



ABENDMAHL

(THE SUPPER)

An art project that brings people together

IMAGINE

Imagine a large hall with 20 large pictures framed in dark, heavy wooden frames on the walls. The images differ in colour and style, but unite in theme and story. They show 13 people who had come together to break bread with strangers. 20 stories of encounters and discussions, one story of a supper that brought them together. a community.

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Abendmahl

An art project that brings people together

The basic idea:

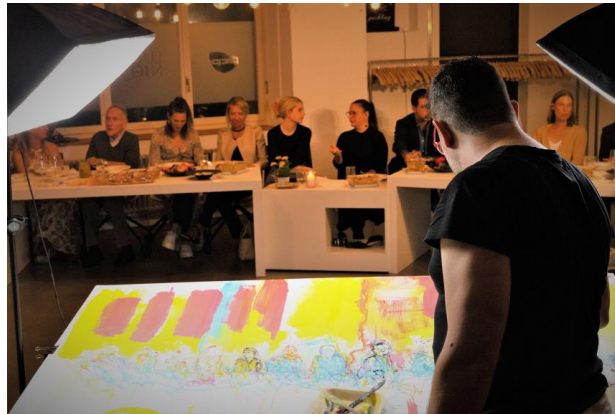
By painting different group pictures of 13 people each and assembling them into an installation, a community is created through art.

Concept:

In reference to the story of the "Last Supper of Christ" and its artistic traditions through the millennia, 13 people are invited to a supper. In an art event that moves between performance, and installation, this «supper» is captured with a painting in all its facets as timely as possible.

These events, called "Abendmahl", are repeated multiple times throughout Switzerland with new guests until around 150-200 people* have been painted.

By means of an installation of the various "Abendmahl" painting and an event where all participants can come together, a new community will ultimately be created and celebrated through art.



Technical concept:

- If possible, the 13 participants should not know each other or only have a superficial connection. Alternatively, they could already be a part of an existing group, such as a family, club, or a company
- The group should be diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity/nationality, socio-economic background, etc.
- The painting process will take between 3-4 hours and will be completed in one session. All participants must witness the entire painting process.
- I will use a mixed technique that incorporates various materials in all my works to reflect each group's individual image.
- In order to create a common visual denominator, all works will be painted on canvas with an image size of 92x176cm.**
- The positioning of the 13 participants in the image will be like the classic "last supper" image by Leonardo da Vinci, a long table and all guests facing forward***.
- There will be no hierarchical placement in the image as opposed to the classic image.

- The meal served will be simple, meat less or meat poor, and ideally of local cuisine.

Justification/Motivation

Background:

Over the past decade, I've focused on exploring the concept of "community" and the artist's role within it. Through artistic collaborations with various sub-communities and subcultures, I've aimed to promote their inclusion in the broader conversation. Some of the social groups I've worked with include Russian and Ukrainian mothers, adults with autism, Syrian refugee children, Swiss women leaders, and Belarusian LGBTQ individuals, as well as people with dementia.

These art projects had a direct side effect of allowing all participants to share an emotional unceremoniously experience through art. This often resulted in a strengthened sense of personal self-awareness, which led to a constructive feeling of unity. Personally, this feeling became my primary motivation for creating art.

The series of projects mentioned was brought to a halt by the corona pandemic. After a break of almost three years, I was able to visualize a new art project in early February 2023:

Inspired by an article that explained that: When a couple sits together with their smartphones on, their brain sends a feeling of loneliness, so they are lonely even when they are together. I took an old idea and worked on an "intimacy" project, portraying couples, and asking them what intimacy means to them.

A key question that emerged from the project was whether our children could achieve the same intimacy that we can in the face of digital media and AI overflow. If they could even muster the patience and perseverance that is necessary to make a steadfast relationship possible?

The developments in the field of AI over the past few months and the deeper insight into our general relationship with technology that I have gained through the project have paved the way for the start of a new art project that I feel is of great urgency.

"Abendmahl" is intended to explore the creation of a community through art. From the creation of small family cells through the small sacrament process with 13 people, to the common self-perception of a community with 150 members, which is very diverse but has a clear - even if only artistic and cultural - common denominator.

The project should address two main questions:

How are communities formed?

Will we be able to form or sustain a community under the influence of AI and the increasingly advanced "communication tools"?

Whether the project can create a community remains to be seen. However, the project intendeds to bring people together both on the ground level and on the meta-level, both in the context of the smaller "Supper" events and in the context of the final installation.

breaking bread:

Strangers "breaking bread" to create a new community is as much a part of human history as using fire. With the "Abendmahl" I want to make room for this primal ritual. The participants consciously take part in an event where they will "break bread" with strangers. You commit to meeting, tolerating, and dealing with other people over a period of 3-4hours. In addition, the "Dinner" is a symbol of living together and the creation of a new community (in the biblical/historical sense - Christianity).

Bible a source of inspiration:

I grew up in Israel as a Jew in a very secular community. Religion was rather smiled at and in some cases also ostracized. But not so the Bible (the Old Testament) or theology (in the ecumenical sense). We learned to love the Bible, not as the "Word of God" but as a mean to deliver us our history, and a cross-cultural milestone of the region and world history. We learned to question the Bible and draw from it as we pleased. We have been taught to recognize reading the Bible as a message to our lives and morals. But not out of fear of God, but out of the complex experiences of our ancestors.

When I came to know the New Testament, I treated in the same way. I perceived the story of Jesus, his words, and actions as a socially critical tradition, with many philosophical and socio-economic views. The fact that it did not always correspond to the Christian organized religion motivated me even more to question this part of the Bible and to interpret it as I see fit.

For me, the Bible (both the Old and the New Testament) is a mountain of inspiration in which I can always discover new things and integrate them into my art.

* This number (150-200 Perssons) was first proposed in the 1990s by British anthropologist Robin Dunbar, who found a link between primate brain size and average social group size. Using the average human brain size and extrapolating the results from primates, he proposed that humans can comfortably maintain 150 stable relationships.

** En référence au célèbre tableau de De Vinci, cette "Cène" porte les mêmes proportions. (4.6 m x 8.8 m / 46cmx88cm x 2 = 92x176cm)



***** In relation to the sentence «they will be the first they will also be the last». As I understand this sentence, it breaks the social hierarchies and norms. What is the first/best in the earthly norm can also be the last in the same - there is no constant order.



The image is for example only, does not contain any intentional symbolism and does not serve as a reference for future works.)

“Abendmahl” –evening run

Plan and schedule:

In an art action between performance and installation, I will capture a Supper or Diner with 13 Participants in all its facets in a large Painting. In the Diner-Table will be set in one line in reference to the «Last Supper of Christ» and its artistic traditions. The painting process will be on site and as timely as possible.

The Food served is aimed to be simple and ideally or traditional meatless or meat-poor. If possible it can be shared and will not be served in plate service. The course of the evening will be organised in 3 equal parts of 40minutes of work/painting followed by 20minutes breaks. During the painting Time participants will eat drink and talk like in a normal dinner.

A few days in advance Participants receive a mail with information and Evening-timetable.

Course of the "Abendmahl" painting session:

Time line	What	Reason
18.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrival of the participants (PA) - Explanation of the process and my way of working. - Questions and Answers session. - Depending on the group, a short exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants receive information in advance. - The conversation serves to prepare the group for the coming time.
18.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seats at the table are allocated by the participants, they will be encouraged to sit with people they do not know. - For the following 30-40 min all participants are invited to sit in silence. - Soft drinks and a light first course will be at the Table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoidance of hierarchical structures - This time serves on the one hand to get in the mood for the evening and on the other hand to create the basis for the picture.
19.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 minutes break - The participants are invited to stay in the room 	
19.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Painting time - Main course is served 	
20.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 minutes break - The participants are invited to stay in the room 	
20.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Painting time - Wine is served in moderation - Desert is served (Fruits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alcohol dilutes people’s presence and makes it hard for me to see them, in moderation its ok.
21.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participants are invited to sit in silence. Till the painting process ends 	
21.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End of the event. 	

Impressions out of past "Abendmahl"



