BERLINISCHE GALERIE

LANDESMUSEUM FÜR MODERNE
KUNST, FOTOGRAFIE UND ARCHITEKTUR
STIFTUNG ÖFFENTLICHEN RECHTS

ALTE JAKOBSTRASSE 124-128
10969 BERLIN
POSTFACH 610355 – 10926 BERLIN

FON +49 (0) 30 –789 02–600
FAX +49 (0) 30 –789 02–700
BG@BERLINISCHEGALERIE.DE

# PRESS RELEASE

Ulrike Andres
Head of
Marketing and Communications
Fon +49 (0)30 789 02-829
andres@berlinischegalerie.de

Contact:
Diana Brinkmeyer
Marketing and Communications
Fon +49 (0)30 789 02-775
brinkmeyer@berlinischegalerie.de

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## Bernhard Martin – Fred-Thieler-Preis für Malerei 2015
## 29.05. – 24.08.2015



Bernhard Martin, Temporäre Unregelmässigkeiten im Geschmacksverein, 2015 (Detail), © VG BILD-KUNST 2015, Repro: Roman März, Berlin

The 2015 Fred-Thieler-Preis für Malerei (Fred Thieler Prize for Painting) has been awarded to Bernhard Martin. The artist, born in Hannover in 1966, has been awarded the prize for his conceptual and at the same time narrative approach to the medium of painting.

His visual narratives, often arranged in series, do not follow an individual style, but seek out the pictorial approach appropriate for each subject. For example, borrowings can be found in his paintings from artistic models as varied as Renaissance painting, Pablo Picasso, or Francis Bacon. Enriched with purported fragments of reality, Bernhard Martin's works open an unfathomable universe of bizarre thematic and stylistic constructions. In this self-created system, his figures live and encounter one another far from common values and conventions.

The exhibition shows a collection of his latest works from the last four years, including the series *Im Immer*, shown for the first time in its entirety (2012–2015). This series derives from the artist's engagement with Michel Houellebecq's novels *Platform* and *The Possibility of an Island*. The eight large-format drawings gather together Bernhard Martin's ensemble of figures that have also populated his paintings of recent years in various constellations. The drawings show worlds of experience, closed resorts, and amusement parks of a special kind. They are based on the seven deadly sins, to which Bernhard Martin adds an eighth, espionage and betrayal. In the landscapes, which are always also puzzles, the figures depicted can, according to the artist, "love, believe, eat, murder, and torture without limitations, refusing all difficulty,

responsibility, and social constraint, as if in a dream, degrading themselves to the very base of their depravities."

Bernhard Martin was born in Hannover in 1966 and grew up in Kassel. From 1983 to 1989, he studied art at Kassel's Hochschule für Bildende Künste. After living in Barcelona, Frankfurt, and Berlin, he left the German art world for London in 2009, but returned to Berlin in 2013.

**Fred-Thieler-Preis für Malerei**
Since 1992, this 10,000-euro prize has been awarded (annually until 2007, now biennially) on March 17, the birthday of Fred Thieler (1916–1999). This master of art *informel* dedicated the prize to "outstanding painters whose artistic development has not yet been completed and who deserve the recognition of the public." The jury chooses artists who have the focus of their lives and their work in Germany and whose work, beyond current market events, stands out internationally in the realm of contemporary art. The prize is combined with a presentation of the artist's work at Berlinische Galerie and a publication including the award speech (award speech in 2015: Prof. Dr. Karlheinz Lüdeking, professor for art history at Berlin's Universität der Künste).

**Jury 2015**
Valérie Favre (artist), Katharina Grosse (artist), Udo Kittelmann (Director Nationalgalerie Berlin), Thomas Köhler (Director Berlinische Galerie) und Gerwald Rockenschaub (artist)

**Prize-winners 1992–2013**
Eugen Schönebeck, Peter Bömmels, Lothar Böhme, Andreas Brandt, Reinhardt Pods, Jan Kotík, K. H. Hödicke, Walter Libuda, A. K. Dolven, Peter Herrmann, Marwan, Katharine Grosse, Cornelia Schleime, Günter Umberg, Bernd Koberling, Gerwald Rockenschaub, Pia Fries, Bernard Frize, Sergej Jensen