

«I see myself as an ambassador for the joy of life»

Text and Interview: **Felix Engeli**
Foto: **Johannes Eisenhut**

Sabeth Holland is one of the most established Swiss artists of the present day. The “plays of color”, as her paintings and sculptures are also known, have received several international awards. In this interview the St. Gallen native explains what her art is intended to achieve and in what way the art world has changed.

The splendor of the colors alone gives your art great radiance. What do you want to convey with your works?

As a self-taught artist, I have always worked from an inner, positive force. This power has evolved through my life experience and has become stronger over the years. I also had to come to terms with private low blows, and dealt with them by filling the inner emptiness with a life-affirming lightness. This lightness is reflected in my art. I see myself as a mediator of a positive view of the world, as an ambassador of the joy of life.



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Where do you find inspiration for your artistic work?

I have a very intense perception of my surroundings and perceive the world as extremely colorful and intense. A foehn atmosphere, fireworks, rising smoke—I see inspiration everywhere for positive emotions which I then incorporate into my works. The paintings and sculptures always show my view

of something. My artwork is an interplay between proximity and distance, between visual and emotional perception, between colors and shapes. Quite chaotic (laughs).

«Colors that seem to tell enigmatic fairy tale episodes» was once written about your art. How do you create this visual language in your works?

I first make sketches and write down my thoughts. During the painting process, however, an object also develops a life of its own that shows me the way. The process is largely unpredictable. But then I can sense when an object is finished. Namely when it has strength and depth. I take my time with the finish. A little stroke here, a touch of color there. I can think about that for a long time. Paint needs time to dry. I take advantage of that.

Your works are now represented in private and public collections on all continents. What are you particularly proud of?

I am always pleased when my works are exhibited in public and can be viewed by a wide audience. This includes, above all, my art on construction. For example, in Wittenbach SG I was allowed to design a traffic roundabout installation. There is also a series of my paintings in the Notkerianum nursing home in St. Gallen. And last year I was invited by the St. Gallen psychiatric clinic in Heerbrugg, to paint my colorful Soulflowers directly onto their concrete walls. That was physically a very nice experience - with every step I took, the gray walls became brighter and more vibrant. - Of course, I am also proud of the invitations to international exhibitions, such as last year at Galerie Koo in Hong Kong.

Your website was selected by the New York Art Magazine and voted one of the "Top 500 Websites". What do such awards mean to you?

Such awards are of course a great honor and also very important for artists. Art is not like professional sports, which have external multipliers and markets itself to the public, so to speak. In the art scene you only really get noticed through invitations to exhibitions and awards. They are like a seal of quality.

Hasn't it become easier with the new media to make yourself known as an artist?

It is precisely because of the new media that the world today is flooded with art. It has become difficult to distinguish yourself. The arts pages used to help me explain my art to people and make it accessible to them. This closeness to the public is no longer as noticeable today. We are in a time of major change - also in the art scene. Where will that lead to? I don't know. I remain open.

Year of birth: 1959

Place of residence: St. Gallen

Favorite color: Turquoise

Web: www.sabethholland.ch

In brief: Since 1995 the paintings and sculptures by Sabeth Holland have been exhibited at art fairs all over the world. Born in St. Gallen, she has received several awards.

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