

The Social Networks will become increasingly important



"Romy Campe geht nach New York" - Romy Campe goes to New York-. This is the motive principle on the brochure at the openings arranged for the artist's first solo-exhibition in the "Big Apple".

The evening introduced an exhibition by the eloquent title "Berlin-New York", which took place 13th to 30th of May 2011 at Art-Salon *"KUNSTLEBEN BERLIN"* - Hauptstraße 31, 10827 Berlin -. The content of the exhibits has presented not only new creations, but has shown a remarkable insight into the whole experience of the artist in spite of the still young age.

Romy Campe, born in 1972, has been living and working in Berlin as a painter and a culture manager since 2006, where along with partner Manfred Schulzke, also an artist, known by

his stage name *"MASCH"*, funded in 2010 their "Art-Salon": its programming contains exhibitions and performance of artists hosted from all around the world and that shows a variety of diverse culture initiatives. It's not only painting or sculpture. Arts and Culture at the same time, which as Romy says, *-aim to provide an alternative to the traditional gallery-*, an idea born years ago evolved over time to become a reality and an important cultural landmark of the new, young creativity of Berlin.

Also in the German capital of art the dealing with the costs of cultural activities is considerably complicated, although Berlin still remains one of the most convenient city of Europe for costs of life, so alluring for artists of every nature and culture.

In 2006 after long experience both as an artist and art dealer in Bochum, Koblenz and Hannover, in the beginning without any permanent resident, Romy Campe came back to the native Berlin.

Thanks to the years of study and her remarkable experience, she came to the conclusion that the choices to make in Berlin had to be different from those previously made. Indeed the experience done in art galleries led Romy Campe to close her experience in Hannover. "Art dealing and fairs are like every business cold and flat and their purpose is more or less equal to every other mass production item": this thought brought her to look for new ideas to pass over the simple opening of the traditional gallery to survive. The decision to move to Berlin was guided by the simple fact that she felt more artist than art dealer or manager.

Together with her partner MASCH, Romy took her chance renewing an apartment in one of the main streets of Berlin-Schöneberg district, the Hauptstraße: 200 m² of an old palace in a very chic area born as the "Art-Salon" for the exclusive promotion of the two artists.

Like many other great European capitals, Paris, Rome, or Prague for Eastern Europe, Berlin is the city of the thousands culture projects and billions of creative ideas, however suffering from a chronic limited public financial support for the sector and really well equipped with a highly competitive and prepared concurrency.

The galleries of the city are more than eight hundred, they open and close continually: only some of them have an ongoing activity, and many are specialized in promoting only certain types of artistic production for selected customers.

Romy Campe: "Who arrives here without detailed project or contacts could face more difficulties than one can pray over. Traditional art dealing it means good understanding of the city horizon, to have potential customers, to maintain public relations with local business and public management. For me was a real leap into the dark so I took one step at a time. I tried at first contacts with other artists and professionals, I thought I would use my experience to create my own space, in which it could have been easier to move and develop my creativity, as an artist. Our first idea was to create as short time as possible our "Art-Salon" and stay far from the modern tendency of galleries to be specialized on clients accounts.

KUNSTLEBEN BERLIN: Romy Campe and the art of success

At the same time I realized that the search for new contacts in the city led me to meet not only the painters or the sculptors, but also the writers, the musicians, the dancers or the actors living in Berlin: the "mono-tone" and the extreme specialization of many dealers, is what makes them not only tedious but potentially at extreme risk of failure in their early days. My studio was about to become something different, I wanted to be able to promote my art through other arts and the right step into the city have come directly from the people we hosted. So we took our time to reflect upon this suggestions and tried with rationality to develop what actually tires sometimes even artists and dealers: something new was born after that. Canvas and art works are always displayed on walls, during a jazz concert or a new book promotion, the performance of an actor's company, and the possible discussion of a new painting: this send out improves our business tasting a glass of wine and transforming my studio in a real center for artistic promotion".

Nowadays and in the years ahead the business promotion will take more and more place through the use of social networks, which in this last decade have been transformed, from a special designed media for private life, into a fundamental tool for professionals to be known on the internet and to create huge business networks.

Romy Campe: "All my current network of contacts born looking for new connections with painter and artists in general. Through the Internet and in a relatively short time I found myself a huge network of over 6000 contacts, potentially and virtually searching for opportunities and ideas to enhance what they're able to do. I started with XING a social network for professional years ago, and immediately after I joined Facebook. All it's still something relatively new to me but besides this we have of course the "traditional" pages of our website.

A considerable share then of the this activity takes place, so to speak, on the net, through the communication with a large number of individuals, -professionals or art lovers- that makes up the first reference for KUNSTLEBEN BERLIN. Easy to understand is the strategy behind all this connections: standing contacts give themselves birth to new ideas, projects and sometimes, with the favour of Destiny, they help to realize also the most ambitious goals.

Romy Campe: "Social networks will become increasingly important. I find that artists and galleries so far have not fully understood or explored the real potential of this new technologies as other professional sectors do, however the presence of artists and gallery online is always greater. The new exhibition itself in a thriving gallery of Manhattan's West Side, the "Skylight Gallery", 538 West 29th Street, NY 10001, that is the main reason for the short exhibition here in Berlin, is the typical social media story. Our first contact was mediated by another German artist, with whom about five years ago I participated to an on-line exhibition, after that, we hadn't exchanged more than a few words via Facebook. When the American art dealers, looking for German artists to be launched in the States, have seen my online art works recommended by him, they were so impressed that they decided to give me the chance to be part of their permanent staff of artists. Four of those paintings they do not come back because already sold, one of them actually flies to Mexico".



Romy is the kind of artist who works traditionally with brush, oil paints on line canvas, also of large dimensions, by rearranging the art of the past to make it a modern and contemporary way to express herself: she knows how to communicate the emotion of the Expressionism, the movement of Futurism, the Surrealism "stravaganza" and, based on her solid artistic culture, she draws liberally on classic Masters -one-up all Goya- keeping however a very personal point of view.

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"Augenblicke" -the title of the presented group of works- plays on the word's meaning of the German - "moments" - and the fact that the study's main theme focuses on men's faces and eyes in connections with their inner emotions -"Augen" is German word for eyes, "Blick" is the word for sight-.

Romy Campe: "Through the eyes it starts a look at the interior of every individual, the eyes are the shiny reflection of our soul".

The inspired idea to open a studio to make it a place for discussion and art presentation, using the inbuilt qualities of the city, therefore allowed the artists Romy Campe / MASCH to overcome the initial difficulties and to go on promoting a whole all-accomplished art performances.

The more targeted network searching of this last year has led to a domino effect which allowed a longer-term planning and the involvement of another professional who joined the team to satisfy the increased workload: the "kultur managerin" Mechthild Alpers. The number of artists asking to perform or to be hosted at the salon is steadily rising and this makes harder for Romy to keep the originally chosen direction of being exclusively an artist.

Although the beating heart of the business will remain Berlin and Germany, the contacts with new markets will intensify: U.S., Mexico, Italy are the next targets. In conclusion, if associated by the right amount of creativity, practicality and above all passion and will to do, as often happens, Art knows no boundaries and speaks only one, single language: that of emotions.

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