



PRESS RELEASE

DUO SHOW ULRIKE BOLENZ & INGE H. SCHMIDT – HUMAN NATURE
11 NOVEMBER – 18 DECEMBER 2021

Husk Gallery is delighted to present the first duo show with Ulrike Bolenz and Inge H. Schmidt, two German female artists from the same generation who were trained as painters in the 1980s. Ulrike Bolenz (born 1958, Castrop-Rauxel) was trained in Kassel and moved from Berlin to Brussels. Inge H. Schmidt (born 1952, Wiehe) emigrated from East Germany to West Berlin. Ingrid Van Hecke, art historian and gallery director of the Brussels-based Husk Gallery, was struck by their thematic crossovers, extraordinary artistic skills, amazingly persistent drive, and long careers in a changing art world. Over the past three decades, Ulrike Bolenz and Inge H. Schmidt have created a legacy of powerful artworks. Influenced by the neo-expressionism movement in German painting of the 1980s, Bolenz and Schmidt have developed a specific style and iconography that is rooted in the figurative tradition. The human figure has remained a key subject in their oeuvre.

Although the duo show *Human Nature* is a collection of older and more recent artworks, it is not conceived as a retrospective but rather as an overview of specific recurring topics in the oeuvre of each artist. The exhibition features thematic crossovers in their body of work and focuses in particular on their allegoric approach and investigation of the human figure. The artworks were selected in terms of themes from mythology to Christianity, but some also refer to a current political situation, or evoke subjects familiar to us all about basic human emotions and behaviour.

The title *Human Nature* refers to the essence and characteristics of human existence. Theories about the nature of humankind can be found in every culture. Discourses on human nature stimulate us to think about our fundamental dispositions and traits. Visual artists imagining what it means to be human are quite often inspired by a specific sociopolitical situation, or their personal experiences. Bolenz' *Ikarus* series is a reflection upon the refugee situation in the Mediterranean region, while Schmidt's *Night of Demons (2020)* series emerged following the discussion between Biden and Trump during the 2020 election night in the US. Humanistic commitment and the topic of human rights is firmly anchored in the oeuvre of both artists.

Schmidt's allegoric painting *The Expulsion from Paradise (2011)* deals with the fall of man, the religious moral anecdote of human sin and the origin of suffering, pain and discomfort. Inge H. Schmidt clearly expresses what it means to be human through depictions of physical and psychological struggles. Many of her showcased drawings deal with the complexity of human relationships and the feelings that accompany them, such as loneliness versus togetherness, and friction versus reconciliation. Besides human weaknesses, both believe in human strengths to surpass oneself and to rise again after a fall. Inge H. Schmidt's depicted *Phoenix*, the mythological bird that stands up from its ashes, is a beautiful allegory about our genuine ability to resurrect and to carry on.

The painting *Zwei Kämpfende (2010)* belongs to Bolenz' *Espace brisé* series, in which she portrays herself twice as a strong woman fighting for a cause. The self-portrait *I and the Head of Janus (2011)* by Inge H. Schmidt, in which she depicts three heads, also deals with how to handle conflicts and how to cope with oneself. In a certain sense, one could interpret these two works as metaphorical statements about how the creators live their own lives as women, and as artists in particular. An artistic career that has required continuous perseverance and a strong belief by the artists in their own artistic language and message for more than thirty years. Bolenz and Schmidt have proven over the years that it is possible to develop a consistent oeuvre and a distinctive idiom that is still strongly anchored in the figurative tradition of the German neo-expressionist movement.

Opening Thursday 11 November 2021 from 2 to 7 pm

Opening hours during exhibitions > Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 1 to 6 pm

Rivoli Open Sunday 5 December 2021 from 2 to 6 pm

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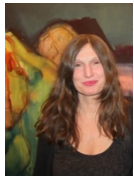
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Short CV artists

INGE H. SCHMIDT



Influenced by the centuries-old European tradition of depicting the human figure, Inge H. Schmidt is best known as a painter and drawer of 'Heads' with an expressively charged realism. The 'Heads' are mostly portraits of unknown people. As a passionate and adventurous backpack traveller, she is inspired by encounters with people in remote parts of the world. Besides her 'Heads', she also paints human figures in her distinctive, expressionistic, gestural and colourful style. With her particular feel for colour and remarkable brushwork, she succeeds in capturing the universality of human beings within indeterminate spaces.



Inge H. Schmidt (born 1952, Wiehe, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She completed her MA in Art History and Germanics at the University of Leipzig in 1977 before undertaking a Painting and Graphic Arts Degree at the Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design in Halle, graduating in 1983. In 1984 she emigrated from East Germany to West Berlin and studied painting at the Berlin University of Arts until 1988.

In 2019 Husk Gallery presented the solo show 'Faciality. Beyond the Silk Road' in Brussels, Belgium. Recent international solo exhibitions include Colours of Life, United Nations, New York, USA (2016), Colours of Life, Brothers Fine Art Gallery, Marfa, USA (2016); Inspiration Desert, Bismarck Art Gallery, Marfa, USA (2015) and Colours of Life, Museum Center, Baku, Azerbaijan (2013). Solo and group exhibitions were held in Germany, USA, Azerbaijan, Poland, France, Mexico, Italy, Great Britain, South Korea and Georgia. Since 1994 she is a guest professor and lecturer at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Baku, Azerbaijan and at the HTK Academy Berlin, the University of the Arts Berlin, the University of Applied Sciences Potsdam and at Potsdam University. In 2012 she was granted an honorary doctorate at the State Academy of Fine Arts of Baku, Azerbaijan.

ULRIKE BOLENZ



Since 1995, Ulrike Bolenz has been a pioneer of 'photoplastic' art, which uses photographs on transparent media such as Perspex and polycarbonate, which she then touches up. The result is a unique symbiosis of photography, transparent sculpture and painting. By using and transforming digital media, she creates layered works which explore current social issues. The content of her photoplastic works is also reflected in her expressionistic paintings and drawings. Ulrike Bolenz is not afraid to take on major themes in contemporary history paintings.



Ulrike Bolenz (born 1958, Castrop-Rauxel, Germany) lives and works in Vilvoorde, Belgium. She studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kassel, Germany.

In 2020 Husk Gallery presented her solo show 'Der Ewige Mensch' in Brussels, Belgium. Her work has been exhibited internationally. Solo and group exhibitions were held in Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, France, Italy, Russia and Turkmenistan. Recent notable international exhibitions include the MMOMA, Moscow, Russia (2021), The international Photo Exhibition in The National State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan (2020) and the Russian Museum, Sankt Petersburg (2019). Her work can be found in the following public and private collections: Collection Thyssen Berlin, Collection of the Senat for Culture of Berlin (Germany); Banque Brussels Lambert, Johnson & Johnson, Jan De Nul Private Collection, ORSI Academy and Art Collection Galila Barzilai – Hollander (Belgium); Fondation Francès, Art collection and The Safa Collection (France); Moscow Museum of Modern Art (Russia) and the Qatar Foundation Minister of Culture (Qatar). Her artist's monograph "Der Ewige Mensch" is published in November 2021.