

Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view, entrance. (photo credit: Fernando Sandoval/MW)

Stefan Sagmeister ***I Look Like This***

March 5 - April 11, 2026

Opens Thursday, March 5, 6-8:30 p.m.

And now for something narcissistic: We're opening an exhibition of posters. Not just any posters, but only those that could be considered self-portraits. Which is to say: images of me taken by other people, designed by me, shaped by a studio, argued over, printed, and sent out into the world. If that qualifies as a self-portrait, then this show is full of them. The earliest poster is more than 30 years old. The most recent one was finished yesterday. —Stefan Sagmeister

Thomas Erben is thrilled to present his second exhibition with Stefan Sagmeister, a designer (b. 1962, Bregenz, Austria) whose transdisciplinary practice has been the subject of major institutional exhibitions since he founded Sagmeister, Inc. in 1993.

Most known for his album covers including for The Rolling Stones, Lou Reed or The Talking Heads, his wider work has sprung

from a level of self reflection and philosophical inquiry unusual in his field. Projects like *The Happy Show*, 2012 (ICA Philadelphia, traveling), *Beauty*, 2019 (Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt, and MAK, Vienna) or *Now is Better*, which premiered at the gallery in 2021, exemplify his cross-over position as a designer, typographer and artist.

The exhibition focuses on posters using his likeness, an impulse stemming from Sagmeister's desire – as a young designer emerging in the early '90s – to disrupt the sterility of modernism's emphasis on form and function. However, it also recalls Austrian art's long tradition of the body as a site of psychological investigation and radical social critique, exemplified by the work of Egon Schiele, the Vienna Actionists, Maria Lassnig or Vallie Export.

In the text accompanying the exhibition, aesthetic philosopher Keren Moscovitch elaborates:

"While his strategies are subversive, Sagmeister is less interested in 'pushing against', and more driven to 'pull along' in gestures that operate like infectious laughter. More than publicity stunts, Sagmeister's performances show that the self is always complicit, always involved, and always undergoing a process of evolution. He draws from the Fluxus vocabulary of conflating 'art' and 'life', through which fluid, creative subjectivity endures an ever present process of transformation in concert with the groundedness of the physical body.

Throughout his career, Sagmeister has sought to bring design to the people in ways that enhance their experience of life rather than merely sell them products. The exhibition features collaborative posters that serve as portraits of friendships, and reveal the pleasures that can be found in making and thinking in community. Operating from a politics of generosity, and by bringing a deeply personal element into his designs, Sagmeister's projects facilitate participation, empathy and joy."

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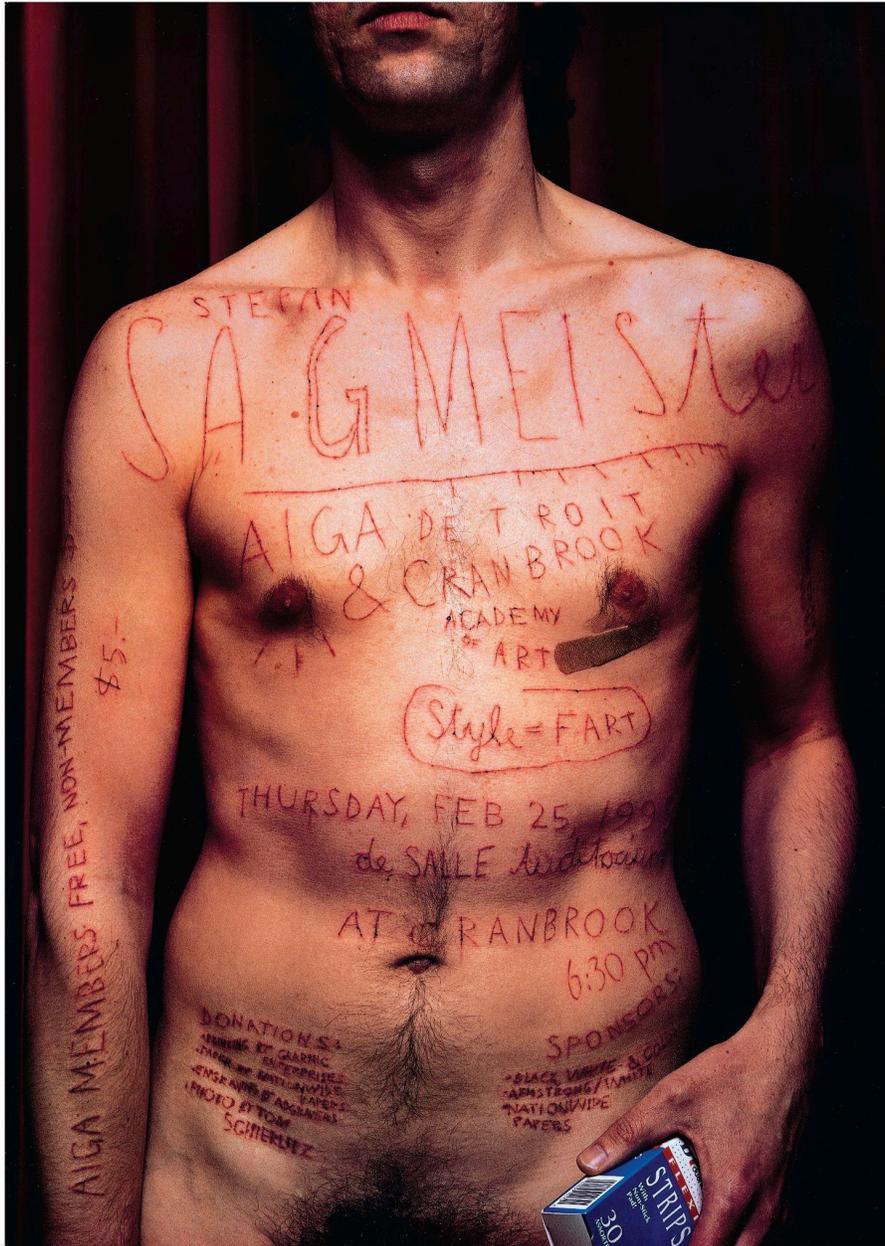
Stefan Sagmeister graduated in 1986 from the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (MAK), a breeding ground for the Wiener Werkstätte and its philosophy of the Gesamtkunstwerk. As a Fulbright Scholar, he then studied at the Pratt Institute, New York, receiving an MFA in 1988.

In addition to the aforementioned exhibitions, his work was shown in such venues as **Museo Maz**, Guadalajara, Mexico, and in **Kiev**, Ukraine (both 2025); **A4 Art Museum**, Chengdu, and **K11 Museum**, Shanghai (both 2024); **Udem**, Monterrey, Mexico (2023); **Vorarlberg Museum**, Bregenz, Austria, and **Museo Franz Mayer**, Mexico City (both 2022); **Maat**, Lisbon (2018); **Museum of Vancouver** (2015); **Chicago Cultural Center**; **Jewish Museum**, New York (both 2013); **Israel Museum**, Jerusalem (2010); **Deitch Projects**, New York (2008); **Wolfsonian**, Miami (2007); and **Zero One Design Center**, Seoul (2004), to name a few.

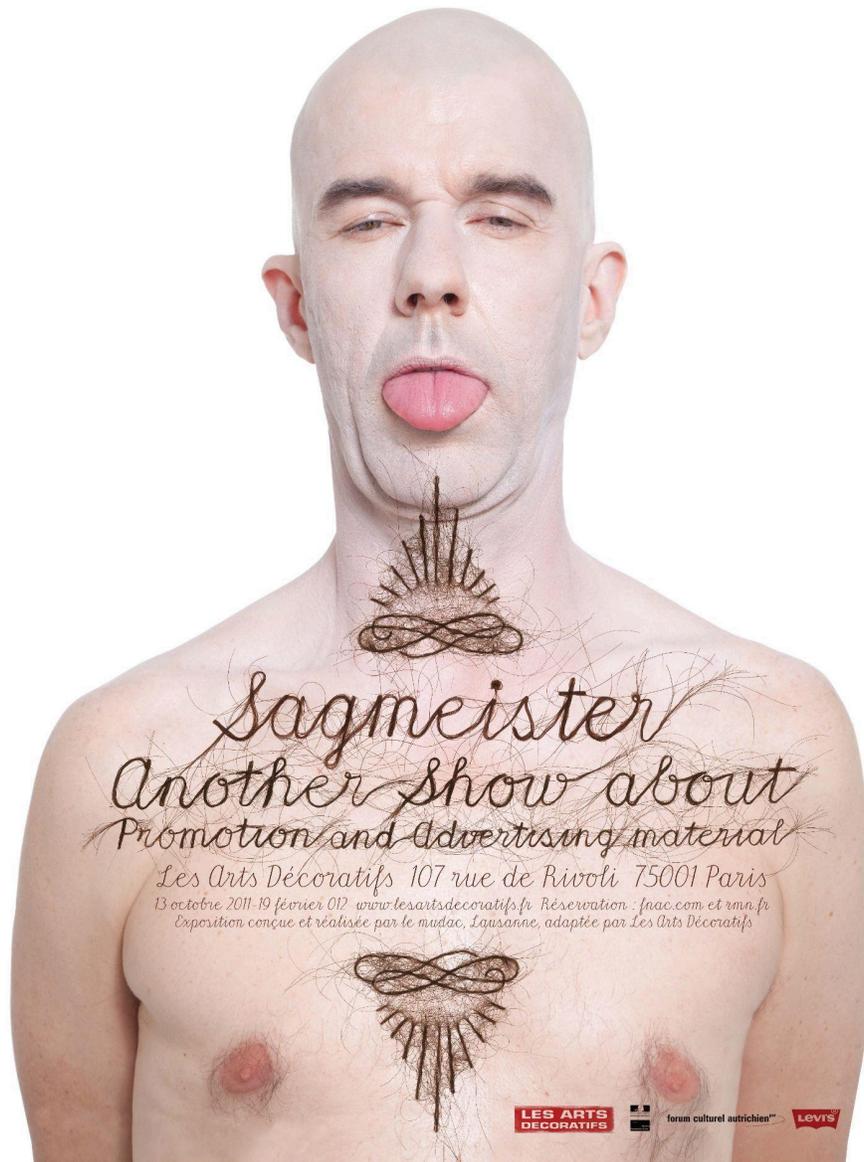
His work is in the collections of **MoMA**, New York, the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, **Art Institute of Chicago**, **SFMOMA**, as well as many other international institutions.



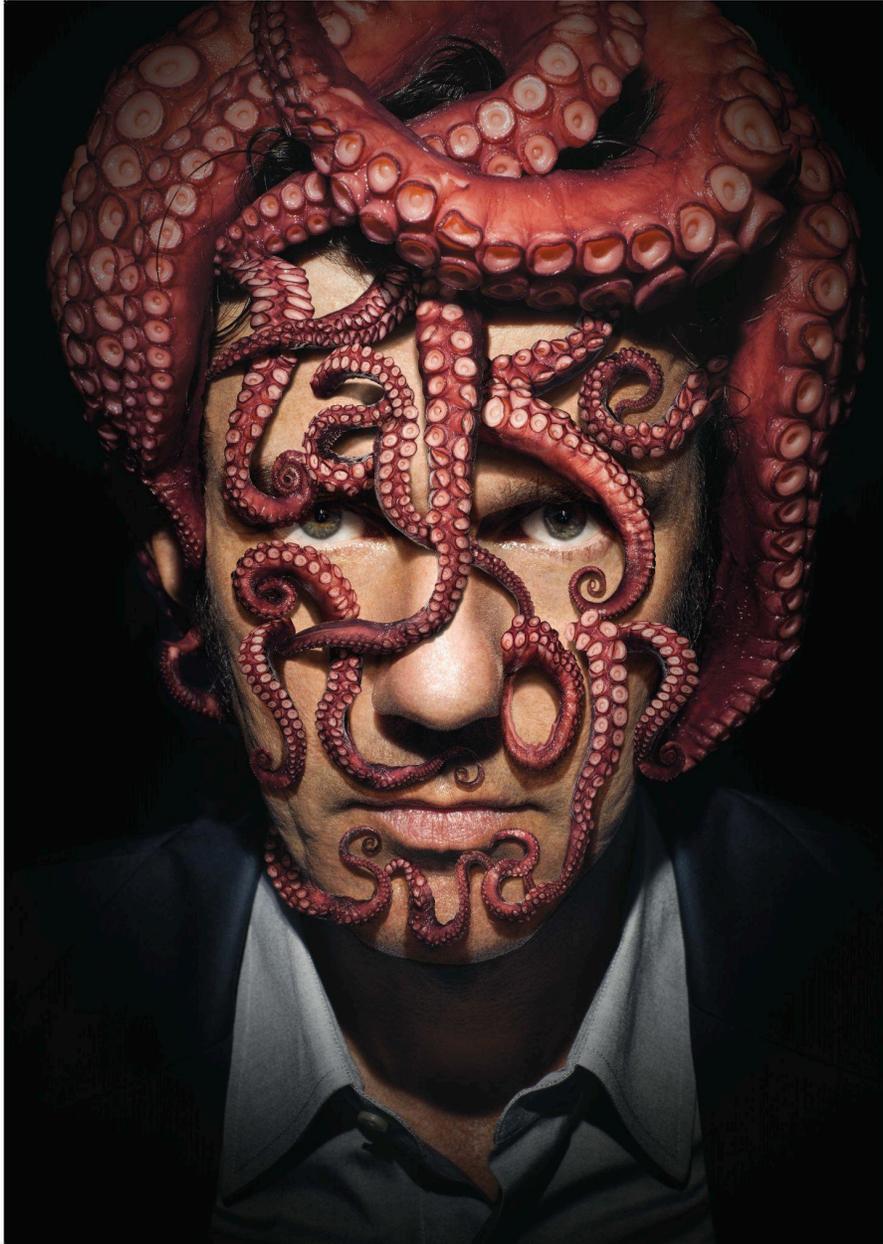
Zurich, 2003
 Posters on truecolor matte paper
 33 x 47 in.
 Edition 9(+3 AP)



AIGA Detroit, 1999
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9(+3 AP)



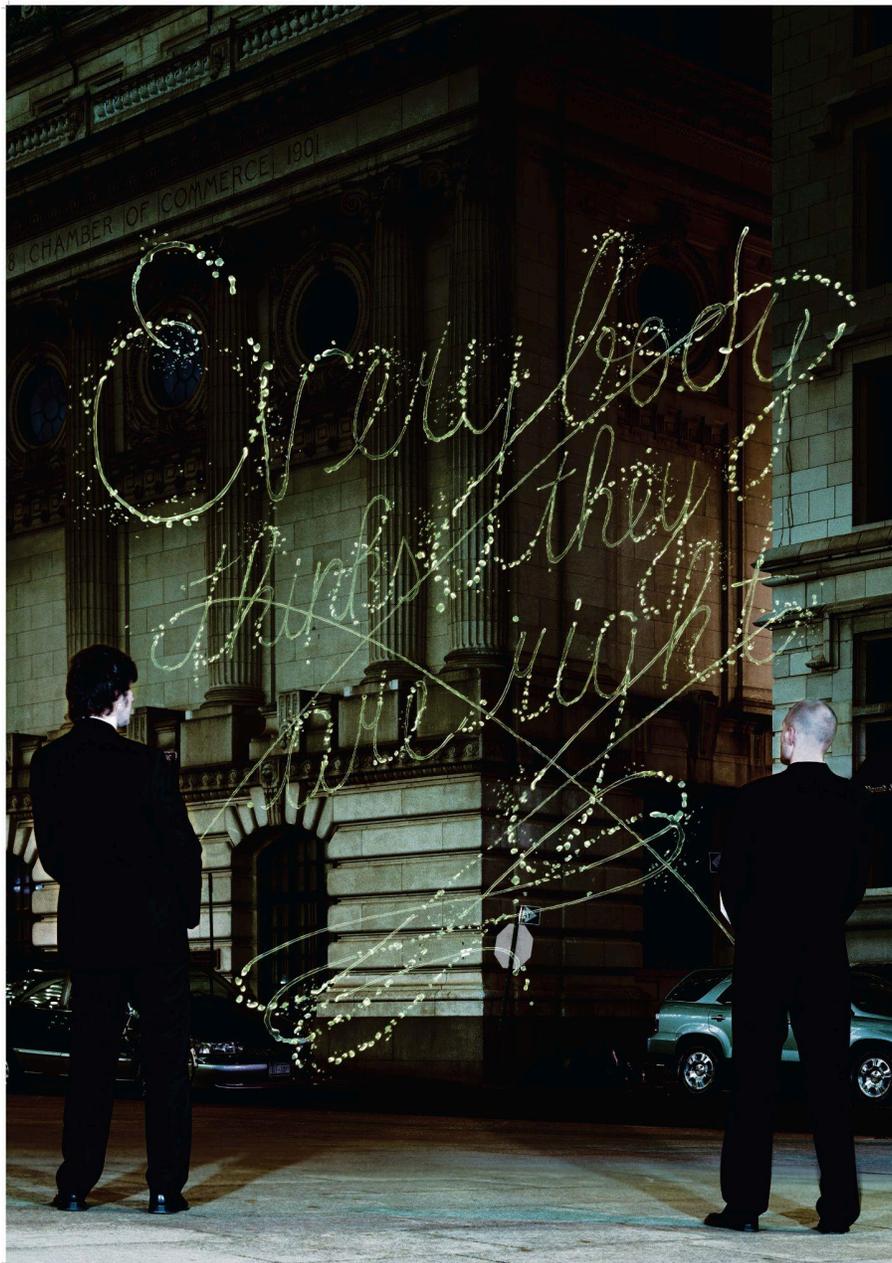
Paris, 2011
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



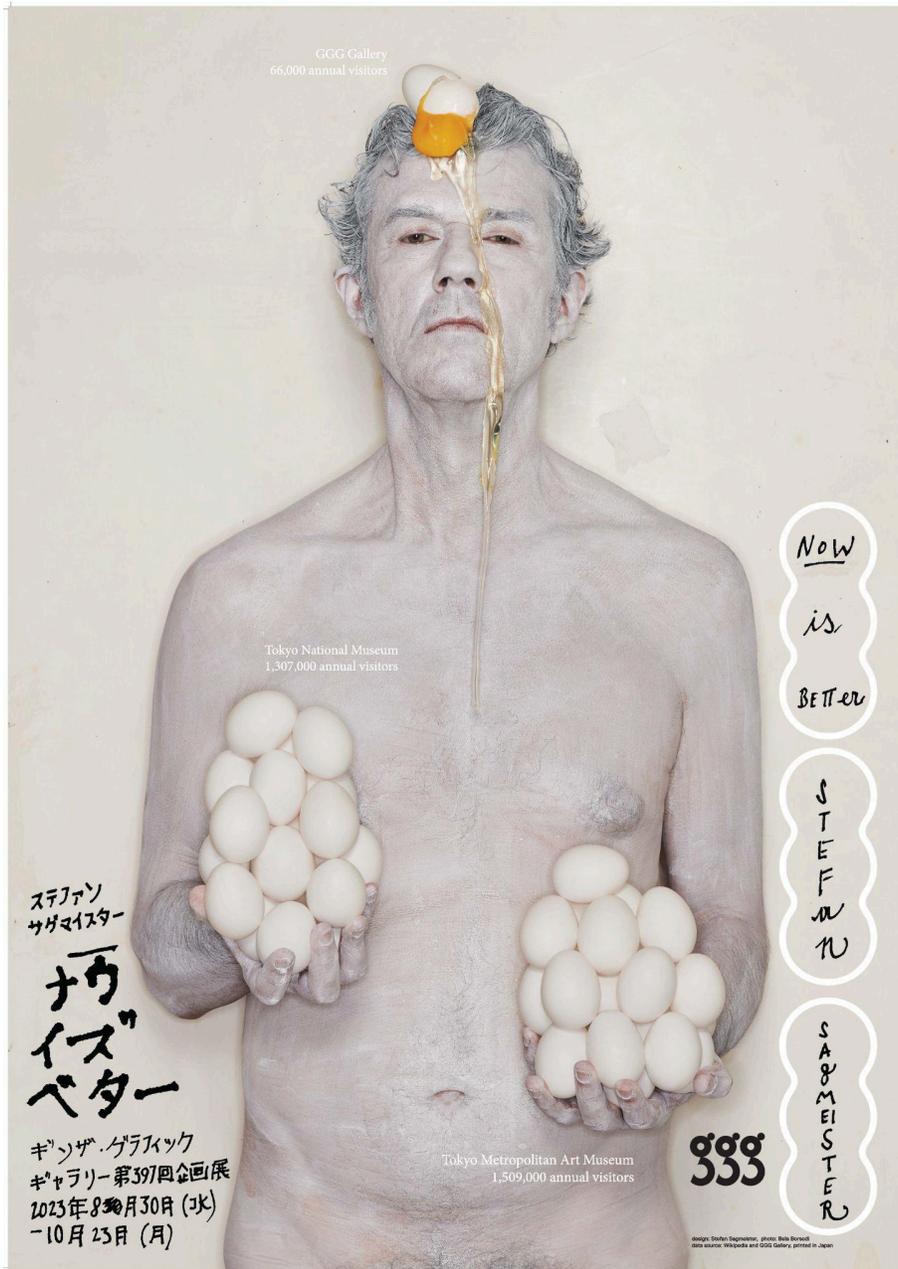
SVA *Take it On*, 2013
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9(+3 AP)



New York Matthias, 2004
Posters on truecolor matte paper
46 x 66 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



Everybody Thinks They are Right, 2005
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



Tokyo, 2023
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



Detroit Opening Card, 1993
Posters on truecolor matte paper
46 x 66 in.,
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



Opening Card Jessica, 2012
Posters on truecolor matte paper
46 x 66 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



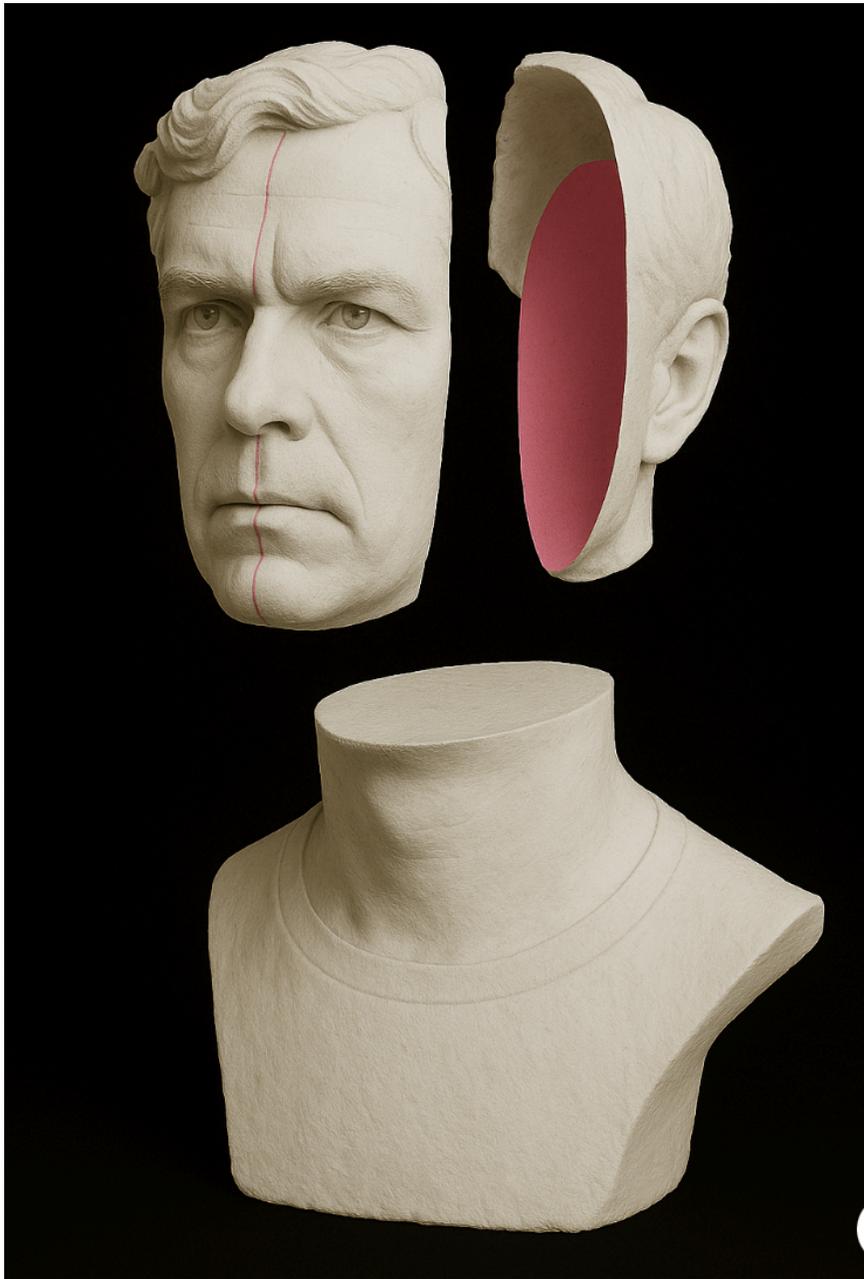
Partners Portrait, 2015
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



Shanghai, 2024
 Posters on truecolor matte paper
 33 x 47 in.
 Edition 9 (+3 AP)



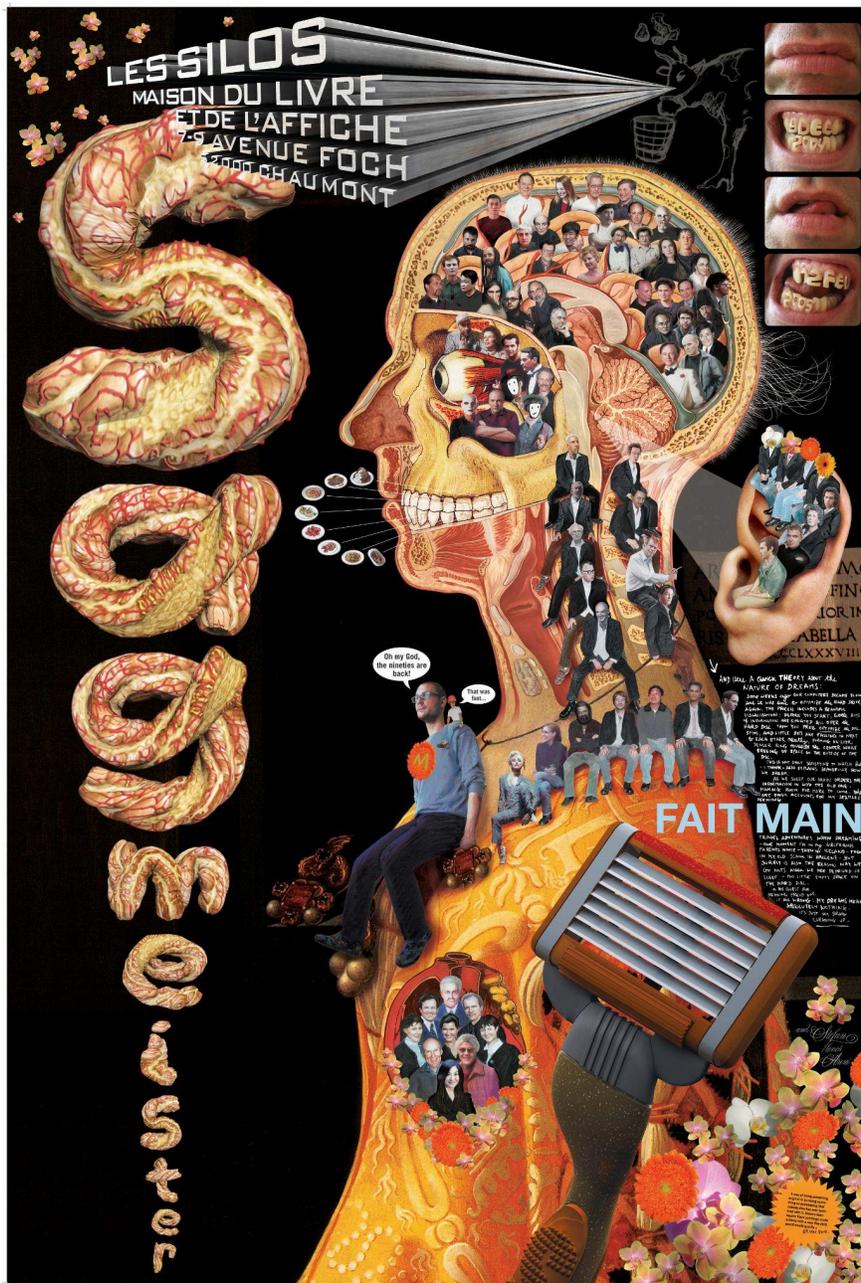
Vienna, 2002
 Posters on truecolor matte paper
 33 x 47 in.
 Edition 9 (+3 AP)



Bela, 2025
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



GGG Tokyo, 2011
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)

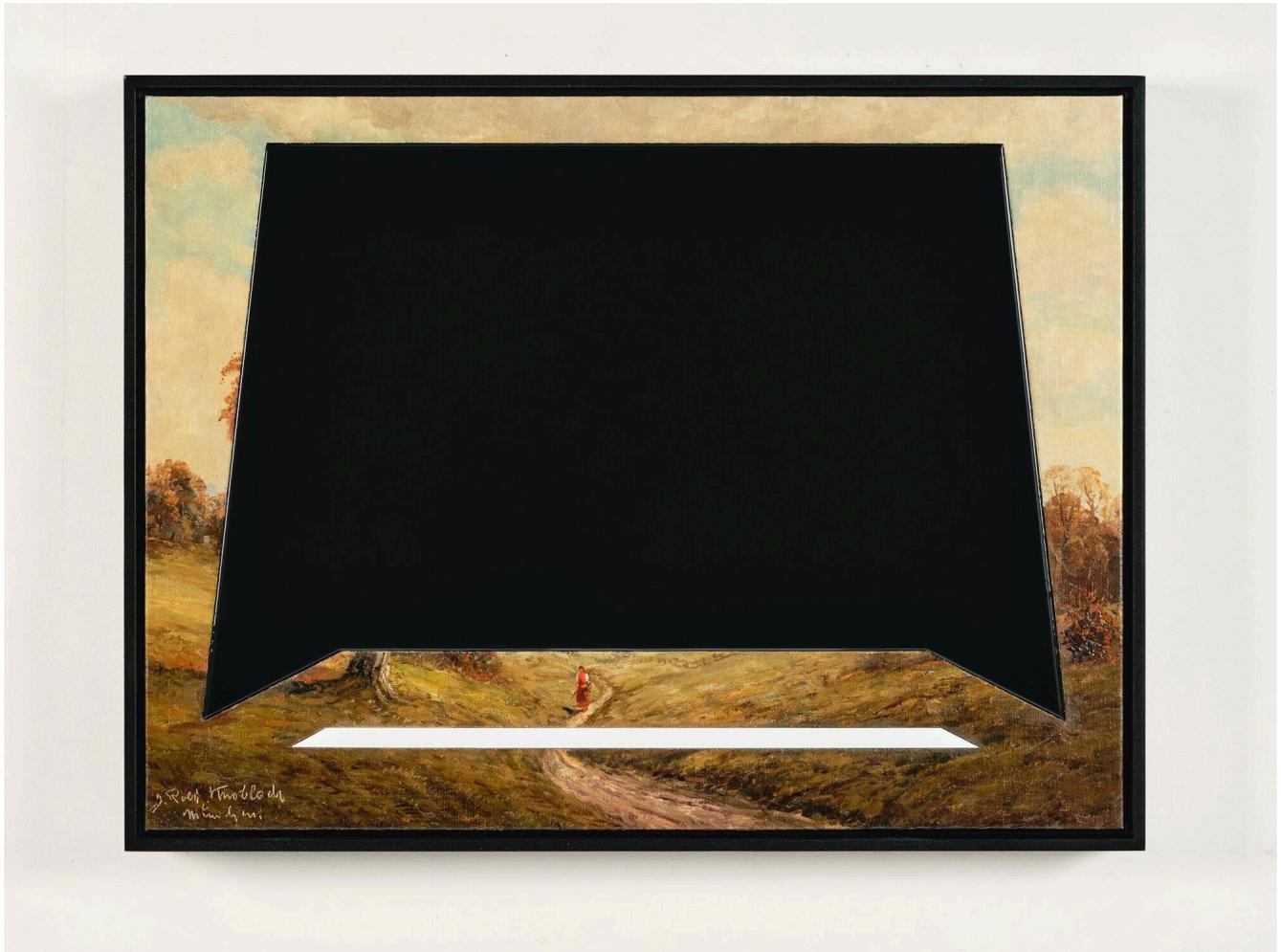


Chaumont, 2004
Posters on truecolor matte paper
33 x 47 in.
Edition 9 (+3 AP)



High and Low, 2021
Contemporary inserts into historical painting
25 1/2 x 25 5/8

Average life expectancy at birth in the UK
Purple shape 1700: 37 years
Light blue shape 2020: 75 years



Concrete, 2025
Contemporary inserts into historical painting
25 x 30 in.

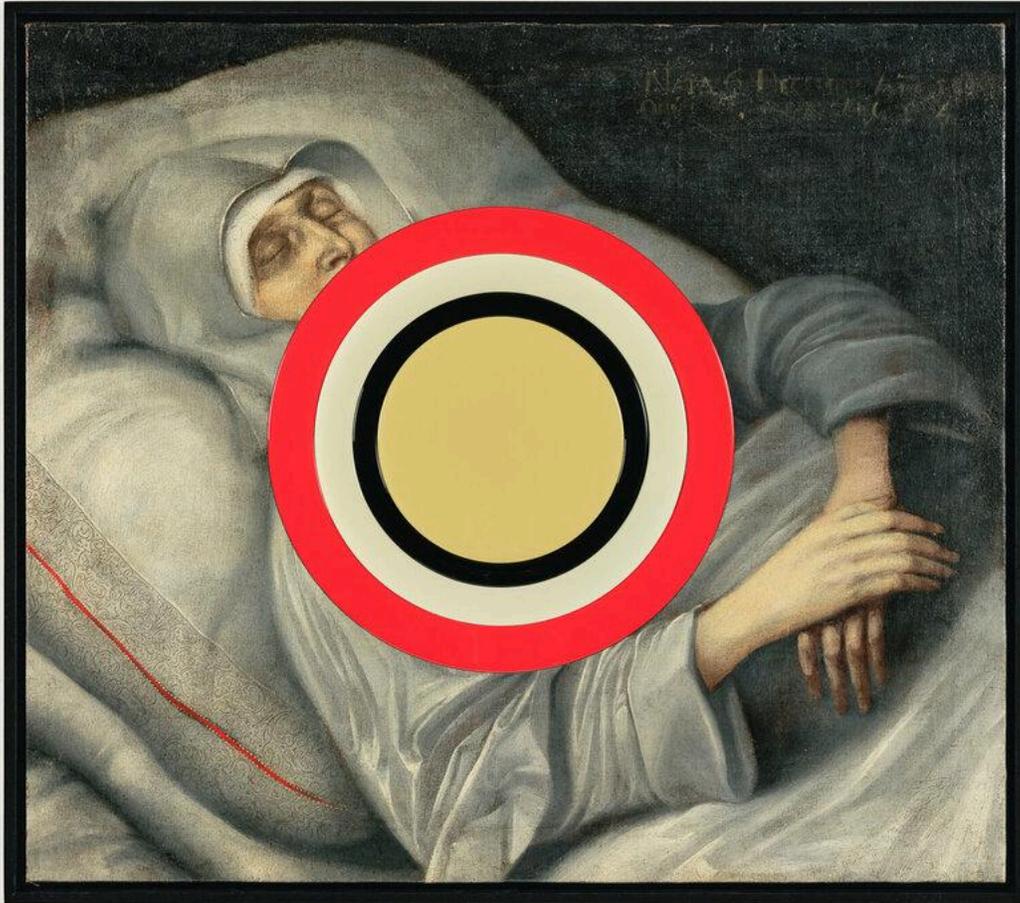
Historic painting: Josef Rolf Knobloch
1981 - 1964, view of lake Starnberg
Source: Hannah Richie, Not The End of The World



MS.MP, 2021
Contemporary inserts into historical painting
51 ⁵/₈ x 41 in.

First female representation in governments between 1920 and 2020

1920 First female MP: 15%
1940 First female MP: 27%
1960 First female MP: 61%
1980 First female MP: 82%
2000 First female MP: 94%
2020 First female MP: 97%



Anxiety, Awe, and Anger, 2021
Contemporary inserts into historical painting
26 x 30 in.

People dying from cardiovascular diseases, per 100,000 people in the US

1960: 500 people

1980: 320 people

2000: 200 people

2020: 140 people

Data applied correctly

Historic painting: unknown painter, Dutch school, 2nd half of 17th century, woman on her deathbed

Sources: OurWorldinData, Cardiovascular diseases



Messing Around Again, 2025
Contemporary inserts into historical painting
48 x 60 in.

Average number of sexual partners, per country

From left to right

India: 3, 20

China: 3.1, 21

Australia: 13.3, 93

Turkey: 14.5, 100

Iceland: 13, 89

Mexico: 9, 62

Netherlands: 7, 48

Germany: 5.8, 40

UK: 9.8, 67

Denmark: 9.3, 64

Russia: 9, 62

South Africa: 12.5, 86

Norway: 12.1, 83

Italy: 11.8, 81

Sweden: 11.8, 81

Switzerland 11.1, 86

USA: 10.7, 73

Japan: 10.2, 70

Historic painting: Josef Willroider, Voralpenlandschaft, Austrian, Villach 1838 - 1915 Munich
Source of Data: WorldPopulationReview.com