



TABULARASA

Each of us knows thematizations that can hurt. The freedom of art is to seek out and explore these zones. Depending on the cultural background, there are other delicate zones, the depiction of which can provoke indignation, even calls for censorship. Instead of illuminating these taboo zones and thus encouraging further outrage, the exhibition format "TABULARASA" aims to gently address the tension between the representational urge for freedom and culturally conditioned sensitivities. Visual forms of representation that would unacceptably offend the sensibilities of the viewers in terms of subject matter and style will be hung. These obstructed works of art are exhibited instead of being made to disappear. Their presence, as well as the reasons for their imposition presented on text panels, are intended to show the audience that artistic freedom finds its limits where the sensitive violation of feelings can be expected with great certainty. "TABULARASA" wants to open the view for the sensitivities of our time. It wants to demonstrate a careful handling of the feelings of those affected. By informing about the artworks and giving information about the motives for their imposition, it leaves the audience free to make up their own minds about the limits of what can be depicted.

Idea: Klaus Heid & Georg Schmitt

DEUTSCHLAND MUß STERBEN - MORDAUFRUF

Brigitte Hankok (1974)

Mixed media, 90 x 75 cm

This panel painting by the otherwise unknown artist Brigitte Hankok, which was already extremely controversial at the time it was created, can, according to consensus, hurt the feelings of people in a sensitive way, especially those who feel a deep cultural connection to Germany as their homeland. Despite the considerable distance in time, the image is potentially capable of disturbing social peace in the long term and giving undue expression to anti-German attitudes.

VRIENDEN VAN DE KINDEREN

Joop van Schevening (2003)

Acrylic on wood, 78 x 66 cm

The depiction of sexual acts with obviously minors shows characteristics of child pornography in its explicitness. Whether this is still covered by artistic freedom, despite the ironic approach, could not be decided with certainty. Due to the sensitive subject matter, an imposition was therefore deemed appropriate.

SILENT DAYS IN THE CLICHÉ

Thomas Agthe (1987)

Oil on wood, 77 x 66,5 cm

Due to the lack of explanations in the picture, the overly clear juxtaposition of common prejudices about foreign fellow citizens can be misunderstood to mean that minorities from other cultural circles are to be exposed to ridicule. Furthermore, the photorealistic manner in which the picture was painted can give the impression of an unreflective denigration of other cultures.

GOD IS AN ASSHOLE, ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE

Søren Korney (2014)

Digital print, 55 x 48 cm

Despite the fact that Søren Korney conclusively justifies his work with his veneration of Nietzsche's philosophy, it still displays a visual language that can be interpreted as universally offensive to religion. Since this could be tangential to the fundamental and human right of freedom of religion, which allows every person to freely and publicly practice their personal individual beliefs in the form of a religion or worldview, the image was imposed in consultation with representatives of religious communities.

THE SMILE

Marc Rivet (2004)

c-print, 120 x 80 cm

Stalin, Hitler, Xi, Kim Jong Un, Putin: Marc Rivet superimposes the mouths of the most powerful dictators of modern times in his computer-assisted montage. The result is a shockingly sympathetic mouth that captivates the viewer with a provocatively erotic smile. An ambivalent work, Rivet explores the depths of tyranny and seductiveness. After the embassies of the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation protested against equating their leaders with Hitler, the work can no longer be shown unveiled.

HA'BUA

Shimon Avital (2021)

Mixed media, 75.5 x 67.5 cm

Controversial artist Shimon Avital caused a scandal with his work "HA'BUA," which is part of a large-scale series of works about the industrial extermination of human beings. The delicate parallelization of the Holocaust with the systematic persecution of Palestinians by Israeli forces drew the attention of critics who saw it as a dangerous and historically incorrect trivialization of the Shoah.

CETERMORDIO

Neil Cairn (2008)

Mixed media, 116.4 x 95.5 cm

Cairn, who has been a paraplegic since childhood, uses "CETERMORDIO" to address the widespread assumption that people with disabilities are completely absorbed in their assigned role as victims by creating a drastic counter-image: several wheelchair users cruelly murder a helpless child. The men's murderousness, portrayed as blatant, far exceeds the level of condignity, according to unanimous opinion; resentment against people with handicaps could be generated - people with disabilities could feel belittled.

EXCRETE

Igor Sluchin (2020)

Acrylic on canvas (copy), 82,5 x 56,5 cm

With "EXCRETE", the exiled Russian painter has created an impressive portrait of Russian President Vladimir Putin, which can hardly be surpassed in polemical exaggeration: the soiled head of the president finds its way out of the body of a giant animal. For all the political and moral objections to the politician Putin, it cannot be ruled out that the feelings of people are hurt who see in the depiction a blatant violation of the human dignity of the person Putin.

SECRETS DE FATIMA

Jeanne Auburdin (1997)

Offset print, 72 x 62,7 cm

The depiction of sexual abuse of children in Christianity and Islam, which originated from a radical feminist point of view, is capable of hurting the religious feelings of believers as well as evoking shame to an extent that can have a lasting impact. The peaceful coexistence of religions and cultures can be endangered by the display of "SECRETS DE FATIMA".

SINAI

Ayse Dajan (2004)

Oil on canvas, 120 x 80 cm

Ayse Dajan thematizes in her work "SINAI" the biblical tradition, according to which the prophet Moses led the people of the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. On Mount Sinai, he is said to have received from God two tablets of the law with the Ten Commandments. These also serve the Christian culture as a moral basis and popular subject of church painting. Dajan replaces the biblical commandments with commandments that refer to Israel's current politics. However, Dajan's quite pointed criticism of Israel can also be interpreted as anti-Semitic.

DESERT FLOWER

Zeynep Mohammadi (2013)

Acrylic on canvas, 160 x 100 cm

In Islam, the pictorial representation of the Prophet is forbidden. The Iranian artist Zeynep Mohammadi fell out of favor with the leader of the Islamic Revolution as the highest authority of Iran with her painting "DESERT FLOWER", a romanticizing depiction of Bedouin life, because she was accused of a caricaturing depiction of the Prophet. In fact, with the necessary imagination, a grimacing face under a turban can be interpreted into the mountain silhouettes dominating the background of the picture, as if one would want to recognize realistic figures in a cloud formation in the sky. For the protection of Zeynep Mohammadi, the painting is now exhibited only covered.

MISTA KWADUNGA

John Bombele (2016)

Silkscreen on wood, 45 x 40 cm

Bombele, whose father is from Uganda and who has lived and worked in New York for many years, addresses racial stereotypes in his work. "MISTA KWADUNGA" depicts a young black slave in an over-sexualized pose in an intentionally offensive manner. The aesthetic ambivalence and lack of clarity in positioning may unconsciously transport and manifest racist patterns of perception in the viewer.

BABY KWEEN

Sibyll Hireman (2010)

Mixed media, 81 x 71 cm

Hireman, an avowed lesbian activist since the 1980s, intends her work to take the reification of the female body in late capitalism, which continues to this day, to its pornographic extreme. However, the depiction of the cruel trimming of a defenseless female body can offend the feelings of shame of sensitive people, especially young women, and convey a distorted image of female sexualization, which is why, despite the artist's political motivation, it was decided to impose it.

SOPPRESSIONE

Gruppo Benessere animale (2017).

Acrylic on wood, 75 x 84 cm

The everyday disregard for the dignity of animals, which is removed from our perception, is shown in drastic form in the work "SOPPRESSIONE" by the Italian animal protection activist group. The violence against animals, which are not only mistreated and cruelly tortured and murdered, but are also subjected to manifold sexual abuse, can, due to the ruthlessness of the images, irritate the viewer in the long term and impair his sensitivity, which is why an imposition was inevitable.

Georg Schmitt is an author and artist who lives in Wiesbaden and conducts aesthetic research with his art. In 2022 he called the "Freedom of Art Day" into being, which will be celebrated next year for the first time. More about Georg Schmitt at:
www.georgschmitt.com

Klaus Heid is an author and artist who lives in Karlsruhe and prefers to deal with the construction of realities. His work "Khuza. A Myth from Siberia" caused a sensation in 2000 and was discussed in the feature pages of the German-language press for a whole summer. More about Klaus Heid at <https://klaus-heid.de>

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