

Entering the studio of Michael Sailstorfer in Berlin-Wedding, the visitor is greeted by a vast workspace, where an open roof truss floods the spacious hall with light. The room is filled with objects, sculptures and readymades, many of them currently in the process of creation. Here a giant knot sculpture, there a monumental metallic Hello Kitty silkscreen frame, and on the ground long panels of white fabric with imprints of car tyres. It's a fascinating playground, and at its centre; Sailstorfer.

Born in Bavaria in 1979, the friendly and engaging artist has become one of the fastest rising stars of the international art world. In 2014, he has had three high profile solo shows in Ohio, Zurich and Berlin, and he's been represented by the renowned Johann König Gallery, also based in the German capital,

since he left university. Despite such success, Sailstorfer's demeanour is as effortless and unpretentious as his art – an approach that was moulded by his background.

When he was young, Sailstorfer's father owned a stone carving business that gave the artist exposure to different materials from an early age. "I spent a lot of time in my father's workshop, where he used to give me stones and wood to work on," he says. The urge to create something for the sake of it is still something he considers to be a trigger for his work. "For as long as I can remember, the possibility of change through the creative process has been an important part of how I work."

With his unconventional and nonchalant works, Sailstorfer not only manages to engage the viewer through aesthetics, performance and the relevance



STUDIO VISIT

MICHAEL SAILSTORFER

SIMPLE YET STARTLING, MICHAEL SAILSTORFER CHALLENGES THE RULES OF SCULPTURE IN HIS OWN UNASSUMING WAY

TEXT — Anneli Botz

PHOTOGRAPHY — Franziska Sinn



of content, but also addresses sculpture's oldest problem: the pedestal. His oeuvre features street lanterns transforming into falling stars, trees hanging upside down from the ceiling and the Statue of Liberty skewering itself vertically through a wall. As such, Sailstorfer isn't so much eliminating the pedestal but redefining it. "What is sculpture and what can it become? This is always the most important question, and how the pedestal looks plays a crucial part in answering it," he says.

In Berlin, Sailstorfer has created the optimal conditions to conduct his work. He currently has two assistants and works closely together with a workshop run by Bernd Olger that helps him build the big sculptures which require machinery: "Luckily, Bernd's studio was able to move in next door. What usually happens is that I go over there in the morning with my

sketches and then we jointly develop the piece. He's the one that helps me with the hanging trees or car tyres."

"Zeit ist keine Autobahn" ("Time is no Highway"), a work composed of a motorized car tire turning against a wall, exemplifies the symbiosis of aesthetics and mechanics in Sailstorfer's work. The sound and smell the exhibit produces as the rubber is slowly eroded focus the viewer's attention on the transition of cause and effect, while the title evokes a conception of time as multi-dimensional rather than linear. "Time does play a big role in my work," he says, "it's one of the most fundamental things in life and, as an artist, I feel the urge to deal with the cycle of transience and creation. I like my pieces to lead a life of their own and to experience change in the time of an exhibition."