

shaul knaz – layout for a dream

Vernissage: Wednesday, 25 November 2015, 7pm

Exhibition runs 26 November 2015 to 25 February 2016

Shaul Knaz was born in Kibbutz Gan-Shmuel, Israel in 1939 and lives and works there as an artist and author.

The **galerie gugging** is showing for the first time in Austria the works of the autodidact who up to now has exhibited primarily in Israel.

“When people ask me, ‘All those people in your works – the ones running, fighting, loving, dreaming, falling down only to stand up again – where are they all heading?’, then I try to explain that I am one of those people, that I talk about people yet don’t want to say anything.” (Shaul Knaz)

Knaz describes his work as being social-critical, rather than a political statement. He observes situations in his country, on the kibbutz, and concerns himself with the desires and the striving of the people for freedom, love, joy and peace. How can a person be a part of the whole and yet preserve his identity? How can he feel connected and comfortable instead of seeking refuge in entertaining pleasures?

Ever since the time of prehistoric cave paintings, cuneiform script and later hieroglyphics, stories have been told and history has been written. Shaul Knaz tells his story, marked by his life on the kibbutz, in his own unique way.

The key figures in his works are man and woman, who represent the human need for togetherness in a complicated modern world, and also the difficulty in safeguarding this connection. The man always has a weapon by his side; the woman is often depicted as being pregnant or holding a child by the hand. One can also see houses, trees, flowers, cars, children playing or holding balloons, the things of everyday life and tanks that seem to float on the works, that are multiple repetitions of themselves, reflecting what surrounds Shaul Knaz. He meaningfully arranges the individual subjects that at first glance appear to be happy and carefree, in such a way that via the feeling of the viewer, the theme of the respective work can be apprehended. Time and again, individual words or phrases appear in his works that – skilfully placed – emphasise the intended message of the work.

Shaul Knaz employs many types of material as the vehicle for his works. They emerge in diverse sizes on PVC, plywood, paper or canvas. He uses mixed media to create works – through a paste-like application of oil and acrylic paint together with various types of glue, which he in turn mixes with materials that are his professional secret – that look almost 3D.

The repetition of the subject, and the clear, simple design are reminiscent of the world of graffiti, of street art, and are similar to the style of Keith Haring, who transported street art to diverse media and whose hallmark is the anonymous figure, heavily outlined in black.

The blend of a seemingly urban design with the value system of the kibbutz is what is private, personal and absolutely individual in Shaul Knaz`s art.

The **galerie gugging** is showing works that have been created in the past 15 years. Shaul Knaz and his wife Hanna have been present at the opening.

galerie gugging

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