

Cathrine Fassbind, 2018

ALFONS BÜRGLER

Following an experimental phase in the field of abstraction and figuration, Alfons Bürgler found his characteristic visual language in the 1990s: paintings, drawings, graphic prints and painted wooden objects entitled KÖRPERSCHRIFTEN. These works depict parallelly arranged and stacked abstract human figures in various poses. Sometimes flat, sometimes graphically set on the pictorial medium, Bürgler's human figures dance, gesticulate, embrace, bounce or shake hands. In certain works more than one thousand figures bustle: "Although he brings many figures together in his pictures, they cannot be treated as a mass, but as a community. Each single figure [...] is a bundle of energy expressing its excess of power. Of course, not in an aggressive way" (Peter Killer 2008). Bürgler's KÖRPERSCHRIFTEN emerge from the repetition of the human figure, but without a regular pattern. They remind us of hieroglyphics due to their stylized execution and arrangement in rows.

The human being is also the focus of Bürgler's BAUMFIGUREN which he began creating in the beginning of the year 2000. The figures possess the character of a modified "objet trouvé", and can be interpreted as three-dimensional executions of his KÖRPERSCHRIFTEN. Bürgler finds his material at the edge of woodlands. The artist takes bush and tree branches, rotates them 180 degrees and then forms figures with humanlike features with a saw and pruning shears. Some of the BAUMFIGUREN are monochromatically painted and have a height up to three meters. They interact with the viewer as a single figure, couple or group, standing tall or inclined, fragile or stable, dancing, communicating or in silence. For his figures – small-scaled ones exist also as sculptural work in bronze – the artist founded the BAUMFIGUREN gallery in 2007: a private museum open to the public in Steinen, Canton of Schwyz.

Alfons Bürgler was born in 1936 in Illgau, a village in central Switzerland, and has worked for over 30 years as a freelance artist. After finishing an apprenticeship as a tailor, he attended the Schule für Gestaltung in Lucerne and the Neue Kunstschule Zürich. Since 1969 Bürgler has regularly participated in solo and group shows in Switzerland and abroad. In addition, he has implemented various architectural art projects in private contexts and public spaces, such as for the Hirslanden hospital St. Anna in Lucerne (2007–2012) or the OBC Suisse in the Europaallee in Zürich (2014).