

The old masters discover lifestyle

For many years Ralf Metztenmacher earned good money as chief designer at Puma. Now he has ventured into the world of the independent artist and is bringing the technique of the old masters into the 21st century

BY GOTTFRIED PELNASCH, FT

Bamberg — The man has nerve. Chief designer at Puma in Herzogenaurach. Travelling between Hongkong, London and Boston. Not yet forty and already at the peak of his profession. And what does somebody like Ralf Metztenmacher do? He packs in his job - on his own initiative mind you - and throws himself head over heels into a new life-adventure. An adventure in which independence and self-realization play a large role.

The Aachen-born Metztenmacher lives on the picturesque Leinritt and also maintains a studio there. "I didn't want just fast-sell success", he says in an FT interview. The new challenge is a comeback by the real roots of art. "From a very young age I wanted to be a painter. I won't live for ever and the time is coming where I need to set my priorities."



"I want to make art democratic"

RALF METZENMACHER

Now he only markets himself. Metztenmacher would not be Metztenmacher if he didn't also use the know-how he gained working for Puma to help him to achieve his goals as a

freelance painter. "Design" in the sense of lifestyle and a modern way of living also plays a significant role in achieving these goals. The 41 year old does not just leave it at fine brushstrokes and selling valuable originals. Using his marketing skills, he also organises high-quality, hand-signed and numbered duplicate prints of varying colours - a proper art sales concern. "I want to make art a democracy. People with less money should be able to derive the same pleasure from my paintings as the well-off", says Metzenmacher. And so it appears to be: The more than twenty large format originals, that can be purchased at any time for a five figure sum are continued in diverse form in the so-called "Editions" (print on canvas) and in the even more economical "Rallipan" collections (print on hand-made paper). These collections consist of the original motive transformed through a photographic process into bright colours, various formats and decorative frames. "This has nothing to do with conventional decorative paintings" stresses the artist. In fact all three variations are part of a total whole – all of them unique specimens in their own right.

Interior decoration is everywhere. Furnishing houses, interior designers, interior decorators, artistic people with good taste and the inclination for the unusual. Ralf Metzenmacher has certainly struck it lucky– these are exactly the areas the painter has focused on. His next aim is to establish himself in the national art market. "No easy undertaking", the experienced PR-professional knows.

He is already setting a promising course for taking a successful route with his art. With his avant-garde style, Metzenmacher combines the old masters' traditional still-lives from the 16th century with the modern world of today. "My art suits the lifestyle of global-thinking cosmopolitans. It is the synthesis of art and lifestyle and hence a new vision in the world of art", says its creator. After "The Beach of My Dreams", his newly completed cycle in which femininity plays a critical role is called "The Crowning of Creation." Relatively few set pieces – snails, mussels, melons, a coffee pot – and strong colours modernly interpret an immemorial theme. It is definitely worth taking a closer look.

Source: Fränkischer Tag, February 2006