

**„If you peel potatoes  
in your kitchen,  
you're a chef, if you  
do the same in a  
museum you are an  
artist.“**

Marina Abramowitsch

“Intoxicated Demons” – had a decisive influence on Marco Schwalbe – who, after many years in the advertising industry, decided to bravely revamp the rather dusty image of the art world in the early 2000s, with a healthy dose of innovative creativity. Until this point, Street Art and Urban Art had generally been associated only with non-conformist vandals, and beatnik youth – and never with White Cube gallery spaces, or art fairs.

This however, was destined to change. In 2005, Schwalbe – who loves Francis Bacon, Kurt Schwitters, Egon Schiele, Robert Rauschenberg, El Lissitzky and Umberto Boccioni – took “Intoxicated Demons” and founded one of the first galleries in Berlin which successfully and exclusively devoted itself to the national and international Urban Art scene. He quickly gained international recognition and were successfully able to prove the profound effects that the modern urban culture had on the creativity of young artists.

Soon he got amazed by the intense creative power of this ‚new art‘, represented by a myriads of possibilities, and in particular by the young devoted artists who were not driven by economic interests. The apparent antagonism of elite- and mass culture vanished and art itself became the

rule and defined the motivation, which was a welcoming progress in freedom and truth. Elitism was blended with popularity, probability with questionability, reality with mythicism, professionalism with proletarianism. The so-called progressive ideology of art, which often bored Marco Schwalbe during visits to exhibits and exhibitions, was finally unmasked. Consequently, it was made clear, that through the ever changing nature of the world of art, art should not be called progressive; rather it should be constantly progressing.

Marco Schwalbe believed that a major gap existed between the highly professional art market of the super trade fairs and auctioneers and the academic circle associated with the biennial film festivals and museums. On the other hand, subtle and sneaky structural changes began in the late 80s and 90s within the art scene which manifested themselves in the 20th Century and posed a dilemma. The dilemma of market dependence and commercial preoccupation. The market value of an artist was considered a hallmark for quality of the art. Something which was unspeakably expensive must also be unspeakably brilliant.

From his point of view art lost its most precious aspect – the viewer. He realized that aesthetics can only be evaluated by multiple measures and that a mixture of criteria had to be developed, so that art would not be judged as regressive, market-driven, or uncultured. Schwalbe was guided by the idea that art by itself could and should affect the viewer. This impact on the viewer, however, should not be derived from attempts to interpret and evaluate art by a respective group. His efforts culminated in the first STROKE Art Fair in 2009.

For Marco Schwalbe art as an integral aspect of a modern and sophisticated lifestyle that helps to nurture an unloaded and idealistic perception on new developments in our society and our culture. But beside all the endeavor for development it is important to balance the new with the old. For our consciousness we have to look back to the old masters and praise their craftsmanship, we have to remember the boldness and visions of the impressionists, we have to admire the surrealists phantasy or the witty social criticism of the dada movement.

His work is whether an ideology nor a battle of thoughts inside the art world. Emerging contemporary art, with all its influences rooted in urban culture, is a vivid example for the massive impact on the prevalence of cultural developments in the 21st century. The „old“ will not be denounced or destroyed but rather adapted and remixed. Predominant aesthetic norms will not be denied but rather assimilated, verified and following the spirit of free artistic expression interpreted.

*Marco Schwalbe (Berlin, August 2016)*

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