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INTERVIEW: ANDY HOPE 1930



Andy Hope 1930 is a Berlin based artist who formerly operated under the name Andreas Hofer. In 2010 he adopted the alias Andy Hope 1930 in tribute to "the rise of the comic book as a mass medium and the abandonment of suprematism and Russian constructivism." He works in a variety of media, from drawing and painting to collage and installation, using iconography sampled from classic literature, science fiction, superheroes and mythology. In this second instalment in a series of interviews exploring the interface between comics and fine art, Kirk Lake spoke with Andy Hope 1930 on the eve of the launch of his Medley Tour London exhibition at [Hauser & Wirth](#) in London.

BERSERKER I'd like to ask a little about your introduction to comics. Did you read them as a child? Can you remember any that you particularly connected with?

ANDY HOPE 1930 I first came into contact with comics as a child when a friend of my mother gave me American comics like *Superman* and *Batman*. At that time I couldn't read them but I was immediately attracted to the images, especially to the movements of the figures, the distorted perspectives and the speed they evoked.

BERSERKER There are recurrent superhero motifs within your work, whether they be appropriated images from comic books, hand-drawn superheroes, collage or even symbolic batwings on a wardrobe. How does the superhero fit in with your art practice? What is it representing?

ANDY HOPE 1930 My superhero-related work is not about superpower. If you look at my superheroes, not so much in the collages but in the paintings, you will discover mostly figures that are deranged or broken, some of them even seem to fall apart or they blend with other characters. For example in the series of paintings called 'Robin Dostoyevsky' I created a queer character wearing a cape and an ancient dress mixing Robin, the helpful young fellow of Batman and often discussed as his secret gay friend, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky whose works represents the dangerous stream of dramatic feelings. Another aspect I'm very much interested in is the role of the superhero as a medium of propaganda during the Second World War. The Superheroes are an archetype, simple cultural icons, but they are indeed very complex characters which allow a wide range of readings and rewritings. It's really not about keeping the figure intact or fetishising them.



BERSERKER Post-pop, the language of comics and the appropriation of comic book motifs require more than the simple reframing of a low-brow form into a gallery space. Artists like Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw, Grayson Perry and others have engaged with the language of comics in a way that is far more intellectually vigorous than merely blowing up a panel of comic art to gallery size. Do you feel any affinity to those or other artists?

ANDY HOPE 1930 I would add Raymond Pettibon, but then I have to mention William Blake first, because I actually knew Blake's art long before Pettibon's. For me there was already Blake as a reference for how to integrate writing and drawing, and Blake had these figures that reminded me of superheroes or other comic strip heroes. I am using figures from comic strips as characters that live in a media, in an imaginary or artificial world and I am also taking this specific 'sound' from these sources. For example the colours or a certain artificial appearance that, I think, is the 'flesh' of these beings. So it is not only about a certain set of figuration; it is also their look that has an influence on my way of using colours and matter.

BERSERKER Are you still reading comics now? Any particular favourites?

ANDY HOPE 1930 To be surrounded by comics is part of my life. But of course my interests shifted from reading them from beginning to end to a more 'research' way of reception. I still try to get everything by Steve Ditko and Wally Wood but I also like Daniel Clowes very much, Robert Crumb, Harvey Pekar. I also got have some very interesting comic history collections like *Government Issue: Comics for the People, 1940s-2000s* and *From Krakow to Krypton: Jews and Comic Books*. Other books I read recently include *The Adventures of Unemployed Man*, Ray Bradbury comics by Al Williamson, Kent Williams and Craig Russell, *Phantom* reprints, *Unexplored Worlds: The Steve Ditko Archives* and *DC Elseworlds #1*.



BERSERKER As far as I'm aware from your work, you are yet to explore a sequential picture narrative although many of the paintings or drawings look like they could have been lifted from a longer story. Do you have any interest in working on a longer form comics story?

ANDY HOPE 1930 I'm not so much interested in the narrative aspect of comics but more in the visual style, the writing, the title, the graphic design. Also my work itself frequently develops as series of installative disposals, but not in a narrative sense. I've done some sequential works though that oscillate between comics and storyboards, but they are rare exceptions.

BERSERKER What can you tell me about your upcoming London show?

ANDY HOPE 1930 Medley Tour London is the second location of the Medley Tour which started in Hannover at the Kestnergesellschaft at the end of February. Simply speaking, the Medleys are iconographic appropriations, blendings and modifications of my visual vocabulary, which is of course in itself based on appropriations, blendings and modifications of already existing images. In London I will show the 'X-Medleys,' a continuation of the Medleys in which I explicitly adopt works from modernism (Picabia, Klee, Rodtschenko), contemporary art and popular culture including abstract comic images by Steve Ditko and submit them through a process of revision, erosion and dislocation. For me it's about keeping the perspective on my earlier works as well as on the appropriated references as movable as possible. Nothing is fixed.

Medley Tour London runs at [Hauser & Wirth](#) in West London until May 26th.