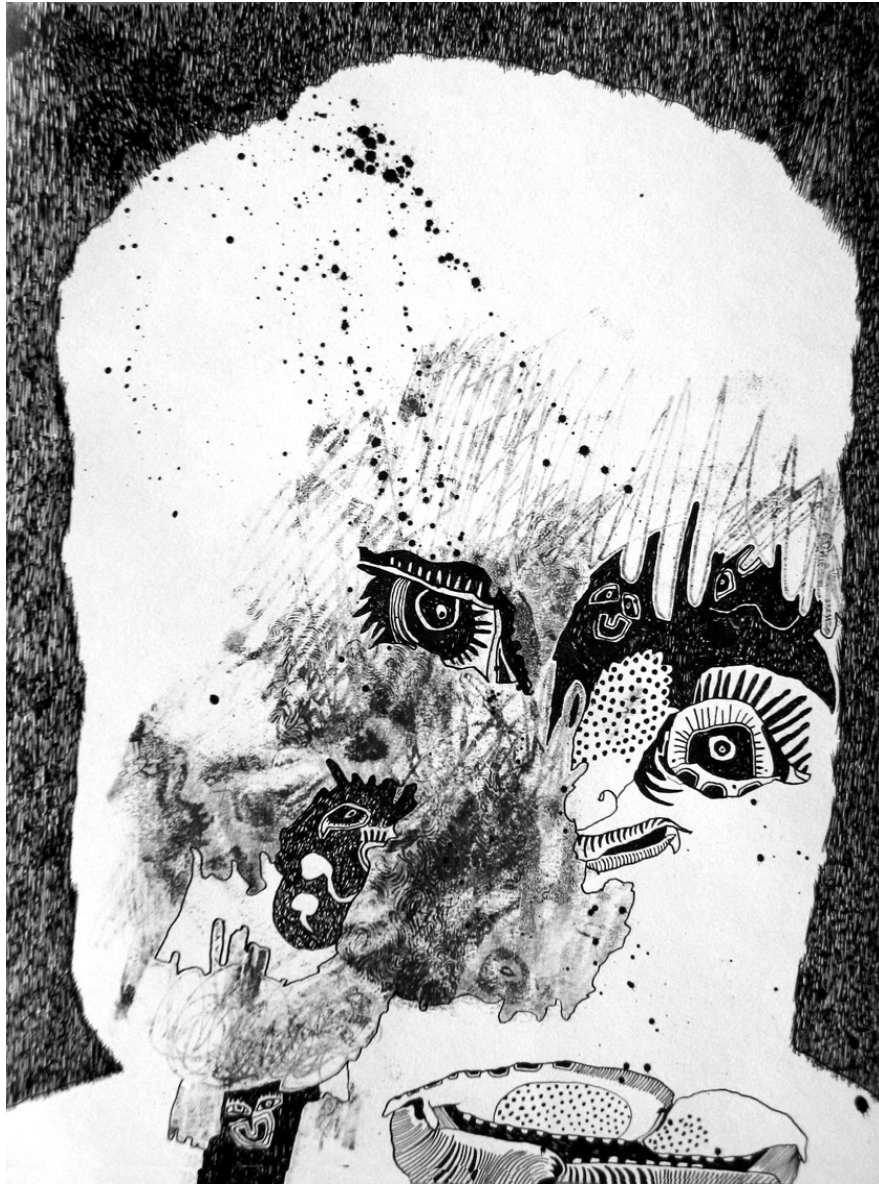
Kaliumiodid 65 mg, 2012
Mixed media on paper
150 x 150 cm (59 x 59 in)



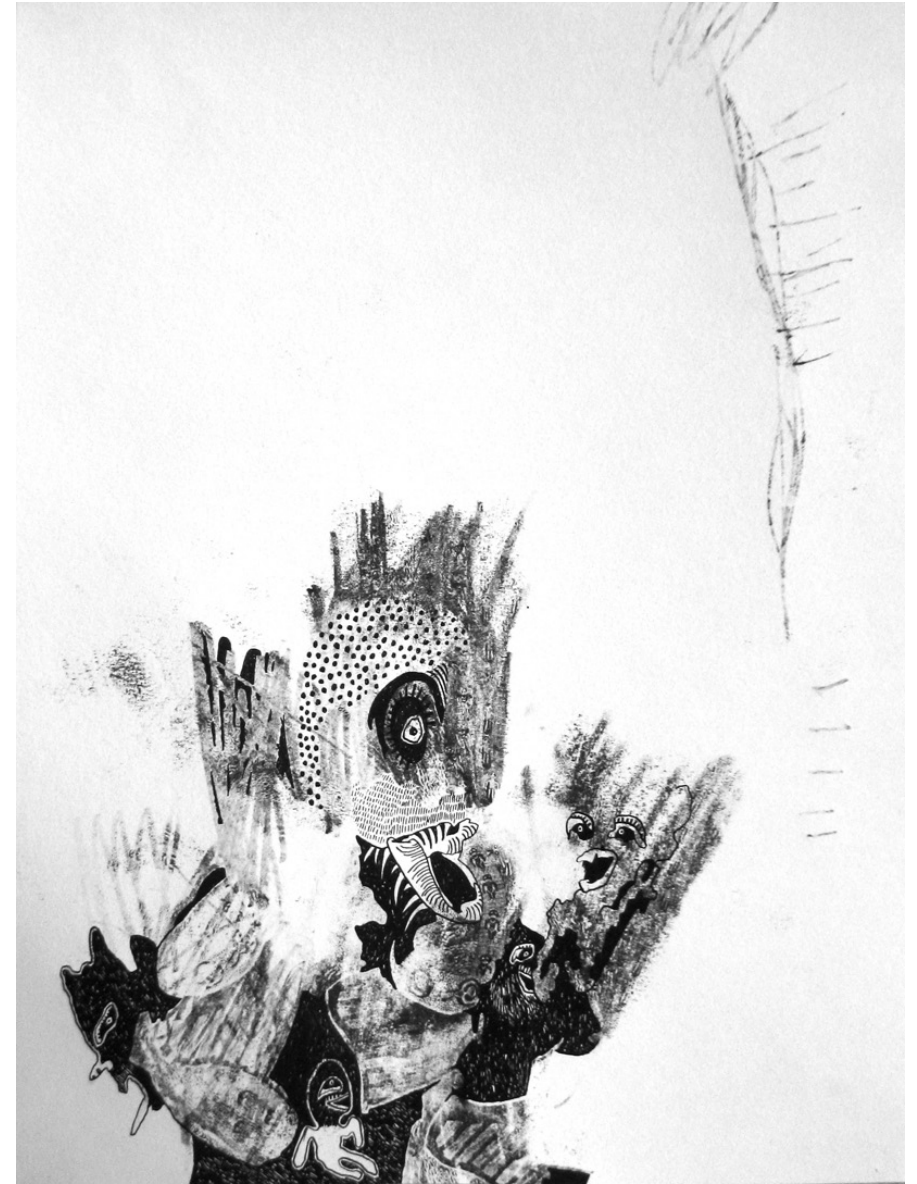
Unterwassertier und neunzehn kleinere Fische
(aus; „Petri-heil“), 2012
Mixed media on paper
65 x 50 cm (25 5/8 x 19 5/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2012
Mixed media on paper
65 x 50 cm (25 5/8 x 19 5/8 in)



Identität 1, 2012
Nitro print, ink on paper
40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in)



Zwiesgespräch 3, 2012
Nitro print, ink on paper, framed
40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in)



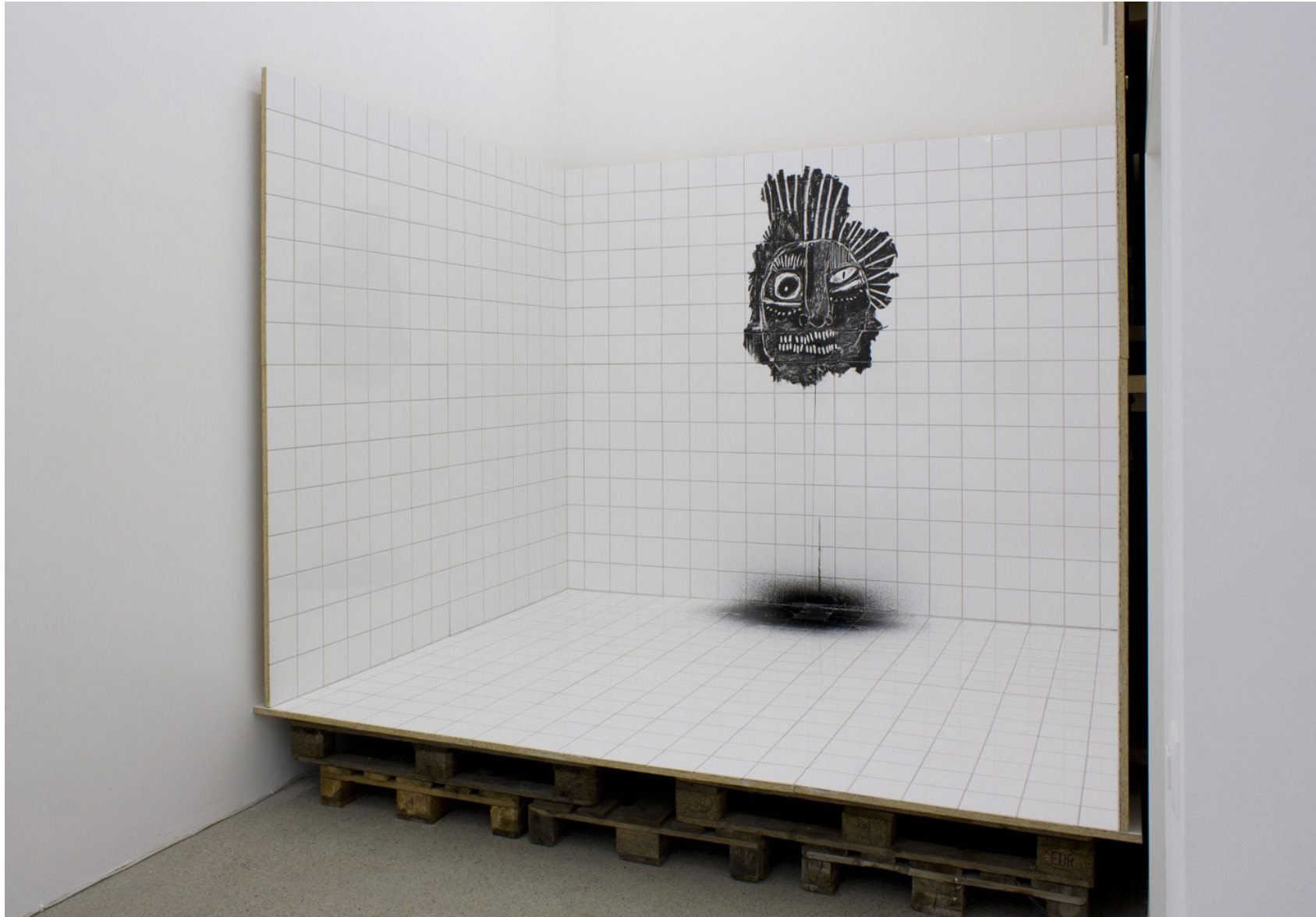
Sich den Spiegel vor die Augen halten, 2012
Mixed media on paper
200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 in)



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2012



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2012



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2012



Ohne Titel, 2011
Acrylic, ink and coloured pencil on paper
100 x 70 cm (39 3/8 x 27 1/2 in)



schreibknecht gottes
aus; die loorbeerblätter (ein reicher), 2011
Acrylic, ink and coloured pencil on paper
100 x 70 cm (39 3/8 x 27 1/2 in)



schreibknecht gottes
aus; die loorbeerblätter (ein papst), 2011
Acrylic, ink and coloured pencil on paper
100 x 70 cm (39 3/8 x 27 1/2 in)

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FILIB SCHÜRMAN

March 17 – May 5, 2012

It is with great pleasure that we announce our second solo exhibition with Filib Schürmann (*1976) at Rotwand.

Filib Schürmann draws, writes poetry, and is a visual thinker. Especially as a thinker he is not someone to randomly throw a few lines and colors onto a sheet of paper. To the contrary, his works on paper bear testimony to a demanding creative process that takes place in small, incremental steps. Not incidentally has he titled one of the series on view *schreibknecht gottes aus "die lorbeerblätter"* (writing servant of god from "die Lorbeerblätter"). In these four drawings Schürmann works from deathbed scenes described by the Christian author Jakob Lorber (1800-1864). In order to represent this highly intangible and fluid transition from this world to the next, the artist not only uses illustrative drawings and ornamental components but also fragments of text, which in their density become visual elements. The artist's immense interest in such transcendental experiences is readily conveyed by his imagery, especially if the viewer makes a conscious attempt to understand his works by examining them close up, inevitably getting caught up in the details in the process. Borrowed from Lorber, the subtitle *durch das innere Wort empfangen* (received by the inner word) thus has nothing to do with the ironic claim of Sigmar Polke *Höhere Wesen befehlen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen* (Higher beings command: Paint upper right corner black) but must be understood in all seriousness. However, it does not concern the artist whether viewers engross themselves in the contents of his images or forgo any attempt to do so. The extreme layering and awkward relationship between the format of the paper and the rich detail of the drawing immediately seem to say: Read me, but you won't come to any conclusion.

The realization that the conditions under which we live are not really comprehensible is also a topic of the second, larger series of works. The starting point for Schürmann's *Vaterserie* (Father Series) was the set of files associated with the fatal traffic accident of his father, whom he therefore was never able to meet. The tragic dimension of this situation is dispelled by fragments of unsparingly detailed descriptions of the accident. Neither the viewer nor Schürmann is able to comprehend or grasp the event. Schürmann responds to this failure with a density of pictorial language, bringing together elements of abstract gesture, comics, and free-hand drawings. This imagery is most effective where a clustering of elements starts to become autonomous to the extent that it turns into a complex layering of imagery detached from any narrative. In this manner Schürmann has attained a form of artistic expression which unites revelation, historical biography, and pure story telling. Schürmann's work consistently deals with birth, life, and death, a triad that the installation in the back room shows in a very different light.

Text Susanne Neubauer (English translation Laura Schleussner)



Ohne Titel, 2011
Acrylic, ink and coloured pencil on paper
106 x 78 cm (41 3/4 x 30 3/4 in)



Ohne Titel, 2009
Acrylic and ink on paper
150 x 250 cm (59 x 98 3/8 in)



ein erfolgreicher Rodeo-reiter, 2009
Mixed media on paper
29.5 x 21 cm (11 5/8 x 8 1/4 in)



Vorbilder heute; der Personal-trainer, 2009
Mixed media on paper
29.5 x 21 cm (11 5/8 x 8 1/4 in)



Ohne Titel, 2009
Ink on paper
70 x 50 (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2009
Ink on paper, framed
70 x 50 (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2009



Ohne Titel (Nr. 5), 2009
Mixed media on film and on paper
45 x 34 cm (17 3/4 x 13 3/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2009
Ink, acrylic and gouache on canvas
40 x 50 cm (15 3/4 x 19 5/8 in)



Installation view, Rotwand Zurich, 2009

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Filib Schürmann

April 4 – May 16, 2009

Opening: Friday, April 3, 2009, 6 to 8 pm

Rotwand Gallery is proud to present for the first time a solo exhibition of Filib Schürmann's work.

For some years now, the drawer Filib Schürmann (*1976) has attracted our attention with his striking, witty and off-beat drawings. His universe is populated with bizarre creatures, little monsters and hairy beasts; we recognize in his drawings echoes of the art of Jean-Michel Basquiat or representatives of Art Brut. The creatures are comical, light-footed, bold and often seem also quite malicious.

Filib Schürmann's newest works arrive on the scene like chaotic and disordered thoughts or wild nightmares. They are characterized by high degrees of coalescence and unfathomably somber traits. Schürmann applies to them a large amount of black ink that takes up a major part of the picture plane and from which his figures seem to be extricating themselves. The artist has recently started working on plastic film and uses it in a whole series of works, imposing one image over a second one, whereby the lower layer is drawn painterly flat and the foreground very much in draughtsman style marked by forceful black areas.

Filib Schürmann has a masterly feel for the effect of lines and planes and for the balance between the concentrated areas of the pencil drawing, of the black and of the painterly daubs in color. The pictures in this way achieve an enormous depth, likewise reflected in the contents, in that we see ourselves confronted suddenly and very directly with creatures that may slumber in the darkest part of our souls and that we would like to know were under lock and key.

To the artist the starting point for the drawings are his own obsessions, fantasies, fears or compulsions. The out-of-control and the chaotic seem to have gained the upper hand. In addition, Schürmann's works are frequently characterized by a combination of image and word, which refer to each other in reciprocal supplementation and enhancement. What at first glance seems like harmless doodling, a closer look proves to be multifaceted commentary on our everyday world with its worries, dark abysses and joys.

Text by Daniela Hardmeier

„damokles, sein schwert und ein par schaulustige“, 2008
Mixed media on paper, framed
70 x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)





ein extrembergsteiger klammert sich an seine mentale stärke, 2008
Mixed media on paper
30 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)



hommage à nijinski, 2008
Mixed media on paper
30 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)



Ohne Titel, 2008
Mixed media on paper
80 x 60 cm (31 1/2 x 23 5/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2008
Mixed media on paper
80 x 60 cm (31 1/2 x 23 5/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2008
Mixed media on paper, framed
80 x 60 cm (31 1/2 x 23 5/8 in)



Ohne Titel, 2008
Mixed media on paper
120 x 93 cm (47 1/4 x 36 5/8 in)

ein fischer in seenot!, 2007
Mixed media on paper, framed
29.8 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)



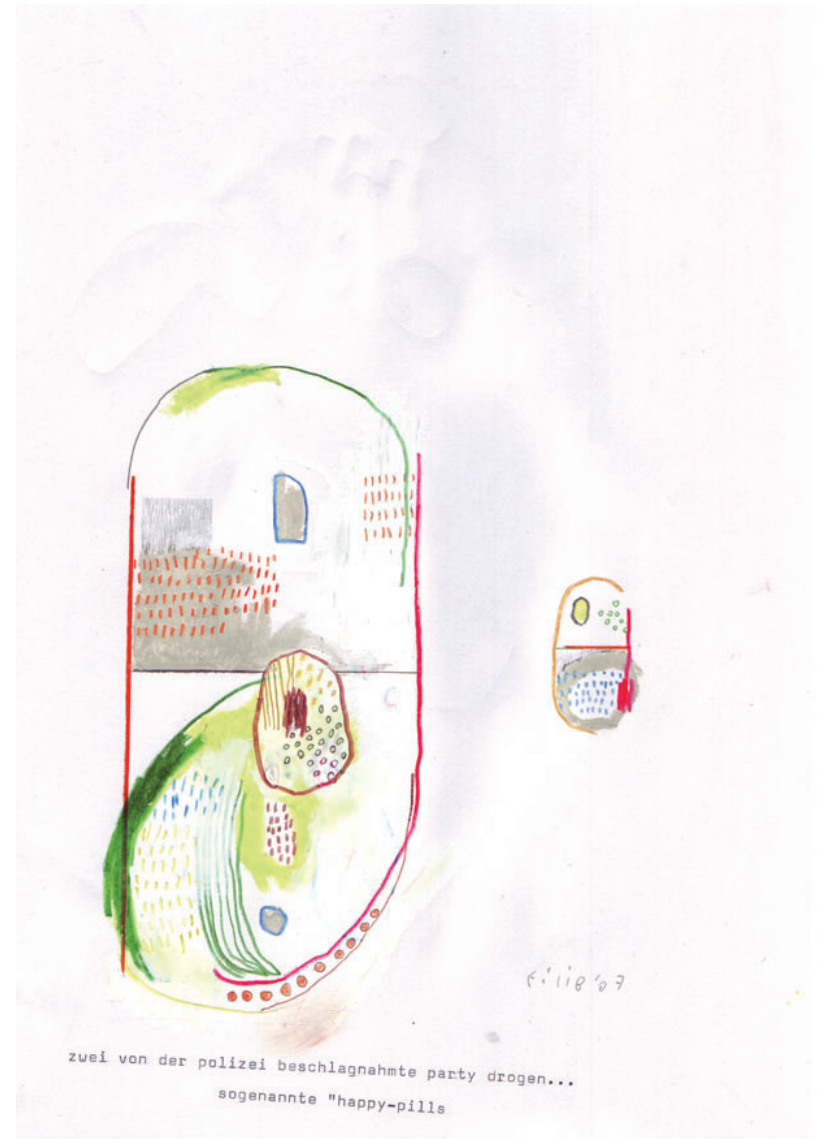


ein rauchendes kaminchen auf saftgrüner wiese.

Fi, '07

ein rauchendes kaminchen auf saftgrüner wiese,
2007

Mixed media on paper, framed
29.8 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)



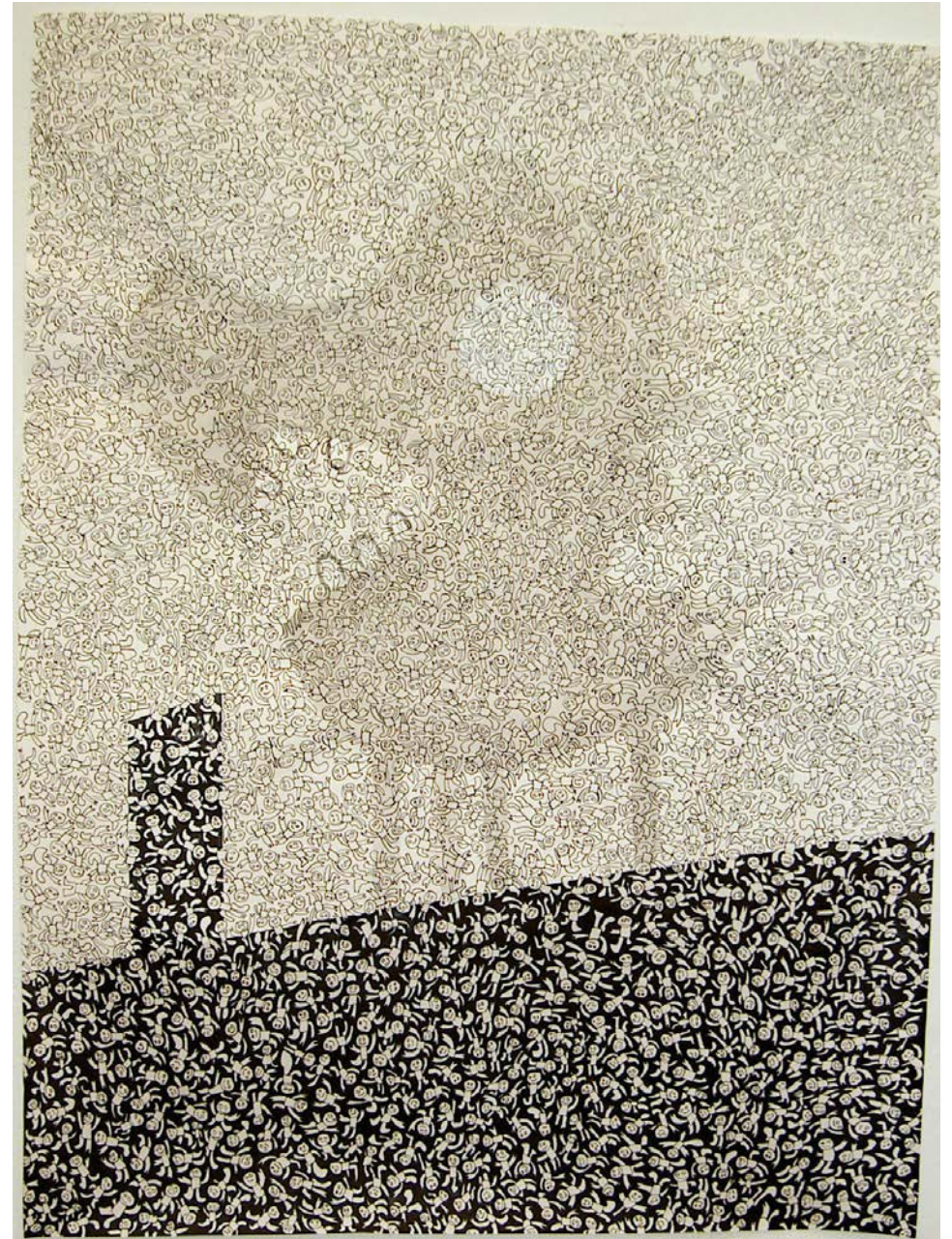
zwei von der polizei beschlagnahmte party dro-
gen... sogenannte "happy-pills"

*zwei von der polizei beschlagnahmte party dro-
gen... sogenannte „happy-pills,* 2007

Mixed media on paper, framed
29.8 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)

ein rosenstiel (vergrössert) mit zwei dornen..., 2007
Mixed media on paper, framed
29.8 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)





Ohne Titel (aus; die Heil samen), 2007
Indian ink on paper
80 x 60 cm (31 1/2 x 23 5/8 in)



live fast, die young, 2007
Mixed media on paper
29.8 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)



ein Pferdennarr kützelt sein ross..., 2007
Mixed media on paper
29.8 x 21 cm (11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in)