

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR, MAN !

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In a world increasingly governed by division - of borders, ideologies, identities - an Anglo-Saxon declaration Make Love Not War, Man ! alluding to the times of the hippies, Beatles and Ravi Shankar, Woodstock, women's rights and contraceptives is just a nostalgic slogan but as a critical directive in this age of so many wars around the globe; from a local radio reportage 'Heisse Konflikte' Katharina Bochsler from SRF refers to 52 wars around the world in 2024. This exhibition is a declaration of the times, representing commonalities in the challenges of human conflict across the globe, representing the inherited systems of exploitation and violence, as well as a playful reclamation of agency through artistic expression. For its third edition, Wild at Art returns to Salon Mondial at the Campus of the Arts in Basel with a bold, urgent, and emotionally charged exhibition that gathers artists from Afghanistan, American, Argentina, Britain, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, India, Iran, Poland, Russia, Serbia, South Sudan, Switzerland, Uganda, Ukraine. In the context of Art Basel 2025, Make Love Not War, Man! is not a counter-program - it is necessary intervention to ensure the complex conversation across mediums, cultures, and lived experiences amidst the buzzing commerce driven frenzy of the art world, passing through Basel like a locust plague.

At the heart of this gathering stands artist Sylwia Zawiślak, whose linocuts and sculptural interventions ground the exhibition in a clear political and aesthetic register. Zawiślak's prints - We'll Protect You, New Olimpia, House of Manipulation - draw on traditional graphic techniques to comment on contemporary forms of control, complicity, and institutionalised care. With irony, clarity, and formal precision, her work retools the language of propaganda, reflecting her belief in art as both visual refusal and personal reckoning. Her works set the tone for the exhibition: sharp, socially engaged, and fearless in their critique.

This energy reverberates in Aleksandra Cegielska's performative textile works. With slogans painted and embroidered across wearable pieces - Vulva Shirts, Protest Blazers - Cegielska uses humour and disruption to tackle the commodification of women's bodies and the social hypocrisy surrounding gender roles. Drawing on the legacy of feminist pop and rooted in personal history, her work proposes clothing not as fashion but as confrontation: statements stitched with reluctance, worn like armour in public space.

Reza Hazare takes a quieter, more introspective approach. His large-scale paintings present human figures caught between presence and erasure - spectral, weightless, yet deeply affective. An Afghan artist born in Iran, Hazare paints from the margins of citizenship, exploring identity, exile, and post-traumatic memory. His fragmented compositions suggest an ongoing process of becoming, of holding space in a world that renders some lives visible and others peripheral. Hazare's visual language is not loud, but it resonates strong energies of the compromised human condition.

If Hazare's terrain is internal, Alexandre Kyungu Mwilambwe's is historical and geopolitical. Working with rubber tyre inner tubes, he carves cartographic incisions that evoke both Congolese scarification traditions and colonial mapping practices. His *Entassement V* transforms industrial waste into topographic poetry- a gesture that reclaims narratives of land, mobility, and autonomy. Kyungu's work exists at the intersection of materiality and memory, mapping identities with wound.

The theme of protection - both physical and psychic - reappears in Juliette Lepage Boisdron's exquisite *Shield Series*. Created on delicate rice paper with glass bead embellishments, her works are poetic meditations on cultural hybridity and symbolic defense. Having grown up across China, the Soviet Union, and Sub-Saharan Africa, Lepage Boisdron transposes her itinerant biography into layered, intimate compositions that offer viewers a form of visual refuge. Her shields are neither aggressive nor impermeable - they are soft structures for navigating a fragmented world.

Jonah Batambuze, by contrast, builds immersive spaces of ritual and radical collectivity. His installations - *Devotional System*, *Our Masala*, *Who Art in Heaven* - reimagine diasporic belonging through food, sound, memory, and communal storytelling. As founder of the *BlindianProject*, Batambuze's versatile practice is not only interdisciplinary but intercontinental. His work is architectural: constructing spaces where Black and South Asian identities intersect and activate each other. With wit and purpose, Batambuze reclaims ritual as a blueprint for global solidarity.

That spirit of self-invention courses through the performative work of Lux Valladolid, whose piece *Are You an NPC?* interrogates the flattening of identity in digital culture. Using constructed personas, performance, and irony, Valladolid asks what it means to be "real" in a gamified,

algorithmic age. Her work hovers between satire and sincerity, reminding us that in a world of automated avatars, authenticity is itself a radical act.

This interplay between theatricality and vulnerability also shapes Swiss Performance Prize Winner in 2024; Markus Goessi's multi-decade practice. His photographs - *Herrschaft*, *Da\Sein*, *A Mirror Maze for Me Alone* - combine autobiographical presence with conceptual abstraction. Influenced by performance, Goessi's work is steeped in contradiction: tender and sardonic, choreographed and instinctual. He mines the body as archive, as burden, and as stage - constructing images that question the construction of masculinity, authorship, and control, whilst embracing feminism as a core value.

The body is again central in Mer Ayang's barkcloth painting *pick me, let's play*, which fuses ancestral material traditions with activist urgency. An artist and anthropologist with extensive work in East African refugee communities, Ayang transforms barkcloth - an indigenous medium traditionally used for ceremony - into a surface for defiance. Her visual language is raw, generous, and unflinching, speaking from within the ongoing crises of migration, war, and systemic neglect where she depicts an armed soldier, in front of babies independent of any cultural bias.

Nika Timashkova continues this thread with textile sculptures that revel in contradiction. Her pieces - *Twisted Witch*, *Spinster Sister*, *Wild Bitch* - reclaim derogatory labels and cultural clichés, turning shame into satire, slur into self-definition. A Ukrainian-born Swiss artist navigating post-Soviet memory and Western liberalism, Timashkova's practice dissolves binaries and mocks the very idea of singular identity. Her work is unapologetic, darkly funny, and always political. Engaging in performance with a strong textile focus in her artworks.

From political irony to metaphysical inquiry, Rama Kalidindi offers a practice that oscillates between the scientific and the spiritual. Her works - ranging from 3D-printed figures to layered digital prints - draw from Advaita Vedanta philosophy, systems theory, and computational aesthetics. Kalidindi treats the cosmos as source material, exploring cycles of life, death, and rebirth not as metaphors but as structural realities. Her *Macrocosm in Mycrocosm* refracts these themes into visual form, suggesting that all truths are interwoven - and all divisions ultimately collapse.

Ana Vujic - well known for her incredible large format charcoal drawings depicting sufferance, life at the raw and cutting edge, struggle, protest and progress. In her works being challenged by the latest declaration of war between Israel and Iran, she chose to broach the topic of neutrality and a fallen flag, depicting no boundaries or nationalities; She questions where and why they start and end and how they become so necessary and divisive.

Copa & Sordes show in their print of an oil painting on linen of Mexican immigrants at the US border crossing aiming for a brighter future like the plight of any immigrant whether it is for greater economic freedoms, fleeing from a war torn situation of political or personal oppression or challenging socio-economic reasons, this universal plight is the same to achieve a greater state of freedom or an once achievable 'American Dream'. This painting is based on a photograph in the press. Copa & Sordes are heavily engaged in themes which are driven to aid in socio-political cultural discourse, exchange and change.

Victoria Lomasko is a well known and revered graphic artist with a plethora of work, covering important socio-cultural and political issues in modern day Russian culture. As an anti-Putinist, her expressions are provocative and controversial where she raises crucial themes affecting every day Russians, for essential change. She sees the many universal issues common to most societies across the globe and works as an illustrator for change. She is also an educator and public speaker and showed an immense body of her work at the Cartoon Museum in Basel in 2019 who hold an important collection of work 'Girls of Nizhny Novgorod'.

Tarlan Lotfizadeh is an interdisciplinary artist based in London, she had an important exhibition in Aarau "Bearing witness to a missing testimony" is a futile effort to recall missing memories of six pieces of stones, each bearing witness to an event at some point in history.

Finally, Saskia Edens closes the exhibition with a reflection on elemental time and transformation. Her work Shot, composed of tin casts of vintage Super 8 cameras, becomes a fossil of past technologies - fragile, hollow, and strangely sacred. Edens works not in opposition to nature, but with it. Across her multidisciplinary practice, she privileges process over product, collaboration over authorship. Fire, breath, erosion - these are her materials. Her works are moments suspended, reminding us that to make art is also to listen, to wait, to yield. She also has a very strong performance art practice.

Make Love Not War, Man! resists easy summation. It is a gathering of artists whose practices are unapologetically political, insistently personal, and shaped by the urgencies of their time. What connects them is not a fixed theme or a formal style, but an orientation: toward care, toward resistance, and toward the possibility of connection in a fragmented world.

This exhibition offers friction and beauty, it moves between clarity, ambiguity, vulnerability and provocation. It asks what love looks like in the face of war - not

only in the literal sense, but in the daily struggles for visibility, dignity, and space. And it responds not with naïveté or nostalgia, but with courage, precision, and the kind of tenderness that comes from having known conflict intimately.

To make love - not war - is not a retreat. It is a refusal. A daily practice. A trained discipline.

And here, in these works, love is not passive. It is sharp, articulate and composed of radical acts: to stay, to speak, to witness, to care.

Make Love Not War, Man ! is a declaration, expressed as an imperative. Does this expression have to be commanded to achieve peace at a personal level, between two individuals, radiating to regional, national and international levels.

The artists come together to extend an invitation for discourse, to pay attention, to be vigilant, to entertain complexity, to begin to deconstruct, recognise and imagine the plight of others, with the notion of engaging in a greater mindfulness, in the hope of great understandings between one another to dispel fears and insecurities in the hope of achieving a more harmonious world.

Will this be easy ? Is this achievable ? Every drop makes the ocean.

With great pleasure, we invite you to enjoy our show,

Aleksandra Cegielska and Rama Kalidindi