

Artist Statement & Career of Brigitte Thonhauser-Merk



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**"I am fascinated by crosspoints
between natural and cultural spaces,
heritage and futurism, harmony and
dissonance."**

- Brigitte Thonhauser-Merk

***Sparks of peace and joy: Distilled in over 50 years
of art dialogue, I create sub-real compositions, that
inspire the observer to rest and recharge.***

ARTIST STATEMENT

After decades of accelerated technical experimentation and refinement, decades of waiting to finally have access to academia to study Art History, and being mentored by renowned artists, her youthful passion for "the line" is back in full bloom.

The artwork shown here combines her cultural heritage of the Viennese art nouveau with her early studies of modern art in Paris of the 1950s. Art critics described her work as "elegant and poetic". What do you see?

Active since: 1962

Signature: "Merk", her maiden name, demonstrating the continuity of her work over the past 50+ years

Visual style: figurative themes layered with abstract distortion, rich colors and bold lines.

LATEST AWARDS

ARTYA AWARDS 2019

ARTtour international Magazine with Artists for a green planet, New York

MÉDAILLE D'OR 2018

Arts-Sciences-Lettres, Paris

GLOBAL ART AWARD DUBAI 2017

1st prize in "Illustration", Dubai

CAREER

The wild beginnings. Inspired by her cultural heritage of the Viennese art nouveau and early European modernists, she starts at a young age to express her world in oil chalk drawings.

At an art competition hosted at Vienna's prestigious art school, "Akademie am Schillerplatz" in 1962, she is awarded first prize by renowned art educator Prof. Gerda Matejka-Felden. The piece "Stilleben in Ölkreide" was on show at the Vienna Secession which should have been a victorious start into her career in the arts.

Pause for effect. Discouraged by her traditional parental home to go to university and pursue a career in the arts, she full-heartedly dedicates the next 30 years to building a family and a business with her husband. But her early cultivated passion for the arts shall be revived soon.

Spring is coming. In 1996, after a 30-year long creative break, Brigitte embarks on the delayed journey of giving her pent-up artist's soul new space. She fast-tracked the lost decades in technical and stylistic development, encouraged and guided by her valued art mentors, like Prof. Colnago for aquarelle, Mag. Schnetzinger for oil painting, or Prof. Hübler, expert for composition. The self-confidence in her unique lines returns, stroke by stroke.

In search for Garden Eden. Encouraged in composition, it's time to fulfill her life-long dream which she could never afford as a kid, to once paint with real oil painting, like the old masters. Those rich in color visualizations of peace and abundance gave her the drive she needed to enter her next phase.

The abstract leap. The early 2000s mark a turning point in Brigitte's artistic evolution towards the bold lines she's known for today. Taking the realistic captures from before and adding the layer of abstract distortion is the gateway to deconstructing and extracting familiar shapes and scenes.

Fantastic new worlds. Her life-long dream of showing her art in Paris is coming true with this new style showing fantastic worlds in bold color and shapes. Working with a local gallery for over 15 years now and earning numerous awards is truly a huge milestone in her art career.

The line, fountain of youth. Processing the passing of her parents unveiled Brigitte a new era of style since 2010 - embracing black and white, adding bold statement colors, while honoring the eternal flow of the line.

- 1943 born in Vienna, Austria on February 18th (maiden name "Merk")
- 1957 first touch and inspiration with modern art during a visit to Paris
- 1961 graduated with honors from secondary school in Vienna
- 1962 1st prize at art competition at Vienna's prestigious art school, "Akademie am Schillerplatz" and exhibition at Vienna Secession
- 1961-63 classical music consultant at "Columbia Graphophone", Vienna
- 1963-64 translator and administrator at Pathé-Marconi, Paris
autodidactic art studies
- 1964-71 secretary at an international trading company, Vienna & Rotterdam
- 1973-76 freelance translator at the national heritage agency, Hofburg Vienna
- 1971-96 raised 4 children and co-founded Thonhauser GmbH, Perchtoldsdorf
authorized signatory until retirement
- since 1996 revival of artistic activity:
aquarelle studies with Prof. Robert Colnago, Perchtoldsdorf,
courses at Künstlerischen Volkshochschule Lazarettgasse, Vienna
like aquarell with Prof. Mühlwisch-Krambichler,
oil painting with Prof. Schnetzinger,
composition, fashion design and acrylic painting with Prof. Hübler,
statuary with Prof. Sukopp, lithography with Prof. Kzywoblocki
- since 1998 over 120 art shows on 4 continents and numerous awards
(for more details see www.atelier-merk.com)
- 2008-11 finally enabled to join academia,
French & Romance studies and art history at University of Vienna
- 2014 Master's degree with distinction in Romance studies
Bachelor's degree in art history
- since 2008 member of Arts-Sciences-Lettres Paris,
member of Kulturvernetzung Niederösterreich,
member of Artistes Indépendants Paris,
published in numerous art magazines and catalogues
(for more details see www.atelier-merk.com)