

METRO PICTURES

Tyler, Russell. "Andre Butzer," *Freight + Volume Magazine* (Spring 2011): 90-95.



RUSSELL TYLER X

ANDRÉ BUTZER

André Butzer was born 1973 in Stuttgart and currently lives in Rangsdorf, Germany. He has exhibited widely in Europe, Japan and the United States including solo exhibitions at Hannover, Kestnergesellschaft; Metro Pictures, New York; and Nuremberg, Kunsthalle. In the following interview, Russell Tyler asked Butzer how his American audience perceives his abstractions, why critics should be eradicated and what the painter considers "beautiful".



90

ARTIST: Russell Tyler X André Butzer

Nicht fürchten! (2) (Don't Be Scared! (2)), 2010 Oil on canvas, 87 X 110 1/4 in.



Wolf Dreams 2, 2010, Oil on Boars, 35 x 25 in.

Russell: Your solo show at Metro Pictures in 2010 consisted mostly of abstract paintings. However, you titled all of your paintings with figurative names such as Aladdin and the Magic Oil Lamp and Entombment of Winnie the Pooh. Why do you give these abstract paintings figurative titles?

André: All art is abstract. Everything I have done so far was very abstract, even if people saw figures or things like that on the canvas.

There are a few characters that end up in your paintings quite often. Is there a background story to these reoccurring characters, in particular the skull character with tentacles on his face in Untitled (Eichmann), 2007 and Hölderlin Apotheke, 2003?

These and other figures helped me to do abstraction right from the very beginning. They came up, followed their path, and then they were made complete in order to disappear and give way to something else, which can be called their own matrix of life and peace. These figures were founding members of their own dead future civilization that is reproducing itself on and on until today.

Scale is important in your paintings. Do you feel your message becomes too diminutive on a smaller canvas?

Scale doesn't interest me. I am dreaming in a painterly, very defined dimension of a painting, not of the size of a stretcher bar. I use small canvases as well all the time, and some kids love to have them at home.

Are we as a society always redefining what beauty is, or have we reached a stalemate with its evolution?

Beauty is always unknown, or it's not. I am stupid enough to believe in that kind of way. That's also a reason why Pop Art

is finally over. I love Pop Art, but that's why I made *Entombment of Winnie the Pooh*. That's my kind of version of Cezanne's late Bathers, if you know what I mean. I didn't want to call it *Entombment of Jeff Koons* or whatever those idiots are called still nowadays. Their time is over—they are very late now. The American audience unfortunately didn't realize what my painting is about when it was exhibited in New York, and still, it's also and maybe only about the golden beauty of Winnie the Pooh in the most obvious way.

You once said that all critics should be eradicated. Is that because they exist solely dependent on the artist? Do you sometimes feel that all artists should be eradicated as well?

No, not at all. I love all art that people make. It's the critics that just suck most of the time. Those people should not criticize art, that's a wrong profession within itself. Art is not made for criticism—we should just embrace it.

As a German artist, do you feel your work is perceived differently in the US than your native country when you show here, in particular when you touch on issues of US history and its culture?

In Germany, people like US history a lot. They are happy to hear of those kinds of topics instead of the more boring German history. I think that the US audience, if it existed, felt strange about me dealing with some American topics. They wanted more German genocide stories instead. So my conclusion was to paint as abstract as possible.

Is there room for happiness in your work?

My paintings are on the sunny side up, I think.



Russell Tyler X André Butzer

Nicht fürchten! (Don't Be Scared!), 2009, Oil on canvas, 110 1/2 X 90 1/2 in.

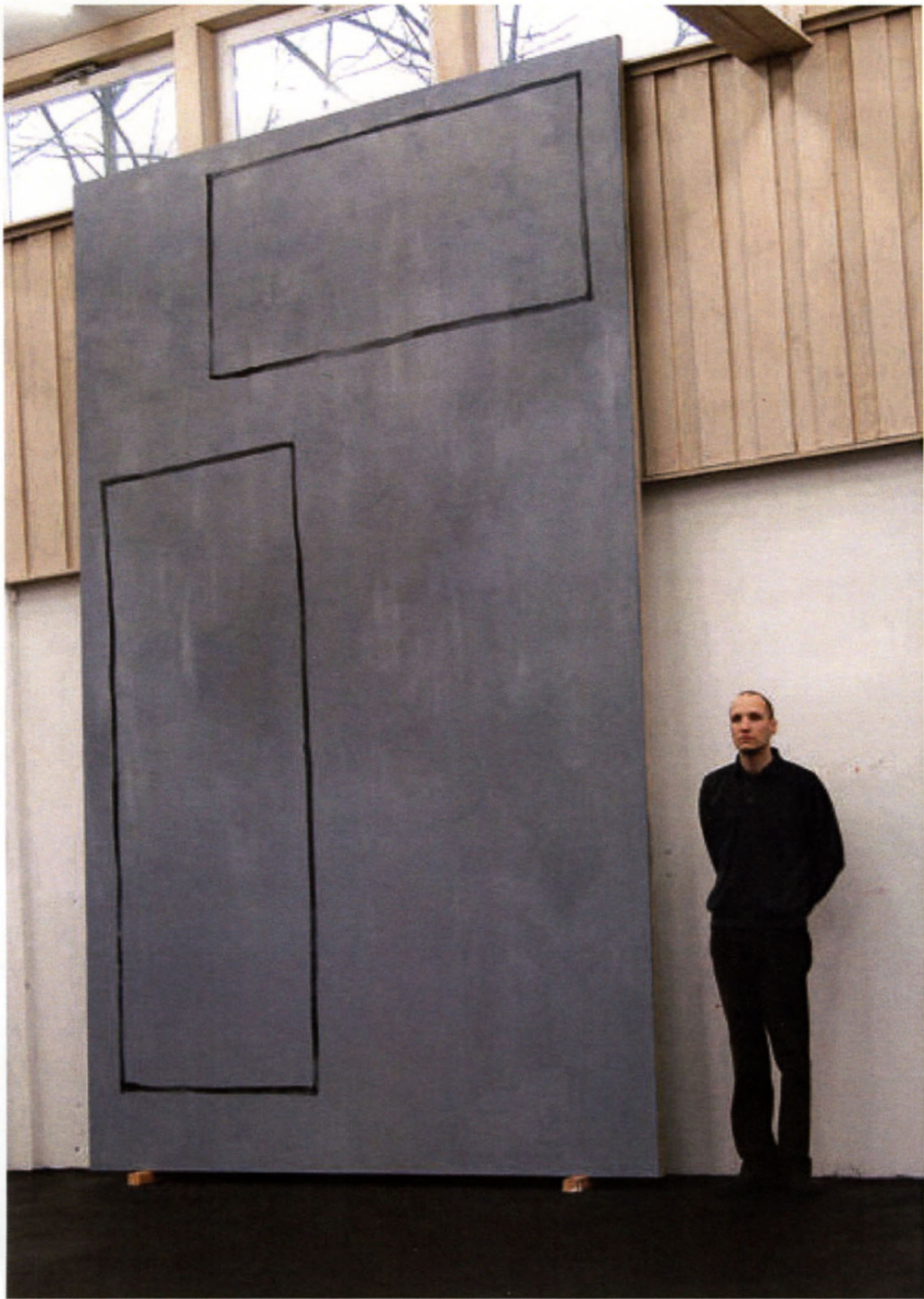


Aladin und die Wunderlampe (Aladdin and the Magic Oil Lamp), 2010, Oil on canvas, 124 1/2 X 90 1/2 in.



ARTIST: Russell Tyler X **André Butzer**

Grablegung von Winnie Puh (Entombment of Winnie the Pooh), 2010, Oil on canvas, 102 1/2 X 134 in.



STUDIO PHOTO: Fabian Schubert