

The Grazer Kunstverein's continuous investigation into notions of *social abstraction* is carried further in response to the new 'Leitmotiv' of the steirischer herbst 2015, which investigates the notion of 'inheritance' by starting out from questions of property, transfer of knowledge and our handling of cultural heritage.

In collaboration with the Salzburger Kunstverein, Grazer Kunstverein has invited artist and healer AA Bronson (1946, Vancouver, CA) to develop a largescale project at both venues simultaneously. AA Bronson operates in this hybrid project as artist and curator, subject and object, in which he includes his solo work, his collaborations with younger artists and works by friends. As a founding (and only surviving member) of the collective General Idea (1969–1994), AA Bronson has had a long history with political and social issues in art and publishing, and especially with the AIDS crisis. Since then he has collaborated with many generations of artists across many disciplines. In the last fifteen years he has taken on spirituality as a key theme in his collaborations and art production.

At the Grazer Kunstverein, Stravinsky and Nijinsky's infamously scandalous ballet of 1913 gives name to this sequence of rites and sacrifices, overseen by sage elders, here given form in the person of AA Bronson himself. Themes of spirit, sex and darkness are knit into a labyrinth structure that takes over all the gallery spaces.

An oversized mandala of rose petals by Chrysanne Stathacos opens the exhibition and functions as a twin to a similar installation at the Salzburger Kunstverein. The artist installs the work during the opening while conversing with the public. The mandala is framed by a work of Yeonjune Jung. Jung's *What a Beautiful World!* is a wallpaper installation, which depicts sites of gay trauma in London.

In the first of a series of galleries, AA Bronson and Scott Treleaven present Cabine, a tent that is at once changing cabin on the Lido, private booth in a gay sauna, and a fortuneteller's carnival booth. During the opening, Michael Dudeck will perform an intense durational work based on ritual Hebrew text within the tent structure. Sharing the gallery is *Ashes to Ashes*, the remains of a performance by Nicolaus Chaffin and AA Bronson invoking the spirits of the dead in Fire Island's Magic Forest, where countless men who died of AIDS have had their ashes spread. *Blue* by AA Bronson and Ryan Brewer underlines this notion of invocation by depicting spirits that wonder the forest.

The galleries that follow reflect on ritual through the work of Elijah Burgher, who has constructed a

ritual space of paintings of magical sigils, and the work of Igshaan Adams, who chants inside a labyrinth of veils. The portraits of burning penises and a publication inspired by a dancer's jockstrap, both by Matthias Herrmann, a custom-made jockstrap of ribbon by Mark Jan Krayenhoff van de Leur, and K8 Hardy's *Untitled (Jockstrap Dress)* each reflect on the notion of the jockstrap as a cultural queer reliquary, rather than faux athletic aid. The exhibition-within-the-exhibition, *Queer Zines*, brings together more than 150 independently published queer magazines from the 1970s to today. Other works by Reima Hirvonen, JX Williams and AA Bronson complete the selection.

Each of these works tells a piece of a story, a history, and together they become a pagan romance, a series of rites, a sacrifice, and a gathering of sage elders.

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