Nina Pohl spins new tales with Abstract Expressionism / **Julian Charrière** makes a mountain of a mud pile / **Thomas Hirschhorn** recasts the "Concordia" catastrophe

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Keith Haring

He was the star of the New York art scene. The he was forgotten. Time for a comeback. Plus: *Jeff Koons*, *Olafur Eliasson*, *Anselm Reyle* and others on artists that deserve a second look



Keith Haring with Madonna, New York, 1988



Artists who have caught our eye:
Julian Charrière

Wouldn't it be great to think the pigeon hopping around on the fence apparently by chance next to Julian Charrière during the interview were there on purpose? A willing candidate for the dye treatment? I guess not. Yet the artist so convincingly enthuses about the abilities of these animals, calls on us to stop vilifying them as vermin-infested "flying rats" forever to be shooed away, and insists that they are capable of much more than we think. They are very good at remembering faces! And their self-awareness is more developed than that of a four-year-old child. Pigeons can recognize themselves in films, the artist claims, and can identify their feathers even after someone has sprayed them with paint.

Two years ago the Swiss artist dyed the white plumage of a house pigeon asphalt gray and released it onto Berlin's streets for it to come into contact with its wild relatives. Charrière put food down in geometric shapes in the city and looked on as swarms of birds flocked down in squares. Together with fellow artist Julius von Bismarck in Copenhagen and during the Architecture Biennale in Venice he dyed several of the famous inhabitants of City Hall Square and St. Mark's green, yellow, blue or red. The pigeons looked as though they had decorated themselves with parakeet feathers, to disguise themselves or in an attempt at coquetry. "Some pigeons are more equal than others" is the name the two artists gave these interventions.

Bismarck built a trap based on the tunnel carwash concept. When the animals (which had been lured by food) are safely in the cage, a small conveyor belt transports them past jets that spray them with food coloring. When released, the unintentional beauty-farm guests



Documentary material for "panorama", 2011, chalk on a pile of debris, Berlin

preen themselves and in so doing distribute the coloring over their feathers with their beak.

"I am interested in the two or three seconds of confusion", says Charrière. "The moment a passerby needs to grasp what he has seen. How can perception shift when you change just a small element?" In wanting to shake up the senses Julian Charrière is like Olafur Eliasson, at whose Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments) at Berlin's University of the Arts (UdK) he completed his master class study program.

Charrière's interventions point to the supposed opposites of nature and culture, wild and domesticated, distinguished and mundane. It seems rather harmless when the artist dusts the tops of piles of excavated sand with flour so that the modest mounds look like the snow-capped Alps when photographed without reference points. The order-destroying effect of bacteria that he presents in the excellent work "and some other obscure traces of" is more uncanny. Charrière molded bricks from concrete, milk and sugar and stacked them up in the form of walls in display cases. It wasn't long before they started rotting. The 25 year old also channels geochemical material cycles in "dominions", a joint work with Andreas Greiner. The pair collected microorganisms at airports and on pastures, in residential areas and in forests, and created biotopes that they then exhibited in display cases, beautiful narrators of the secret life of these places.

Julian Charrière likes process-based artworks and collaborations (he also exhibits as part of the collective "Das Numen"). The fact that he uses living materials can also be read as an expression of his view of art. He actually wanted to study biology, architecture and philosophy. Art seemed to him a compromise,



Julius von Bismarck and Julian Charrière "some pigeons are more equal than others", 2012, Venice, pigeons, food coloring

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Daniel Völzke

Julian Charrière is represented by the Berlin gallery Dittrich & Schlechtriem