Magnus Plessen

Born in Hamburg in 1967, Magnus Plessen lives and works in Berlin. A self-taught artist, he pursued photography and filmmaking before dedicating himself fully to painting in 1999.

Plessen's multidisciplinary background continues to inform a distinctive painterly practice that explores the porous boundary between abstraction and figuration. Through fragmented representations, dynamic compositions, and an expressive use of paint, he creates works that challenge conventional notions of space and perception, resulting in images that are characterized by their materiality and emotional complexity.

Plessen's work was presented at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003). It has been exhibited in numerous international museum exhibitions and is held by major public institutions such as the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), the Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago), Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (Düsseldorf), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), and the Rose Art Museum (Waltham).

It is also included in prominent private collections including the Fundación Amparo y Manuel (Mexico City), the Goetz Collection (Munich), the Jorge M. Pérez Collection, El Espacio 23 (Miami), the Rachofsky Collection (Dallas), and the Rubell Collection (Miami).

Since 2019, he has been Professor of Painting at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Karlsruhe.

Magnus Plessen is also represented by Mai 36 Galerie (Zurich), Konrad Fischer Galerie (Düsseldorf, Berlin), Wentrup (Berlin), and White Cube (London, Paris, Hong Kong, New York). His first solo exhibition with Galerie Lelong will open in Paris on October 19, 2026.

Solo shows (selection)

2026

Théâtre imaginaire, Galerie Lelong, Paris, France

2025

Dein Gesicht in meinen Händen, Wentrup, Berlin, Germany

2023

Lucid density, Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2022

Collagen, Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2021

Neues Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, Switzerland

Hope, Love, Helium, White Cube, London, United Kingdom

2019

Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2018

Mess Dress Mess Undress, White Cube, Hong Kong, China

Schablone und Fragment, Daniel Marzona Gallery, Berlin, Germany

zweitausendeinhudnertachtzehn, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany

2016

The Skin of Volume, Kunstparterre, Munich, Germany

The Skin of Volume, Gerhardsen Gerner, Oslo, Norway

The Skin of Volume, White Cube, London, United Kingdom

2015

Neunzehnhundertvierzehn, Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2014

19:14 Magnus Plessen, The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, United States

2013

Gladstone Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

White Cube, São Paulo, Brazil

2012

Riding the Image, White Cube, London, United Kingdom

Glastone Gallery, New York, United States

2010

Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2009

Glastone Gallery, New York, United States

2008

Freizeit, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Berlin, Germany

2006

Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2005

For Immediate Release, Glastone Gallery, New York, United States

2004

Kristin Baker & Magnus von Plessen, Espace 315, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

2002

Malerei, K21 Kunstsammlung, Düsseldorf, Germany

Recent Paintings, MoMA PS1, New York, United States

2001

Neues Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, Switzerland

1999

Fotografien 1996 -1999, Kunstsammlung, Neubrandenburg, Germany

1996

Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, Germany

Group shows (selection)

2023

A Theatre of Waiting, The Cloud Collection, Nanjing, China

2022

What is Left Unspoken: Love, High Museum, Atlanta, United States

2020

Figure and Form: States of Dissolution, White Cube, West Palm Beach, United States

2018

salondergegenwart, Hamburg, Germany

Memory Palace, White Cube, London, United Kingdom

2016

With a Touch of Pink - With a bit of Violet - With a Hint of Green - Dorothee Fischer - In Memorianm,, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany

2014

Fruits de la Passion: La collection du Centre Pompidou, The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, Japan

2010

Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum & Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany

Wojtek Bakowski, Piotr Bosacki, Magnus Plenssen, Iza Tarasewicz, Philip Topolovac, Galerie Isabella Czarnowska, Berlin, Germany

Americans Looking In., Center for Book Arts, New York, United States

Florida Wild, McKenzie, Miami, United States

2009

HUB: Dumont Editions, White Space, Beijing, China

Slow Paintings, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany

2008

The Krautcho Club / In and Out of Place, Forgotten Bar Project, Berlin, Germany

You Dig the Tunnel, I'll Hide the Soil, White Cube, London, United Kingdom

2007

Eberhard Havekost, Johannes Kahrs, Magnus Plenssen, Wilhelm Sasnal: Imagination Becomes Reality, Arbeiten aus der Sammlung Goetz, Karlsruhe, Germany

Images in Painting, Museu Serralves, Porto, Portugal

2006

Imagination Becomes Reality, Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany

Infinite Paintings, Villa manin, Passariano, Italy

The Cartin Collection : Subject, Contemporary Portraiture, Lyman Allyn Art Museum, New London, United States

2005

Bilder von Magnus Plessen und Fotos von Carlo Bottigello, Kunstparterre e.V., Munich, Germany

Art Institute of Chicago, United States

Drawing from the Modern, 1975 – 2005, MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States

2004

Direct Painting, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany

2003

Clandestine, Dreams and Conflict, Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland

2002

Startkapital, K21 Kunstsammlung Nordhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany

1999

Missing Link: Menschen-Bilder in der Fotografie, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Public collections (selection)

Start Museum, Shanghai, China

Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

Goetz Collection, Munich, Germany

K21 Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany

Kunstsammlung NRW K20/K21, Düsseldorf, Germany

Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany

Fundación Amparo y Manuel, Mexico City, Mexico

Ellipse Foundation, Cascais, Portugal

Art Institute of Chicago, United States

MoMA, Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, United States

Rose Art Museum, Waltham, United States

Rubell Collection, Miami, United States

Rubell Museum, Miami, United States

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, United States