

BOB & ROBERTA SMITH - *THE WHOLE WORLD IS AN ART SCHOOL*

FEBRUARY 3 – MARCH 24 / 2018



Bob & Roberta Smith, *This artist is deeply dangerous*, 2009, Signwriting enamel on found materials from Viking Bay, 140 x 120cm each (9 panels), courtesy of the artist and von Bartha

Von Bartha, Basel is pleased to announce a new immersive exhibition from British artist Bob & Roberta Smith, running from February 3 – March 24, 2018. Titled *THE WHOLE WORLD IS AN ART SCHOOL!*, the show transforms the gallery space into an art school and visitors into art students, asking them to confront the motives behind artistic practice and celebrate the often ‘nonsensical purposeless’ of the inspiration-finding process.

New works include artistic propositions and provocations designed as calls to action, instructing visitors to take part in several creative activities within the gallery space; these include making ‘pink on pink’ or ‘grey’ paintings, ‘build your own blob’ and ‘painting with both hands’. With artist tools, media and workspace provided by the gallery, including new benches painted with slogans by the artist, the exhibition is an organic, creative space that develops over time. Bob & Roberta’s own attempts at these challenges, as well as those created by visitors during the exhibition’s run, will be on display at the gallery.

Bob & Roberta Smith’s campaigns are extensions of his artistic practice. Also on display at von Bartha are a variety of brightly-colored text-based slogan works which deal specifically with the role of art in wider society, and brought together here for the first time. A seminal piece *This artist is*

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deeply dangerous (2009), details verbatim an experimental art review included in [The Guardian newspaper in 2008](#). Written by the paper's tennis correspondent – who had swapped places with their art critic for the day – the 9 part painting, measuring over 12 metres high, describes the sports writer's experience encountering the work of Louise Bourgeois. The piece encapsulates the artist's interest in broadening the parameters of art.

Also on exhibition at von Bartha are Bob & Roberta Smith's shorter slogan-based works created on pieces of discarded wood. Working in an improvised way, the artist adapts his handwriting to reflect his message - the ever changing font reflective of the individuality of creation. At once comedic and pointedly political, they depict phrases such as "Make Art Not War" and "All Schools Should Be Art Schools". Some are painted on found doors, with their upbeat, affirming slogans representing literal entry points; the artist suggests that in the embracing of these ideas, we can find entryways to alternative futures.

Patrick Brill aka Bob & Roberta Smith (born 1963) is a British contemporary artist, a Royal Academician, writer, musician and art education advocate, who sees art as an important element in democratic life. His work encourages people to engage with art and to look beyond the aesthetic surface, with pieces including *Make Art Not War* (1997) which belongs to the Tate collection and *Letter to Michael Gove* (2011), a letter to the now former UK Secretary of State for Education reprimanding him for the "destruction of Britain's ability to draw, design and sing". He is also an associate professor at Sir John Cass Department of Art at London Metropolitan University and initiated the Arts' Party Conference in 2013, where artists and organisations came together to debate the role of arts within the education system. Recent exhibitions include *This is a Freedom of Expression Centre*, for Hull City of Culture (2017); *All Schools Should be Art Schools*, for Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2017) and *Folkestone is an Art School*, for Folkestone Triennial (2017). Other exhibitions include *Art Amnesty*, MoMA PS1, NY (2014), *Help Build The Ruins of Democracy*, BALTIC, Gateshead (2004) and *The Mobile Reality Creator*, Compton Verney, Warwickshire (2003)

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Exhibition Facts

Title:	THE WHOLE WORLD IS AN ART SCHOOL!
Address:	von Bartha, Kannenfeldplatz 6, 4056 Basel
Telephone:	+41 61 322 10 00
Website:	www.vonbartha.com
Opening:	February 2, 2017, 6 - 8 pm
Dates:	February 3 – March 24 / 2017
Opening Hours:	Tuesday to Friday 2 – 6pm, Saturday 11 am – 4pm, or by appointment
Admission:	Free
Twitter:	@vonbartha
Facebook:	galleryvonbartha
Instagram:	@vonbartha #BobandRobertaSmith #vonBartha