

**MULTI  
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**André Butzer**

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## André Butzer

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André Butzer was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1973 and currently lives and works in Berlin. From 1996 to 2000 he studied at the “Akademie Isotrop”, Hamburg, DE, with a critical, autonomous and avant-garde spirit. During these years he integrated various groups of artists in Europe such as *Contemporary Fine Arts, Secession and Ulm*. In 2001 he founded the "Institut für SDI-Traumforschung", together with the artist Björn Dahlem, in Berlin, and was co-editor of the magazine *Isotrops*. At the end of the 90s, figures with monumental heads, eyes and hands appeared, with a predominance of primary colors and electric brushstrokes.

His interest in the theory of color and its integration with light are reflected in the search not for a precise language but in the full enjoyment of pictorial, conscious and cognitive action. Although his work can be inserted within expressionism, Butzer does not conform to the traditional definitions of art and his creation is constantly changing, both in style and medium, called by the artist himself as *Science Fiction Expressionism*. In his abstract paintings the color gray is an ally of History and takes the viewer to a dreamlike introspection zone where there is no division between fiction and reality: NASAHEIM.

Butzer is inspired by different artists such as Walt Disney and Edward Munch and articulates a cultural utopia that comes to life in the collective imagination, warning us of the

power of representation and the echo of the image. An ideal feeling between pop and neo-expressionism, multicolor and monochrome. The evocation of chaos and comic does not disturb, but it excites the comfort zone of the characters represented, who enjoy the dynamic gesture.

In recent years he has exhibited in important institutions such as IKOB Museum of Contemporary Art, Eupen (2018), YUZ Museum, West Bund, Shanghai (2021), Museum of the Light, Hokuto (2021) and among his most recent shows highlights “Works from the TASCHEN Collection 2000–2021”, TASCHEN, Cologne (2021). His work is part of prominent public collections such as the Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, MOCA, Los Angeles and Collection Olbricht, Berlin.

# UNTITLED

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Silkscreen print, 38.5x 27.5 In (98 x70 cm)  
Produced on 320 g 100% cotton Somerset satin natural white paper



We are proud to announce our first collaboration with german artist André Butzer.

*Untitled*, is a limited edition of 45. Is a silkscreen print, 38.5x 27.5 In (98 x70 cm) Produced on 320 g 100% cotton Somerset satin natural white paper

# Press

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27/04/2011

André Butzer by Mark Prince in Reviews



André Butzer, Untitled, 2011

# FRIEZE

One of the false notes of recent German painting has been a presumption of innocence which recalls how painters of the early 1980s brashly proclaimed their obliviousness to there having ever have been a problem with churning out large-scale expressionistic figurative paintings. André Butzer has often appeared to conform to this conservatism even as he parodies its naiveties. His guise as a brilliant but infantile painter-cum-cartoonist was always qualified by murky historical echoes and by his method of co-opting Conceptualisms recourse to peripheral information in order to invest his blithe gestures with historical references.

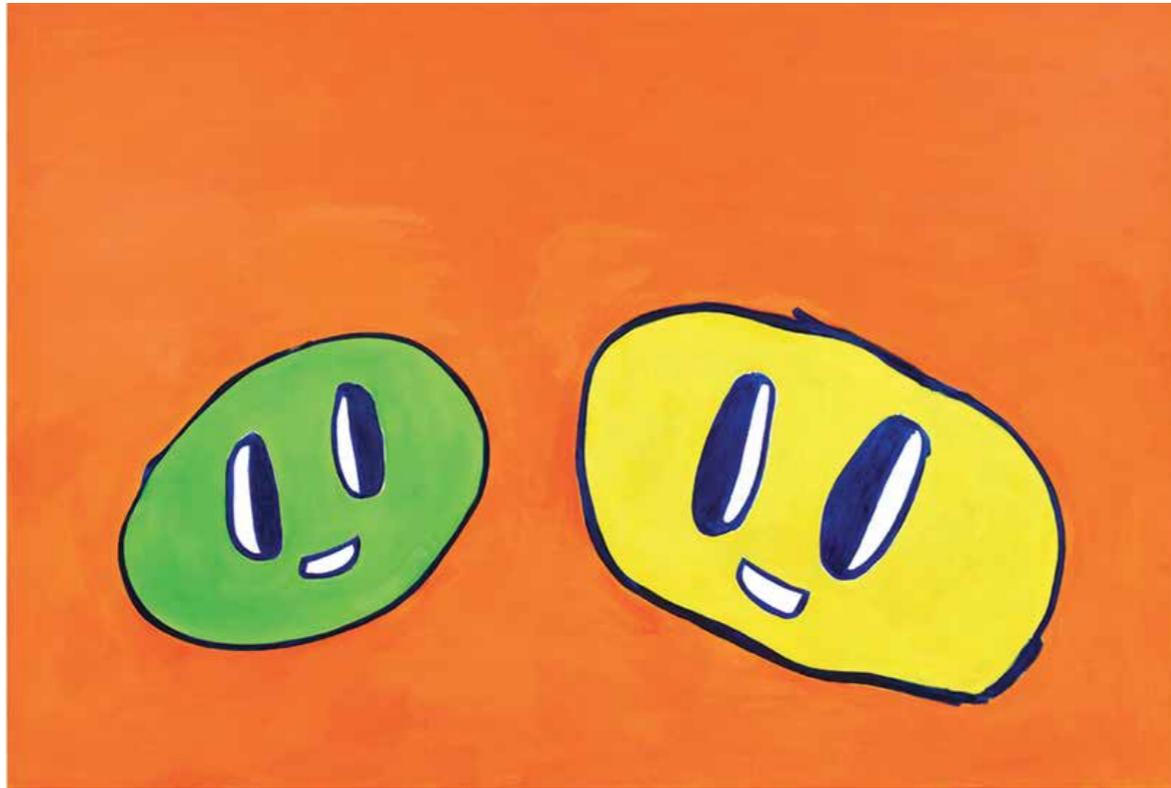
This show, however, was unequivocally knowing and reflected the non-hierarchical twin-stream approach that has characterised Butzers work of the past two or three years: his production of skeletal geometries on flat grey grounds in conjunction with full-colour painterly abstractions. At the same time, the exhibition represented the primacy of this form of bifurcation within Postmodernist painting since the 1980s, from Gerhard Richter (photo painting/abstraction) to Günther Förg (photography/gestural abstraction) to Christopher Wool (text painting/decorative silkscreen). In Baudachs generic rectangular gallery in Charlottenburg, there were only two upright rectangular paintings, which are relatively small for Butzer, the larger measuring just under two metres in height, the smaller 140 cm. Both are oil on canvas, but they follow diametrically opposed remits. *Château Pettersson und Findus* (Château Pettersson and Findus, 2010/11) consists of a single layer of grey on raw linen over which two black rectangles have been painted freehand. Butzers cartoonist facility has been redirected from sketching out floppy-eared citizens to mocking up signs for modernistic formalism, such as the conflation of abstract shape with architectural layout. Those dovetailed black rectangles suggest floor plans and site-specificity, but the title which refers to the fictional characters Pettersson and his cat Findus in the Swedish childrens books by Sven Nordqvist emphasizes that we are in a realm of quirky symbolism in which normal gravitational rules of historical causality do not apply.

The smaller *Untitled* (2011) its smears and blotches of brightly coloured impasto oozing across a white-primed ground explodes the grey paintings reticence with a show of vulgarity. Conceptualization cedes back to the action that it superseded. Haunted by the absent figure, the prominent loops of red and blue squeezed straight from the tube echo outspread arms or wide eyes. The awkward handling is disingenuous in the context of a whole that is so unashamedly lush and luscious. Butzer seduces you while telling you he is unable to. In the glare of the gallerys neon lighting, the DayGlo paint is unsettlingly vivid, a variegated surface reeking of still-partly-wet oil. Like a wild animal trapped in the elegantly minimalistic gallery, *Untitled* mocks its neighbours presumed authority and cerebrality; in turn, *Château Pettersson und Findus* condescends to the smaller paintings temerity. Butzers risk is to assert against the insistent foil of the larger grey paintings doubt that this performative gestural painting is still do-able and not merely a sign of a blinkered artist persisting, out of a vain or even autistic necessity, with an idiom beyond the point at which it has become no more than a nostalgic commodity, a dumb painters effusions. And yet the dichotomy between the two paintings proves to be as supportive as it is antagonistic. The proximity of the grey painting renders *Untitled*s metaphysical energies relativistic: one point on an axis of possibilities, one half of a binary holding irony and innocence in perpetual equilibrium.



André Butzer, *Château Pettersson und Findus*, 2010-11

André Butzer  
GALERIE MAX HETZLER  
By Jurriaan Benschop



André Butzer, *Untitled (Früchte)*, 2016–17, oil on canvas, 9' 6" x 14' 1 1/4"

# ARTFORUM

I was lucky to see André Butzer's new paintings on a sunny winter day, with natural light coming in to make visible what is hidden in their black surfaces. There were eight big and nine medium-size dark paintings in Galerie Max Hetzler's Bleibtreustraße location, along with one very large and colorful canvas, a small work on paper executed in colored pencil and crayon, and an artist's book. The dark paintings each have a sort of vertical seam, right of the center, where light seems to come through, sometimes clear, most often faint. Around this so-called *Fuge*, or gap, brushwork is visible, dark in dark, best seen from the side. Through this painted opening one feels it is actually possible to enter these hermetic paintings; the fissure implies a sense of depth and inner life. At times, it looks like the thin trunk of a sapling in winter, slightly crooked, but there is nothing to confirm that one is looking at a landscape or other recognizable setting. One of the large paintings, *Untitled*, 2017, contains both blue and brown in black. This work felt especially dynamic and inviting—perhaps thanks to its position next to the window, as the light uncovered layers of color forming the dark painted surface. But does it make sense to focus on individual works like this? This exhibition felt more like the demonstration of an attitude toward painting, a specific phase in the artist's development, than like a presentation of paintings as such. The similarity of the canvases made the selection feel arbitrary; the repetition undermined any sense of urgency.

The second part of the show, at Hetzler's Goethestraße space, offered something different: a selection of fifteen mostly very colorful figurative works dating from 1999 through 2008, along with one new work. Some are dense and intense; they seemed the pictorial equivalent of a person who can't stop talking and keeps free-associating, heedless of whether his interlocutors are still with him. This Butzer is bold, sometimes funny, always excessive. A rare moment of compositional restraint could be found in two paintings that both feature a pair of huge eyes popping out, *Friedens-Siemens XII*, 2003, and *Friedens-Siemens IX*, 2001, the latter warm in color, with light coming from behind the eyes: a high note in the show. Butzer's poetry leans toward the painful, and he makes the act of painting seem a mythological enterprise in which figures and forms represent antagonistic life-forces.

What was not visible in this double exhibition was Butzer's work of 2008 to 2016, including the moment of his turn into the dark palette in 2010. The black paintings, of course, signify an allegiance to abstraction, the wish to paint inclusively and abstain from setting a scene. As the artist has pointed out, though, his earlier colorful figuration is also a kind of abstraction. In both cases, his paintings convey an existential condition or a sensibility, rather than a narrative. But the recent works made me wonder if Butzer has painted himself into a corner. What if the black takes over and the seams close further? Is there anything left to say? It seems only a U-turn could get him back on track, permit some contrast or allow more articulation. There was one work in the show that possibly anticipates such a turn (or return): the wide and bright *Untitled (Früchte)*, 2016–17, showing an apple-like face and a pumpkin-like face against an orange background. To execute a silly, cartoonish painting on such a big scale seemed odd. Even though the work on its own did not offer a lot to look at, it brought fresh air into the show. It mocked the seriousness and the search for subtlety in the dark paintings, and left me hoping that it might anticipate a new phase in Butzer's work, a form of figuration that would somehow incorporate the austere sensibility of the artist's reductive abstract works without being limited by it.

05/08/20-17/09/20

André Butzer Solo Show  
Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris



Installation view: André Butzer at Max Hetzler Paris. Courtesy of the artist and Max Hetzler. Photo: Claire Dorn

# émergent magazine

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of recent paintings by André Butzer.

Fusing European Expressionism with American popular culture since 1994, André Butzer has painted his way through the artistic and political extremes of the 20th century: life and death, consumption and mass entertainment. Today, he is one of the internationally most recognized painters of his generation.

After having completed his black, so-called N-Paintings (2010–2017) which fundamentally explored colour, light, proportions, and the potentiality of the painterly expression, he relocated to California. There, his paintings opened up again, colour and even figuration returned. With this “American experience”, Butzer reinvented himself. Once more, he turned his paintings into a “primary area of language”.

His second Paris exhibition at Galerie Max Hetzler is a profound display of André Butzer’s matured painterly mastery. He still strives to articulate dreams of a possible future, particularly as painting is always a matter yet-to-be: “Incineration, Rembrandt, beginning and end, synchronicity, the suspension of time, the origins of life, flowers.”

As painting can never be found in its mere surface, Butzer, defying the unfruitful distinction between abstraction and figuration, avails himself to a careful balance of planar colours and recurring contrasts. He extends his pictorial means and exposes them to light itself, because: “All is light and I, in a sunhat, measure its beams. The genetics being blue, red, yellow, and the colour of flesh.”

Given his new Californian neighbourhood, Butzer feels stronger than ever that Walt Disney might indeed be the ultimate challenge for Expressionism, Henri Matisse as well as for the fair idea of man.

For André Butzer, “paintings are localizations of the greatest despair and the greatest hope” and this is exactly why “they come closest to the very joy and aid we are in dire need of.”

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**This is a special edition.**

*André Butzer donated his print and all the  
profits will directly benefit Casa Santa  
Ana's library project.*

# CASA SANTA ANA

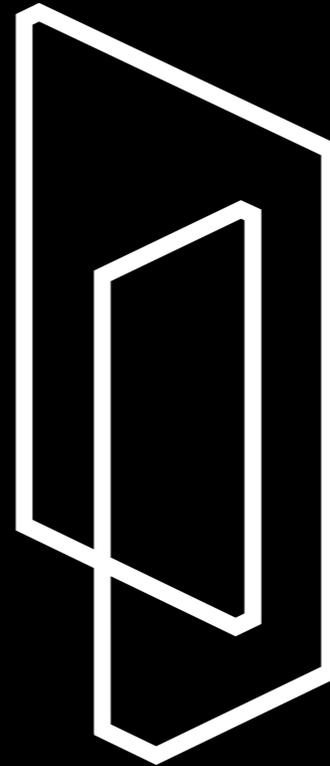
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Casa Santa Ana is a non-profit organization that connects people through contemporary art. We want to show everyone that art can be relevant to their lives, especially communities with historically limited access to it. We've been working nomadically since 2015, and our work is mainly centered around Santa Ana, an underserved neighborhood in Panama City, Panama.

Casa Santa Ana was founded in 2015 by Johnny Roux, a passionate art collector who wanted to find a way to “give back” to Panama and decided to do it through his passion, contemporary art. Johnny wanted to open up greater and free access to excellent international contemporary art in Panama, offer local artists more tools, and bridge local and global art scenes.

Over the years, we have evolved and become a five-legged beast: we organize exhibitions, publications, residencies, community programming, and workshops or presentations. We have two main audiences: artists and our neighbors in Santa Ana.

We strive for and pride ourselves in listening to our community's needs. Santa Ana is a neighborhood where most people live day to day, so when the pandemic started, we knew there would be a lot of need. During the time that Panama had the most restrictive quarantine in the region, or maybe worldwide, we were able to help 1,500 families with food bags during the first two months in the pandemic. That's what was needed and we were grateful that we were able to help.



CASA  
SANTA  
ANA

**Arte Contemporáneo**

# **Interview with Carolina Hausmann**

## **– Director of Casa Santa Ana**

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*by Paula V. Kupfer*



**Carolina Hausmann**  
Director, Casa Santa Ana

**Carolina, what is Casa Santa Ana? Can you tell me about the history of the organization, its mission, and how it has changed over time, especially given the many interruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic?**

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One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been the opportunity to reconsider our priorities. Before, we were spending a lot of time, energy, and resources preparing to inaugurate an ambitious art space, and we let go of this idea. The heart of that space was going to be a children's library,

which would provide literacy support for kids and their families starting from age zero. During the pandemic, as I struggled with my six-year-old son who was learning to read and write, it became obvious that if we could focus on only one thing from the original idea of the art space, it should be the library. So that's what we are doing. Especially considering that while everything else is “back to normal,” public schools are still closed in Panama.

We all have stories to tell and our stories are equally important and deserve to be heard. We will be providing a safe space for children to learn and discover who they are—and who they can become—through their engagement with books. Books are mirrors that allow us to see ourselves, windows to look out from and sliding doors to encourage us to get out of our comfort zone, knowing we have a safe space to return. Our library will provide a safe space for learning that our community needs.

The space will also include a multipurpose area that we can use for small exhibitions, for our residency program, and for Voces en Accion (Voices in Action). The latter is an experimental art conceptualization and production workshop led on an annual basis, since 2017, by artists Donna Conlon and Jonathan Harker. In this workshop we emphasize constructive criticism, experimentation, mutual support, collaboration, and especially the importance of using one's authentic voice to address urgent social and political issues. It has forged a greater sense of community among local artists.

As for larger exhibitions, which have always been part of our plan, we will continue to organize them in collaboration with other spaces in the city, as we did in 2016 with *Larry Fink: An American Life*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

**As the director, what is your role in the organization? How has it both built on your previous professional experiences and aligns with your own passions and commitments?**

Since we are a small organization, as director of Casa Santa Ana I wear many hats. I'm originally from Caracas, studied art history and psychology at NYU, worked in museums in Mexico, and have been calling Panama home for the last eleven years.

I am the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors and that has had a big impact on the way I see the world. Contemporary art is a powerful tool to question everything and put ourselves in other people's shoes. If we understand that we are more alike than different, then there is no space for hate in any shape or form, call it xenophobia, homophobia, racism, or otherwise. As a country, we are very much behind on important social issues, such as those related to gay marriage, sex education in schools, etc., and I know that art is a powerful tool to push us in the right direction. For instance, ten percent of pregnancies in Panama occur in children fourteen or younger and 30 percent of pregnancies in Panama are teenage pregnancies. Part of our plan is to work specifically with these vulnerable people in our society.

**I can feel your passion about the importance of literacy and children's access to books and stories. In what ways will the library organization bridge the distance between children and their ability to engage with the books in the library, especially when smartphones and social-media apps exert an especially strong pull on young people?**

When I was three or four years old, I was obsessed with making the ocean less salty, so I would grab sugar packets wherever I could find them and spill them whenever we went to the beach. Clearly, my efforts didn't yield any results. It has taken me a long time to understand that we must start small to really change things. We know that 80 percent of brain development occurs in the first three years of life and that if you don't read to

a child before the age of five, everything you do will be fixing problems that didn't need to be there in the first place. That's why we are starting with babies and their families from age zero. Since teenage pregnancy is such a big issue in our society, teenage moms and their babies are one of the populations we intend to work with closely. In addition, children who live in homes with at least twenty books get three more years of schooling, on average, than children from homes without books, regardless of their parents' education, occupation, and social class. That's why part of our plan includes a network of home libraries, so that the families enrolled in our program can get twenty age-appropriate books for their children per year to start their home libraries. The habit of reading develops from doing it everyday at home, so while there will be many activities at the library to engage children of different age groups and provide support for their success at school and in life, we know that it is imperative that we make the parents our partners in this effort. Parent involvement is the number one predictor of early literacy success.

**Can you share an anecdote or two that you cherish from your experiences developing programs with Casa Santa Ana? Has there been a moment, or multiple ones, when you felt, "Yes, this is what this is all about!" ?**

We recently had a beautiful show called *Hasta Aquí Era Agua: Fotografías en diálogo con historias de Santa Ana* (The Water Came Up To Here: Photographs in Dialogue with Stories from Santa Ana) which brought together the self-portraits of five international artists (Ana Mendieta, Zanele Muholi, Francesca Woodman, Aneta Grzeszykowska and Katalin Ladik) with testimonies in various creative formats by women from the neighborhood of Santa Ana (Nelly Vera, Xiomara Da Silva, Gineth Camargo and Raysa Ramirez). Curated and facilitated by Tova Katzman and Daniel Molina, the exhibition presented a dialogue around the transformation of the body and territory. We started out by talking with the four women from the community about their concerns, since that is often where artists' works originate, and it's something we can relate to. The process was special, full of introspection, and the pieces the women created were deep, powerful, and honest.

The day before the opening, Nelly, a refugee from Colombia who had felt deeply touched by Ana Mendieta's work, had a video call with her mother and siblings in Cali. She showed them her piece: a picture of her mother covered in the Colombian flag, next to a poem entitled "Matria," about her longing to return to Colombia and hug her mother. I could not contain my tears. It was truly special to witness that moment. Nelly later told us that the process of the exhibition had not only allowed her to connect with her family in a different way, in spite of the distance, but that it had tapped into her love of writing, something she had stopped doing years ago. She recently started working on a novel.

I am still, three years after the fact, insanely proud of Casa Santa Ana's first publication, *Sandra Eleta: The Invisible World* (2018, copublished with Editorial RM). Eleta is one of Panama's most important photographers and an inspiration for her incredible work with communities, especially in Portobelo, the fishing village on the Caribbean coast of Panama where she has lived since the 1970s. Sitting with Sandra and listening to the stories behind the photographs was a privilege. We took it as our responsibility to make her work and life be better known in the world. The process included digitizing the negatives; researching the actual dates of the pictures, since Sandra had never really cared about dates; and encouraging Sandra to write her own memoirs of life in Portobelo. It even resulted in the reconnection between Sandra and her dear friend, photographer Graciela Iturbide (whose work I loved since my Mexico years). Iturbide ended up also participating in the book. We launched the book at Paris Photo and it is being sold in eighteen countries around the world. The whole experience was magical but I mainly cherish the team of women (Mónica Kupfer, Paula Kupfer, Rose Marie Cromwell) that worked together in this book, which gave the project an even more powerful energy.

Around the time that we were working on the book, we also had an eight-week photography workshop with children, in which they photographed their neighborhoods and the people who were important to them. They all met with Sandra and the encounter was remarkable for its horizontality and the absence

of any sense of hierarchy. They showed her their pictures and she showed them hers, a conversation between photographers.

**Both of these experiences—the exhibition and the book—sound like fruitful and generative collaborations with artists and your local community. What is the connection between Multiplo Editions and Casa Santa Ana, and how does it also represent a collaboration with contemporary artists?**

As any non-profit might tell you, sustainability is key in order to continue doing our work. Both Casa Santa Ana and Multiplo Editions were founded by Johnny Roux, and through him, German painter André Butzer heard about us and the work that we do. We are incredibly fortunate that Butzer was so generous with his donation of this print, the proceeds of which will directly benefit our library project. We are always looking for creative, collaborative ways of funding our projects in a sustainable manner, and look forward to many more collaborations.

**In addition to the children's library, are there other current or future Casa Santa Ana projects that you can share?**

We are working on the first book-length publication on Donna Conlon and Jonathan Harker's longstanding collaboration as video artists. The book will offer an overview of their work; an extended interview between the artists and curator and art critic Sandino Scheidegger, and a contextual essay by art historian Paula Kupfer that considers their videos through the prism of the historical, cultural, and ecological laboratory that is Panama City. It's an honor to work and learn from brilliant people on Casa Santa Ana's different projects. Working collaboratively is a fundamental aspect of our organization. Other exciting things are in development. Stay tuned!

*Paula V. Kupfer is a Panamanian-German art historian and writer specialized in the history of photography and modern art in Latin America. She is a frequent collaborator of Casa Santa Ana.*

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