

Israeli-German exhibition

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The tree house from Beuel in Tel Aviv

Stefan Zajonz and Wolfgang Hunecke took part in the "Act of Change" exhibition in Israel.

© Photo 1, by **Meike Böschmeyer** / Studio Hunecke

On the photo Wolfgang Hunecke and Stefan Zajonz & Text under the picture:

Stefan Zajonz shows a pendant he received from a family whose son was killed in the attack by the terrorist organization (Hamas) on the music festival on the border with Gaza. Wolfgang Hunecke contributed two prints from the "Dancers" series. A picture from the series hangs in the background. (Studio).

BEUEL. As art lovers know, Wolfgang Hunecke's tree house is located on the Kreuzstrasse in Bonn Beuel. But during Stefan Zajonz's visit one morning in March, the studio becomes a space-time capsule that connects the Bonn art venue with the Machon Hamayim City Gallery, Joseph Wiessman, in Givatayim. This is because Zajonz and Hunecke took part in the Israeli-German exhibition "Art of Change" with five German artists.

This morning, Bonn organizer and co-curator Zajonz, born in 1958, gives a first-hand account of what he experienced during his week-long stay in Israel. At the meeting with his friend Hunecke, born in 1950, he weighs every word he says. Due to the current situation, he would like to refrain from making any political statements, except for one: "Bring them home. Now!" By which he means the people who are still in the grip of the terrorist organization following the Hamas attack on 7 October.

**"Artists have to be careful about expressing themselves.
Statements critical of the regime can have consequences".**

(**Stefan Zajonz**, Exhibition maker)

Zajonz has returned from a country that he describes as traumatized and divided, full of emotions between grief, despair, frustration and the hope for peace. "Artists have to be careful about expressing themselves. Statements critical of the regime can have consequences."

According to Zajonz, the City Gallery Joseph Wiessman (*Water institute*) is located in a former industrial area in the south of Tel Aviv, which is roughly the size of a third of Beuel (*sic*) and where numerous studios have set up shop. He describes with fascination a place in the vicinity of the Museum of Modern Art, the Cameri-Theater and the Opera House, where trees have been erected with wish lists from all over the world hanging from them.

Zajonz reports on a reconstructed Hamas tunnel and a long, white table with empty chairs that have been left free for those people who are still in Hamas hands almost six months after the attack and kidnappings. The message is: "As soon as they are free, they can sit down and eat."

The embassy dominates the cityscape in Tel Aviv

BRING THEM HOME. NOW! (with Michal Zakai)

© Photo 2, Stefan Zajonz

The families of the abducted people meet regularly in some of the tents to share their experiences. "The suffering told, the suffering shared - is half the suffering," says Zajonz and

Transl. German-English, Stefan Zajonz

shows a pendant he received from a family whose son was killed in the terrorist organization's attack on the music festival on the Gaza border. "He was on the dance floor when he died." According to Zajonz's information, two other members of the family are still being held by the terrorist organization. "That was a touching and tearful encounter for me."

The two pictures that Wolfgang Hunecke has contributed to the exhibition in Tel Aviv, namely two prints from the "Dancers" series, form an artistic link to the music festival. "Dance has always been a basic theme of my work and fits perfectly into this situation." As Stefan Zajonz adds, Hunecke's pictures were very well received in the exhibition. While the reference is quite clear at this point, the Israelis avoided alluding to the current situation. Instead, they exhibited works showing family's everyday scenes, for example a picture of someone hanging up laundry.

Zajonz himself presented two photographs on the theme of „TimeDISplacement“, which is about creating something living from ruins - i.e. dead material. Alongside curator Doron Polak, Zajonz thanked painter Michal Zakai in particular at the exhibition opening, who was instrumental in the concept. When Zajonz read out the quote from German Chancellor Olaf Scholz from October 13, 2023, in which he assured Israel of Germany's solidarity and support, there was such strong applause that the Bonn-based artist had to interrupt his speech for a minute.

Zajonz also extended a counter-invitation to the Israeli artists for an exhibition in Bonn. The Artists' Forum in the August Macke district or the Haus an der Redoute in Bad Godesberg could be suitable venues, he says. "Making this possible is a matter close to my heart."

Exhibited together in Tel Aviv (from left):

**Idith Levy, Doron Polak, Sue Ela, Stefan Zajonz, Shira Mushkin, Shlomi Ben Yakar
in the Machon Hamayim, City Gallery Joseph Wiessman, in Givatayim.**

© Photo 3, by Act of Change

During his stay in Israel, Zajonz not only visited important religious and historical sites such as Yad Vashem, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem or a historic water pipeline (Burma Road) in Judea, but also had countless conversations with the people. "The country is traumatized," he says. "All the people I've met talk about war. But they want peace."

For Zajonz, the exhibition in Tel Aviv was also an opportunity to bring a bit of peace from Germany - and therefore also a bit of normality - to the crisis-ridden region. Face-to-face understanding is valuable and healing in these difficult times. And Wolfgang Hunecke adds: "Our pictures will not make the world a better place, but we can try not to make it worse."

ACT OF CHANGE

info box

Artists send their works to Tel Aviv

The German part of the exhibition "**Act of Change**" („**Ein Akt der Veränderung**“ & „**פעולה של „שינוי**“ is organized by the NRW-Bezirksverband Bonn, Rhein-Sieg e.V. in the **Bundesverband Bildender Künstlerinnen und Künstler BBK** (Federal Association of Visual Artists). Stefan Zajonz, in collaboration with the director of the BBK-Kulturwerk in Bonn, Georg Schnitzler, was able to recruit a total of **seven artists from the region** (Cologne/Bonn) who each sent two of their works to Tel Aviv, including Alexandra Hinz-Wladyka, Almuth Leib, Christiane Rath and "zweiimdruck" alias Christine Pohlmann & Suki Meyer-Landrut in addition to Hunecke.