

## THEO BOETTGER

- 1975            born in Meißen, Germany
- 1996-2001     studied fine arts at the Academy of Fine Arts Dresden, Germany
- 2001-2003     master studies with Prof. Hans Peter Adamski at the Academy of Fine Arts  
Dresden, Germany
- lives and works in Berlin, Germany

### Prizes/grants

- 2006            New Talents at the Art Cologne, Germany
- 2005            Grant by Käthe Dorsch Foundation, Berlin, Germany
- 2004            Residency scholarship by Kulturstiftung of Saxony (Schloss Wiepersdorf),  
Germany
- 2003            travel scholarship, Moskow, Russia
- 2002            New York scholarship by the German National Academic Foundation  
Hegenbarth Fellowship for the project »No more heroes«
- 2000            Scholarship Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes

### Exhibitions (solo shows)

- 2013            »RISE«, galerie baer, Dresden, Germany
- 2011            »Das Orakel«, union of art Wolfsburg, Germany
- 2010            »Point Of No Return«, galerie baer, Dresden, Germany
- 2009            »Aspirin«, Galerie Koal, Berlin, Germany
- 2008            »Der Petzer«, galerie baer, Dresden, Germany  
»Dirty Tricks«, Priska C. Juschka Fine Arts, New York, USA
- 2007            »Netto«, gallery at the castle Senftenberg, Germany

- 2006 »Die Garage«, Delikatessenhaus, Leipzig, Germany  
 »Puls und Blei«, Galerie Pankow, Berlin, Germany (C)  
 »brutstadt«, galerie baer, Dresden, Germany
- 2004 »Die Masse«, Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf, Germany
- 2003 »Laufwerk Hauptstadt«, Leonhardi-Museum Dresden, Germany (C)
- 2002 »like lead«, New York, USA

### Participations (selection)

- 2012 »Apokalypse Utopie«, Galerie Pankow, Berlin, Germany (C)  
 »Kontrollverlust«, Kunsthau Erfurt, Germany  
 »Kunst-Kunst. Von hier aus betrachtet«, GfZK Leipzig  
 »l'oiseau présente...«, Ballhaus Ost, Berlin, Germany
- 2011 »Colorado«, Galerie Module, Dresden, Germany  
 »Theo Boettger, Hannes Broecker, Eckehard Fuchs, Andreas Hildebrandt«, galerie baer, Dresden, Germany  
 »Positionen Sächsischer Gegenwartskunst«, Villa Eschebach, Dresden, Germany  
 »Dialog – X. Biennale der Gegenwartskunst«, St. Petersburg, Russia
- 2010 »Welt und System«, Städtische Galerie Dresden, Germany (C)  
 »Otto-Dix-Preis«, Orangerie, Kunstsammlung Gera, Germany (C)  
 »houseparty II«, galerie baer, Dresden, Germany  
 »There´s a tear in my beer«, Westgermany, Berlin, Germany  
 »Fred Rapid Glassworks«, Autocenter, Berlin, Germany (C)
- 2009 »Line up«, Galeriesgesellschaft, Berlin, Germany  
 »Baut auf Tour«, Delikatessenhaus Leipzig, Germany  
 »50 Werke von 50 Künstlern«, Kunstsammlung Lausitz, Senftenberg, Germany (C)  
 »All about ... Dresden«, whiteBOX e.V., Munich, Germany (C)  
 »Formation 45 x 16 x 6,5 m« Halle 41, Berlin, Germany  
 »Facebook«, the drawing lab, Berlin und galerie baer, Dresden, Germany (C)
- 2008 »Wasistdas?«, Loft 19, Paris, France (C)  
 »Appell«, Verbeke Foundation, Antwerp, Belgium (C)  
 »Hinterland«, Museum für Junge Kunst Frankfurt/Oder, Germany  
 »Erwerbungen«, Städtische Galerie Dresden, Germany  
 »Appell«, Museum Felix de Boeck, Drogenbos, Belgium

- 2007 »Tokio Hotel«, Ostrale, Dresden, Germany  
 »life worth dying for«, Wilde Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2006 group show, Galerie Noack, Mönchengladbach, Germany  
 »Wir haben keine Probleme«, Backfabrik Berlin, Germany  
 »today even the drawers are winners«, Klara Wallner Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
 »TinaB«, The Prague Contemporary Art Festival, Prague, Czech Republic (C)
- 2005 »Frühstück im Freien« (Wasteland), Kunstverein Rügen, Germany (C)
- 2004 »Lichter«, Großenhainer Str. 9, Dresden, Germany  
 »Schönheit – der Sprung im Spiegel«, Städtische Galerie Traunstein, Germany
- 2002 »Werkzeuge und Einheiten«, Berlin, Germany  
 »bilder«, Showroom Köln, Germany
- 2001 »The daily way«, Galerie NEON, Brösarp, Sweden  
 »Koch«, Mediaclub, Berlin, Germany  
 »Alice in change«, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden, Germany
- 2000 »FRANKFURT/OSTCLUB«, Galerie B, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany  
 »unplugged«, Galerie, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden, Germany  
 »Dem Deutschen Volk«, temporäre Galerie, Dresden, Germany  
 »Spielstätte für Foxy Lady«, Brösarp, Sweden
- 1999 »Stapeln und Folgen«, temporäre Galerie, Dresden, Germany  
 »DID das kollektive Ich«, Senatssaal, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden, Germany

### **Art fairs**

- 2011 Volta NY, Prieview Berlin
- 2008 Art Cologne, Scope Basel, Preview Berlin
- 2007 Scope New York, Art Cologne, Scope Basel, Preview Berlin, Pulse, London  
 (with Galerie Priska C. Juschka, New York), Scope Miami
- 2006 Art Chicago, Preview Berlin, Art Cologne, Scope Miami

### **Acquisition bought by:**

Städtische Galerie Dresden, Germany  
 Kunstfonds Sachsen, Germany

Zeitgeschichtliches Forum Leipzig, Germany  
Sammlung Loushy, Israel

## **Bibliography**

Bezirksamt Pankow Berlin (publisher): Apokalypse | Utopie; Galerie Pankow; Berlin 2012

Städtische Galerie Dresden – Kunstsammlung (Hrsg.): World and System – Contemporary Art between Analysis, the Search for Meaning and Dilemma, Dresden 2010

Kunstsammlung Gera (publisher): Otto-Dix-Preis 2010 – Theo Boettger, Gera 2010

Fred Rapid (publisher): Glassworks, Konzeptalbum, Berlin 2010

Atelier Verlag Ursula Fritzsche (publisher): Kunstart. Die kostenlose Zeitung für Kunst und Künstler, issue march - april 2010, Köln 2010, S.20

Kunsthalle whiteBOX (publisher): All about ... Dresden; Unterführung 2009

Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (ver.di)/department 8 (media, art and industry) (publisher): Art+Culture (cultural and political journal); cover, p. 6,8,9,10,13; issue No. 3; Oktober/November 2008; Berlin 2008

Suzanne Tarasieve (publisher): Wasistdas; p. 8/9; Paris 2008

Ausrufer und Eckensteher; Sächsische Zeitung; 11.2.2008

Unterwegs in Dunkeldeutschland; Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten; 31.1.2008

Alles, nur nicht leise; Die Welt; 27.1.2007

Bezirksamt Pankow Berlin (publisher): Theo Boettger – Puls und Blei; Galerie Pankow; catalogue; Berlin 2006

galerie baer (publisher): Theo Boettger; catalogue; Dresden 2006

Prague Art Future (publisher): tina b – The Prague Contemporary Art Festival; Prague 2006

Kunstverein Rügen (publisher): Theo Boettger – the wasteland; Frühstück im Freien; Putbus 2005

Leonardi-Museum (publisher): Theo Boettger – Laufwerk Hauptstadt; catalogue; Dresden 2003

### **Theo Boettger: THE SNEAK**

Theo Boettger's Sneak is bald. With black tongue stretched out venomously and greedily staring bulging eyes, he drools at the thought of his next victim.

Every generation and society has its sneaks, inquisitors, informers, snitches, vilifiers and bullies. Sneaking can happen out of malice, envy and thirst for revenge. It can serve as an outlet for aggression or be motivated by moral convictions or social pressures. Sneaks always sneak on their own group and allow themselves to be used by employers and authorities for checking up on and penalising in-house or system-endangering misdemeanours.

Against a backdrop of global terror and fear of losing one's job, sneaking is increasingly losing its moral taint. The Internet provides new dimensions in this respect. On websites such as [www.verpetzt.de](http://www.verpetzt.de) or [www.anschwaerzen.de](http://www.anschwaerzen.de) anyone can betray, condemn and insult his or her fellow humans under the cloak of anonymity and in uncensored form. Meanwhile, Süddeutsche Zeitung has introduced a "Sneak and Evaluate" function into its online forum to regulate the daily flood of unqualified reader comments.

Theo Boettger's Sneak is joined by other dubious creatures: a neighbour with scarred face contorted in a grimace, pierced eyes and bared teeth; a bloody, battered, bent figure on his nocturnal way home; a tormented heap of flesh stretched out on a kerbstone with the bodiless legs of passers-by trampling indifferently over it.

Scarcely has one tried to relax and create a distance by drawing comparisons with the Expressionist metropolitan art of the 1920s but scraps of words like plus, reopening and big bladder drag you back to the here and now that Johannes Schmidt aptly described as the

“pandemonium of modern life on the edge of the abyss.” Boettger paints the uncomfortably commonplace margins of our everyday life in an excessive, aggressive and authentically unattractive style with a great deal of black and blood red and all the less exuberant colours or areas of light. They include a supermarket checkout assistant, her body torn apart by shopping trolleys, extended opening times and screaming kids; a family whose supporting legs begin to totter badly while waiting in the job centre queue; they extend to rampant mass hysteria in the battle for the lowest prices at the Media Markt store opening.

Theo Boettger deals with areas of life of those failed or neglected in capitalism, who surround him daily and affect him personally. He does so with brushstrokes in oil, grotesquely distorted slogans and bulky layers of collage. He translates individual destinies and inferno-like mass battles into psychograms on canvas and wood. Boettger’s painterly realisations may be apocalyptically grim, but the circumstances he describes are perfectly normal everyday madness. His artistic commentary is more personal than political, never other-worldly, but in the midst of life – and close to the abyss.

(Text by Carla Orthen)

## **Deadly Serious**

Dark, faceless figures, a bawling infant in a stroller, the company logos of cheap discount stores, banker types, angry people with tattoos, zombies with wrinkled faces and empty eye sockets, stumbling people, falling people, people swept away, crumbling houses, shreds of words, fragments of people, lots of black and little colour – Theo Boettger creates a pandemonium of modern life on the brink of the abyss in his large-format watercolours. As an artist, he deals with topics in everyday life by pitting himself against the demoralising details of social inequities, the impertinence of the media, and hopeless human fates. In his pictures, he addresses exclusion, life balanced in the margins and condemned there to desperation, explosion, and failure. Black holes and spiral forms that have been incorporated into the collage, bursts of black colour emanating from fierce brush strokes, chaotic compositions of simultaneous actions – all of these endow the realistic elements in the images with even greater intensity. The artist eschews banal descriptions in his images, interrupting his narratives with symbols and commentaries comprised of word fragments, as if to slow down the viewer’s observations by requiring a large amount of time for decoding. For there is, in

principle, nothing written in these paintings that could not also be seen. Where people act like the black-and-white characters in a comic strip, one person can be exchanged for the other; the stories in the speech bubbles become a parallel reality that functions as a spark for the painterly discovery of form. For Theo Boettger, codification does not mean disguising facts. Even though many story sequences are given only in fragments, a mood of grim critique always pierces through all filters of artistic alienation. Distance and identification seem to have congealed into a constant state of fierce struggle with one another. The artist does not allow himself the cool distance of an analyst, nor does he deliver a plain and simple sociocritical evaluation of the situation. His images derive their clarity from the topicality of their subjects and their deep seriousness, even though this seriousness also overflows, now and then, into hopeless gloom. Theo Boettger takes advantage of only a fraction of the potential of the medium in his watercolours, but he does so intentionally, reducing his works to a few primary tones without any decorative smears or flowing colour gradients. Simplicity of form is the goal; formal disquietude corresponds to an authentic sense of agitation. The remnants of the artist's presence in the paintings – moist waves and blemishes, drips of paint, black blots – attest to the intensity of the process of creation and appear as marks of desecration on the once – white paper. There is more than formal coquetry with brutishness, fury, and rebelliousness resonating in these paintings. Indeed, the interspersed words outline the path of a diffuse, cognitive march; yet they remain mere intimations that never run the risk of congealing into slogans. Like echoes, these words refer back to the fragmentary nature of modern worlds of signs. Artistic examinations of acute situations in society by means of street observations have a rich historical tradition. The high point of this tradition was, arguably, the urban painting of Expressionism and Critical Realism in the 1920's, which often derived the arc of tension in their narratives by juxtaposing the rich and the poor, the seemingly limitless possibilities for amusement in the city and the melancholy of the individual in the crowd. It is possible to draw a direct comparison between Theo Boettger's paintings and these traditions. Nevertheless, these works are missing the »lighter side« almost completely, as if one had taken down all of the radiant facades of the city, leaving behind only the featureless quagmire of humanity in its bowels. The artist turns his attention to the darkened realms, the splatter scene that is everyday existence. Yet he does not do so with meticulous descriptions and objective statistics. Rather, he uses images to speak the language of what he represents. Boettger is gruff and sarcastic, but never distant.

(Text by Johannes Schmidt)

There is a forlorn life at the periphery of things, where the disenfranchised hanker to be seen and not seen, to be known and not known. This is the subject matter of the painter Theo Boettger, who by the frangible means of watercolour and ink wash evokes the mental and emotional territory of the forgotten ...

However, the sources for Theo Boettger's works are not prescriptive, and they are not intended as transcriptions of precise events that have taken place. There is no desire to be a social realist in the commonest of senses, but they are a means of personal identification engendered by the accumulate of many different personal sources, an impulse that forges and maintains the artist Boettger's sensibility. (Mark Gisbourne)