

Studio Beisel *St. Beisel*

Curated by Dr. Nadia Ismail
Duration: 22.10.2021–09.01.2022

Press event

Wednesday, 20.10.2021, 11 am, Kunsthalle Gießen
The artists will be present.

Opening

Friday, 22.10.2021, 12–6 pm, Kunsthalle Gießen

What links a disreputable dive bar with the spiritual? What connects unique, physical artworks to those in virtual space? The artist duo Studio Beisel offers up answers to these questions in their first institutional solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Gießen.

Under the title *St. Beisel*, Laurenz Raschke (*1989 in Halle/Saale, Germany) and Kajetan Skurski (*1991 in Gdynia, Poland) have created a walk-through installation that transforms the entire 400 m² exhibition space into an artificially constructed world that lies somewhere between this world and the one beyond. Between now and 9 January 2022, visitors are invited to embark on their own personal pilgrimage: "Are you ready?"



© Fig.: Studio Beisel, untitled, 2021

St. Beisel – a pilgrimage

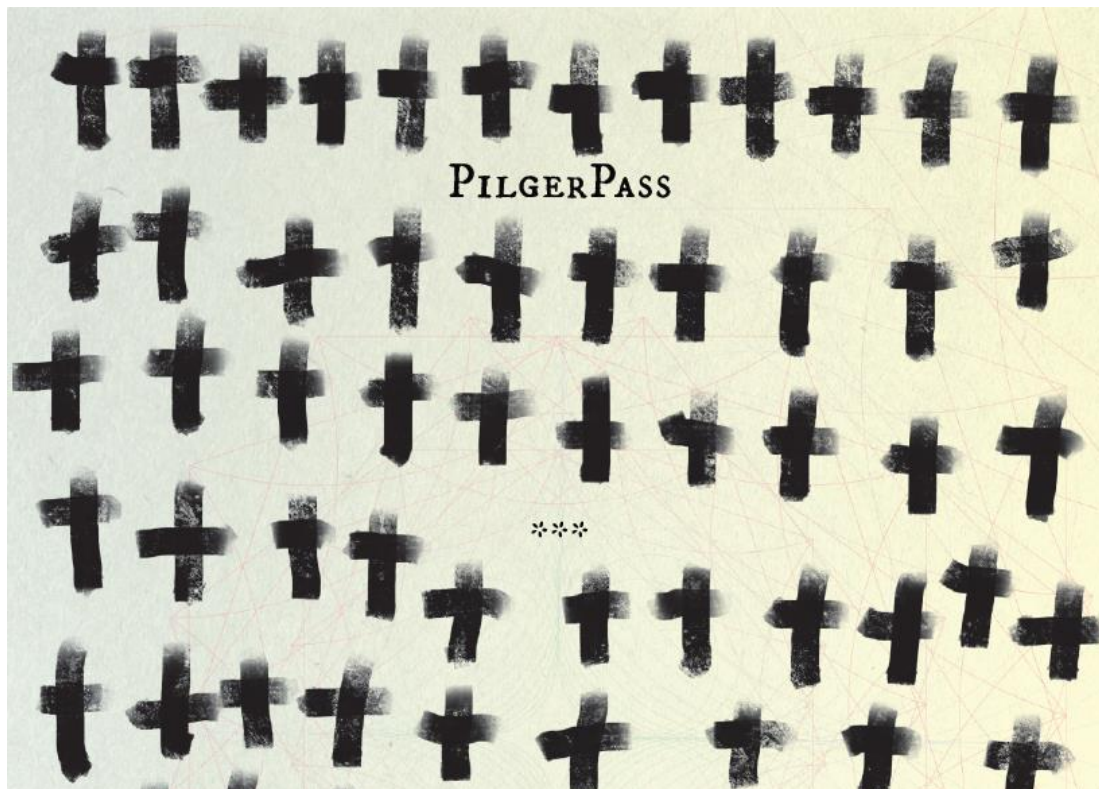
St. Beisel's existential theme announces itself at first glance. Visible from afar, the exhibition's start date is marked with an asterisk in Kunsthalle Gießen's display window. A cross indicates the end of the exhibition – written symbols that typically stand for the beginning and the end of a life.

Conceptually, Studio Beisel also connects the world beyond with the world here, the sacred with the profane. Depending on the language of origin, Beisel can mean dive bar or pub in Austrian, kennel or brothel in Czech and skittle alley or house in Yiddish. The prefix *Saint* in the exhibition title *St. Beisel*, conversely, denotes something sacred. With this neologism, the artists reveal that the special or sacred lies, as is so often the case, in the simple, the overlooked and the all too commonplace. This also explains why the wooden barn, which was erected as the central object in the Kunsthalle, is more than it seemingly appears to be.



© Fig.: Studio Beisel, Detail from the pilgrim's passport, 2021

At the very beginning of the exhibition, guests are handed a pilgrim passport, which bears an 'official' stamp. It permits them to pass through and stay within the five spaces that have been developed by the artists. At the same time, the printed passport contains existential and evocative questions that accompany visitors on their journey from the mundane world to *St. Beisel*. "Who do you miss?", "What do you regret?", "When do you like yourself?" and "What happens after death?", for instance.

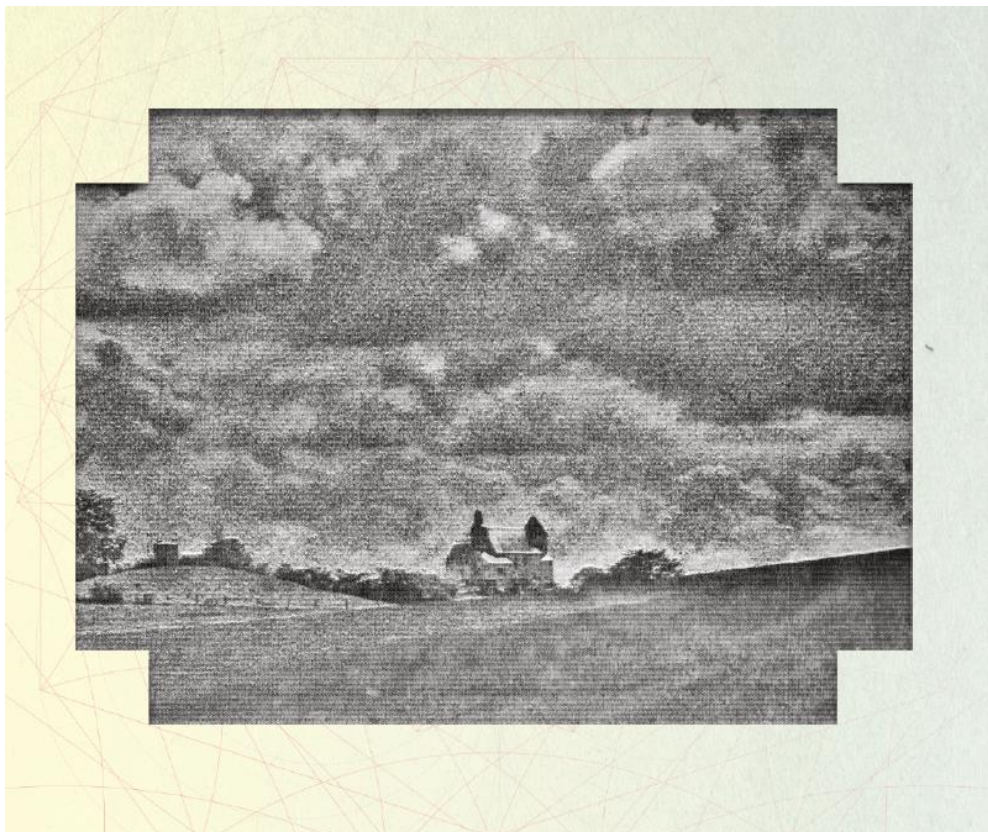


© Fig.: Studio Beisel, Detail from the pilgrim's passport, 2021

From the outset, the questions posed in the pilgrim passport, as challenging as they are intimate, negate the detached attitude of traditional exhibition visits. With this, the artists emphasise what characterises art at its core – to understand art as a space for thought and discussion that offers the possibility of being a resonant intersection in reflection and feeling. Only those who have left the coldness of the waiting room and stepped through a wooden door to emerge into the artificial expanse of a field can arrive there. A path embedded in the artificial landscape inside the Kunsthalle leads to the barn, which is central to the artists' work and is marked by time and weather. From a place near Fulda in Eastern Hesse, where Raschke and Skurski dismantled it to finally reassemble it in the Kunsthalle.

NFTs or the indelible mark of the human being

While the previous paths through the installation – guided by the questions in the pilgrim pass – were still characterised by a quiet exploration of one's own inner self, the barn is now the place where a trace of one's own existence can be left behind. "Your body is about to be sent to the internet. It will be kept there forever as an 'NFT'. You can visit it there, if you want. – Now begin the process –".



© Fig.: Studio Beisel, Detail from the pilgrim's passport, 2021

Visitors can use a camera to record images and sounds, thoughts or questions. These traces are collected by the artists and transformed into unique digital artworks in the form of non-fungible tokens. In doing so, earthly traces are transferred into virtual space, where they will endure for an undefined period of time. At the same time, this immaterial trace is returned to the material, in that the so-called NFTs can be purchased at the finissage in the form of a highest-bidder auction.

Once this step has been taken and the separation of 'spirit' and body has been completed, the visitors step out of the barn and finally reach *St. Beisel*. From this point on, the earthly world is slightly blurred and somewhat distorted, visible through a film. **"Take all the time you need."** You can watch the hustle and bustle on the other side in peace and ask yourself "What happens after death?"

Studio Beisel's work creates an deeply engaging space that allows for complete immersion in the various spaces and sends visitors on both an inward and outward journey. "Maybe it goes further."

Studio Beisel

Laurenz Raschke (*1989 in Halle/Saale) and Kajetan Skurski (*1991 in Gdynia) studied under Prof. Heiner Goebbels at the Institut für Angewandte Theaterwissenschaft (Institute for Applied Theatre Studies) in Giessen and have been working together at the intersection of visual and performing arts since 2015. Various exhibitions and performances include, among others, the Palais de la Porte Dorée (Paris), the Schillertage (Nationaltheater Mannheim), the Hessische Theatertage, the Fast Forward Festival for Young Directors and the Frankfurter Kunstverein.



© Fig.: Studio Beisel, Laurenz Raschke und Kajetan Skurski, 2021

Accompanying programme

Artist talk

Wednesday, 24 November 2021, 6 pm

Postponed to 9 January 2022, 6 pm, following the Performance and NFT fair

Studio Beisel in conversation with Bernhard Siebert, dramaturge and research associate at Justus Liebig University Giessen and Dr. Nadia Ismail, Director of Kunsthalle Giessen

Registration: kunsthalle@giessen.de

Art education in individual conversations

Tuesdays 4–6 pm and Saturdays 3–5 pm

Finissage featuring performance and NFT fair

Sunday, 9 January 2022, 4 pm

Free admission to all events

Special thanks to:

Antonia Alessia Virginia Beeskow

Tarika Johar

Jessica Mascher

Simon Patzelt

Familie Skurski

Red Corridor Gallery

Familie Rothmann

Justus-Liebig-Universität