

Michael Müller Solo Exhibition

***Drei biographische Versuche* [en: Three Biographical Attempts]**

Exhibition Period: 17 February – 9 April 2022

Venue: Galerie du Monde, 108 Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell Street, Central, Hong Kong

Kindly note that there is age-restricted content, visitors must be above age 18. [Online Preview](#) // [Virtual Tour](#)

Drei biographische Versuche

Kapitel I.: Gefüge – Gefühl und Genauigkeit¹

Kapitel II.: Der Wolkenvermesser²

Kapitel IV.: Das gemachte Ich³

^{s1} Einschließlich: Der Versuch unter Hypnose abstrakt zu sein

² In „Vermessen“ steckt das Maß, kann auch anmaßend bedeuten und dem Maß nicht gerecht zu werden

³ **Fehlt der dritte Teil?**

Three Biographical Attempts

[English translation]

Chapter I.: Structure – Feeling and Accuracy¹

Chapter II.: The Cloud Surveyor²

Chapter IV.: Self-Creation³

¹ Including: Trying to be abstract under hypnosis

² In „measuring“ there is measure, it can also mean presumptuous and being not enough

³ **Is the third chapter missing?**

HONG KONG – Galerie du Monde is pleased to present groundbreaking German artist Michael Müller's three-chapter solo exhibition series *Drei biographische Versuche* [en: Three Biographical Attempts] in Hong Kong from September 2021 to March 2022. The *Drei biographische Versuche* exhibition series is like Müller's personal diary from the past three decades. Through each chapter, Müller unveils his journey of self-discovery, embracing change, and self-formation.

In the finale *Das gemachte Ich* [en: Self-Creation], Müller exposes personal and intimate events of his life, to elaborate on the belief that "Life is Flux" (proposed by ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus), the theory of *tabula rasa*, and his motto of "Do It Yourself" – asserting the notion that human beings, each individual should take charge in constructing one's self, one's relationship with the other and the world – through his large-scale installations in a white cube with "a dangerous open bracket".

Müller rarely composes the "self-portrait" as a literal portrayal of his own likeness. Instead, he develops forms and selects objects that represent the various aspects of his self-perception. His works meanwhile remain in a limbo between pathos and irony, hence between *imbuing-with-meaning* and *showing-through-distancing*.

Throughout his practice, Müller repeatedly utilizes the two Greek gods Hermes and Hermaphroditus as motifs, to concretely strike out on the search for the origin of meaning. He uses their help to explore *drive* as a manifold motor for human activity: one time lived out directly as sexual lust, one time sublimated and transferred to an artistic product. In doing so, the real as well as symbolic phallus and the threat of its castration plays a dominant role again and again.

Das gemachte Ich provides a survey of Müller's oeuvre in every medium – drawings, paintings, sculptures, objects and performances, multiples and printed works, revealing the multifaceted creativity, formal inventiveness and wide conceptual range of the artist. Müller challenged the traditional confines of art to embrace a much broader, philosophical and humanistic practice.



Duett [en: Duet] Ceramic, steel and plastic, 19.5 x 171.7 x 40 cm (2017)

Consisting of a starting block, *Duett*, featuring Michael Müller's footprints, pressed in plaster, are mounted on the footrests, which visualizes time advancing in both directions – the past and the future. The tense moment before the start of a race is frozen in the work, capturing the loneliness of the runner before taking action, "free" of any struggle or competition. The work was part of a performance in which the dancers stepped into the artist's footsteps in a literal sense.



Unfertiges Ich [en: Unfinished Self] Lacquer on plexiglas and printed alu-dibond, 150 x 269 x 6 cm (2020)

Unfertiges Ich is printed on alu-dibond and covered with "water drops" of clear varnish. It revolves around the theme of potency in the sense of possibility. The left half of the image shows a free upper body in a boxer and high heels, while the right half features Michael Müller's leg, whereby the swing of the boxer's legs merges into those of the artist, who thus connects the two halves of the image. Potentially realizable possibilities of the ego are shown, such as gender identity or the performance of individual expression. This is also reflected in the title, which emphasizes that the ego is always in a fluid state, changeable, unfinished – there is always potential and possibility.



Falscher Inder reveals conflicts in the biographical narratives and exemplifies them with Michael Müller's "identity". The form of the two pillars takes up the phallic lingam referencing the Hindu worship of the deity Shiva. The fresh milk poured onto the right column in a ritual gesture and brushed into a white square unites in itself the contradiction between material and form. The milk is religious in its materiality – the gift of the cow, which is sacred in India, and refers to the Orient. The white square into which the milk is brushed in – the ritual is reminiscent of Russian artist Kazimir Malevich's Suprematism, who in 1919 concluded his series of the famous black squares. This "milky" white square – a clear Western connotation that cannot be reconciled with Indian language.

Falscher Inder [en: Fake Indian] Marble and fresh milk; monolith: 100 x 20 x 20 cm each (2015)



आत्मसमर्पण मुद्रा (Aatmasamarpan Mudra) and ईगल विंग मुद्रा (Eegal Ving Mudra)

Pencil on paper and adhesive tape, 40 x 120 cm each (2021)



सैंडक्रैपे मुद्रा (Saindakraipe Mudra)

Pencil on paper and adhesive tape, 30 x 80 cm (2021)

The three drawings are Michael Müller’s self-portraits, showing only a fragment of the self. But since they show gestures that are embodied expressions of individuality, they are at the same time total portraits of subjectivity, in which each fragment is more than itself – a perfect representation of the whole person. The gestures shown echo the arms of Christ at crucifixion, in which a spiritual, transcendent dimension is revealed alongside the worldly physicality. The titles of the drawings, however, respond to this as a misdirection, since they refer to Indian mudras, the opposite of Christian symbolism. In the Indian-Hindu tradition, mudras are symbolic hand gestures used in everyday life and in religious practice. Interreligious overlaps are apparent – mudra means “a gesture to please the gods”, comparable to the gestures of Christ.



Tageswerk [en: A Day’s Work]

Ceramic, dimensions variable (2015)

The 378 individual pieces made of clay are negative handprints of the artist, which he formed in the course of one day. The starting point of *Tageswerk* is Michael Müller’s Protestant upbringing, which promotes a “work ethic” that ultimately legitimizes and fills a life before oneself (and God). In the course of forming the clay casts, a process of realization took place for the artist. While he initially followed the logic of capitalism that arose from Protestantism and tried to form as many impressions as possible within the given time, this initial

condition changed over time to the realization that each individual piece demands its time in order to be completed, and the impressions are only complete when they conform to a form. From an assembly line production where each piece is “machine made”, they became individual and independent works of art.



Mach dich selbst (Do-it-Yourself)

[en: Make yourself (Do-it-Yourself)]

Single-channel video, edition of 5 plus 1 AP

Duration: 00:30:30, loop (2015) ([Play Video](#))

In the video *Mach dich selbst (Do-it-Yourself)*, two hands are seen repeatedly touching each other, like a dance. In “self-touch”, the human being becomes aware of his “split” into subject and object. And experiences himself as such, he is at the same time the one touching and the one being touched, active and passive, accessing the world from the outside and yet part of the world.



Can you teach me how to fight?

Part 1: The Collapse of Identity; Part 2: Me at the Photoshop

Oil on canvas, wood and plexiglas, 2-part work, 112 x 154 x 8.5 cm each

Can you teach me how to fight? consists of two paintings showing Michael Müller as a hermaphrodite in the pose of Gustave Courbet's *L'Origine du monde* [en: The Origin of the World] (1866). Yet, Müller goes beyond Courbet: he is both the artist and the model. While the left panel shows only the change of sex, the right panel depicts a "Photoshop" version, in which the artist's entire body is shaped femininely, in accordance with an ideal of beauty; thus, the outlines of breasts and a feminine waist are visible. The title of the work refers to Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler's theory of the social determination of gender in social and performative acts: When individual gender is externally determined, one must fight (with society, others and oneself) to resist this definition.



Motivbild Nr. 9 (zwei Titel) [en: Motif Image No. 9 (two titles)]
a.) Flex (Double rib and Zipper); b.) up to day / schön stupider

Vorgang [en: a beautiful mindless process] 202 x 146 x 4 cm (2021)

Spray paint on printed alu-dibond and glass; white UV resin in acrylic glass box

Motivbild Nr. 9 (zwei Titel) is a reflection of the censorship and valuation inherent in human gaze and perception, which is not reflected and conscious in everyday seeing. The depicted nude shows the paradoxical experience of autoeroticism, in which one is both subject and object, toucher and touched, active and passive at the same time. The photograph, printed on aluminium dibond, is placed behind a glass plate, which is partly painted over in black and thus covers and censors parts of what is depicted. However, only insignificant, unspectacular parts that are not decisive of the subject are censored here; not, for example, the usually censored erect penis. While looking at the image, one involuntarily displaces the censorship applied by Michael Müller to reveal the underlying imagery, which is, however, only secondary in this work.

Pedestal for a Thinker is based on Auguste Rodin's *Le Penseur* [en: The Thinker] (1880). While it is assumed that Rodin depicts his thinker in a relaxed posture during his thinking meditation, the opposite is the case. The thinker is in one of the most tense and strenuous positions one can hold. So the figure is not busy thinking,



absorbed in his thoughts, but holding his position and not slipping off the plinth. Accordingly, the figure depicted in Rodin's work is not a sophisticated intellectual, but a muscular athlete. Rodin used a boxer as a model. The tension of the situation depicted in Rodin's work is made clearer and intensified by Michael Müller's mere representation of the plinth. The plaster plinth was used in Müller's performances: The dancers were to take and hold the position of the original thinker, an exhausting and strength-demanding act that shows that Rodin's work of art is only possible as a snapshot, deprived of any temporality. By means of the performance, Müller tries to give this act back its temporal dimension.

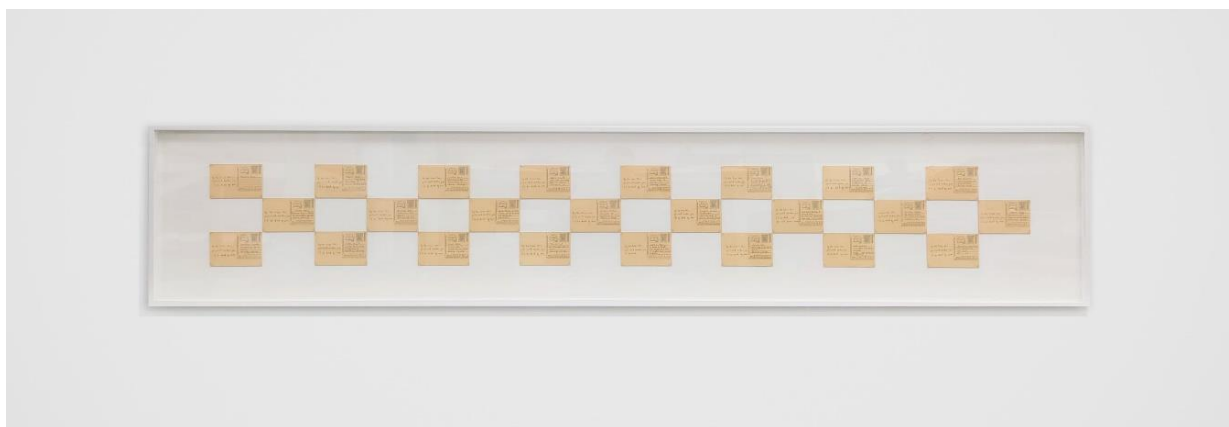
Pedestal for a Thinker

Plaster, edition of 3, 65 x 40 x 50 cm (2015)



Schamlippen (Die Kapitalisierung aller Ressourcen) [en: Labia (The Capitalization of All Resources)]
Plexiglas, textiles, ink and color on paper, bookbinding linen, cardboard, and images, 105 x 100 x 18 cm (2020)

Schamlippen (Die Kapitalisierung aller Ressourcen) represents the fetishization of the artist as a person in contemporary art, which ultimately culminates in the question: "What is the artist trying to tell us?" The viewer or the collector of a work of art wants to see and understand the artwork from the artist's perspective, to be a passive recipient of the artistic activity of the artist's creative act. This is accompanied by the desire for power and control over the artist's body, into which one would like to place oneself and which is supposed to cease to exist as an independent entity, not subject to change, transformation and development – a state that only occurs after the physical death of the artist, which objectifies a life and brings its ability to change, to be revised, to a conclusion. Corresponding to this are the photographic images of the clothes archived into a publication by Michael Müller, entitled "TEXTILOGRAPHY: The total capitalization of all resources or the connection of mind and matter, similar to a hooker." Converting the clothes into images like police mug shots and identification service records, they are neutral, objective, sober, descriptive, treating the clothes as pure objects, without history, containing no experiences of the artist, materialized in stains, holes and traces.



By the time this postcard reaches you, I'll be dead by now.
Ink on colored paper, framed: 50.5 x 264 x 5 cm (Date of the death of the artist.)

The work *By the time this postcard reaches you, I'll be dead by now.* is a reference to Japanese artist On Kawara's telegram series I AM STILL ALIVE. From 1970 to 1979, Kawara periodically sent telegrams to various people he knew, mostly friends and colleagues, with the content: "I AM STILL ALIVE. ON KAWARA". The postcards, which are from India, pre-franked there and hand-addressed by Michael Müller, contain the text: "By the time this postcard reaches you, I'll be dead by now." Part of the artwork is a contract concluded with the collector, which obliges the collector to take the postcards out of their frame and mail them after the artist's death. The empty frame remains as an independent artwork, which at the same time echoes the artist's eternal absence.

About the artist Michael Müller



Michael Müller (b. 1970, Ingelheim am Rhein, Germany) is an artist with a German-Indian background, whose manifold, proliferating oeuvre cannot be ascribed to any one-way interpretation. He continuously broadens the methods of his artistic expression, combining works on paper with painting, text-based work, sculpture, found objects, music, and performance. Müller studied sculpting and fine arts at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf with Magdalena Jetelová. From 2015 to 2018, he was a professor at the Berlin University of the Arts. In 2018, he was nominated for the Kunstpreis der Böttcherstraße, Bremen.

Recent solo exhibitions include: Städel Museum, Frankfurt (2022, forthcoming); “Drei biographische Versuche” (3-chapter series), Galerie du Monde, Hong Kong (2021-2022); “Schwierige Bilder”, Sammlung Wemhöner, Berlin (2021); “Stripping the Force – The Self and the Other”, Spotlight by Art Basel, Galerie du Monde, Hong Kong (2020); “Anton in a Bast Skirt”, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin (2020); “An Exhibition as a Copy”, Galerie du Monde, Hong Kong (2018); “Stripping the Force”, Kunsthalle Bremen (2018); “SKITS. 13 Exhibitions in 9 Rooms”, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2016); “Who’s Speaking?”, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015). Müller’s works belong to many prominent museum collections including the Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany; Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, USA; among others. Müller lives and works in Berlin.

About Galerie du Monde

Founded in Hong Kong in 1974, Galerie du Monde has been specializing in modern and contemporary works by internationally established Chinese artists for 48 years. The gallery also nurtures and promotes emerging talent, presenting a varied program of solo and group exhibitions with a strong focus on works of art on canvas, paper, sculpture, photography and new media. To celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2014, Galerie du Monde introduced the GDM Project series to strengthen the gallery’s support to a wider group of artists from different geographical regions, providing them the opportunity to exhibit outside of their own areas.

Website: www.galeriedumonde.com
Instagram: [@galeriedumonde](https://www.instagram.com/galeriedumonde)
Email: fineart@galeriedumonde.com

Galerie du Monde opens from Monday to Saturday, 10 am to 7 pm

Michael Müller
Drei biographische Versuche [en: Three Biographical Attempts]
Kapitel IV.: Das gemachte Ich [en: Chapter IV.: Self-Creation]
 17 February – 9 April 2022



Ausstattung und Aneignung eines Objekts durch Liebe (Edition 2/3)
 [en: Endowment and Appropriation of an Object through Love]

Oyster, Metal Ball and Marble Column
 Marble Column: 100 x 20 x 20 cm / Oyster, Metal Ball: 7 x 11.5 x 6.5 cm, 2013



I'll fuck with my boyfriend in the shower.
Die Verbindung zweier Momente durch einen Vorgang.
 [en: I'll fuck with my boyfriend in the shower.
 The connection of two moments through a process.]

Clear Lacquer on Glass, Wood and Shorts
 3-part work, 2015
 Part 1 and 2 (Glass): 63 x 39.5 x 0.2 cm each / Part 3 (Wood): 120 x 4 x 4 cm



Duett
 [en: Duet]

Ceramic, Steel and Plastic
 19.5 x 171.7 x 40 cm, 2017



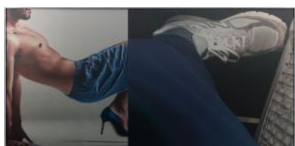
to erase myself I

Pencil, Gesso and Lacquer on Alu-dibond with Plexiglas Cover
 Painting: 150 x 235 cm / Framed Size: 152.5 x 237 x 5.5 cm, 2021



to erase myself II

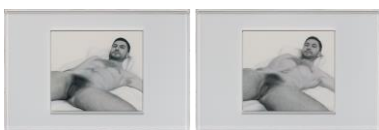
Pencil, Gesso and Lacquer on Alu-dibond with Plexiglas Cover
 Painting: 150 x 235 cm / Framed Size: 152.5 x 237 x 5.5 cm, 2021



Unfertiges Ich
 [en: Unfinished Self]

Series: Anton im Bastrock

Lacquer on Acrylic Glass and Printed Alu-dibond
 150 x 269 x 6 cm, 2020



Can you teach me how to fight?
Part 1: The Collapse of Identity // Part 2: Me at the Photoshop

Oil on Canvas, Wood and Plexiglas
 2-part work, 112 x 154 x 8.5 cm each, 2013



By the time this postcard reaches you, I'll be dead by now.

24 Postcards, Ink on Paper with Plexiglas Cover
 Framed Size: 50.5 x 264 x 5 cm, Date of the Death of the Artist.



Schamlippen (Die Kapitalisierung aller Ressourcen)
 [en: Labia (The Capitalization of All Resources)]

Part 1: Plexiglas and Different Textiles, 105 x 100 x 18 cm
 Part 2: Plexiglas, Ink on Paper, Bookbinding Linen, Cardboard, Images, 27.5 x 50 x 17 cm, 2020



Tageswerk
 [en: A Day's Work]

Ceramic
 Clay Objects: 378 Parts, Dimensions Variable
 Installation: 56 x 240 x 120 cm, 2015



Motivbild Nr. 9 (zwei Titel) [en: Motif Image No. 9 (two titles)]
a.) Flex (Double rib and Zipper)
b.) up to day / schön stupider Vorgang [en: a beautiful mindless process]

Spray Paint on Printed Alu-dibond and Glass / White UV Resin in Plexiglas Box
 Painting: 202 x 146 x 4 cm / Installation: 33 x 39 x 8.5 cm, 2021



Oral (Mangomilch und süßer Rauch)
[en: Oral (Mango Milk and Sweet Smoke)]

Cigarette Ends, Colored Plexiglas, Glass, Mango Milk, Mold, Paper Cup and Tape
40 x 15 x 15 cm, 2013



Pedestal for a Thinker (Edition 2/3)

Plaster
65 x 40 x 50 cm, 2015



Hugging a Corner

Polyester Resin
4-part work, Site-Specific Installation, Dimensions Variable, 2017



Hände weg! (ein weißes Bild)
[en: Hands off! (a white painting)]

Series: Handicap

Acrylic, Lacquer and Gesso on Belgian Linen
260 x 652 x 4.5 cm, 2021



The figure 4 (Body-language). M.E.
Part 1: Warum etwas malen was bereits existiert? Eine andere Wirklichkeit.
[en: Why paint something that already exist? Another reality.]
Part 2: Wendung [en: Turn]
Part 3: Einsamkeit (missing or cannot be displayed)
[en: Loneliness (missing or cannot be displayed)]
Part 4: Blue, blue Zipper (holding my dick while I think about a painting)

Acrylic, Gesso and Lacquer on Printed Alu-dibond and Glass, Blue Edge Protector and Cigarette Butt
4-part work, 124 x 83 x 4 cm each, 2021



Falscher Inder
[en: Fake Indian]

Marble and Fresh Milk
Two Marble Columns: 100 x 20 x 20 cm each / Fresh Milk: One Liter, 2015



ईगल विंग मुद्रा (Eegal Ving Mudra)

Pencil on Paper and Adhesive Tape
Drawing: 40 x 120 cm / Framed Size: 45.5 x 125.5 x 7 cm, 2021



सैडक्रेपे मुद्रा (Saindakraipe Mudra)

Pencil on Paper and Adhesive Tape
Drawing: 30 x 80 cm / Framed Size: 35 x 85 x 7 cm, 2021



आत्मसमर्पण मुद्रा (Aatmasamarpan Mudra)

Pencil on Paper and Adhesive Tape
Drawing: 40 x 120 cm / Framed Size: 45.5 x 125.5 x 7 cm, 2021



Mach dich selbst (Do-it-Yourself)
[en: Make yourself (Do-it-Yourself)]

Single-Channel Video, Edition 4/5
Duration: 00:30:30, Loop, 2015



aufeinander
[en: on top of each other]

Acrylic, Cotton and Feathers
40 x 54 x 50.5 cm, 2015



Dispositionen
[en: Dispositions]

Acrylic, Tension Belts and Mattress
2-part work, Overall Size: 77 x 150 x 90 cm, 2015