



Event location in an old factory in Winterthur

© All photos Jung Kunst

Get the original

Do you find buying original artwork daunting? Or just simply too expensive? For the past five years, Jung Kunst has been offering a chance for young Swiss artists to exhibit their work, while at the same time providing a relaxed and enjoyable environment for potential first-time clients looking for the courage (or inspiration) to buy their first original work of art.

By Julia Hancock | Jung Kunst creator Tom Stierli has always loved art; however, he was tired of going to art exhibitions and feeling uncomfortable. He simply wanted to enjoy the atmosphere, and talk freely about the art he was seeing without feeling the need to prove he had extensively studied the subject.

One evening some six years ago, while chatting with friends, he discovered that he was not the only one who felt this way. Others too, felt intimidated at art shows; and not feeling at ease, they opted to stay away.

An entrepreneur at heart, Tom, with his friends' help, set out to create an art event that fulfilled what they felt was missing from Switzerland's art scene: accessibility, both in atmosphere and prices.

This month their creation, the Jung Kunst exhibition in Winterthur, is celebrating half a decade, and is displaying the



work of around 20 young artists from across the country, in its usual relaxed atmosphere.

Picking the right location

The setting: an old factory. The rules: the artist has to be under 35 years old. The prices: affordable.

Stierli, together with two friends – Martin Landolt and Andreas Schmucki – officially launched Jung Kunst in 2006. Landolt and Schmucki, originally from Winterthur (northeast of Zurich), felt that their hometown would provide the ideal location. Small, but culturally vibrant, they argued that Jung Kunst would have a brighter start in a smaller centre, rather than getting drowned out in the larger, and more competitive, Zurich. So far their choice has proved correct.

In Winterthur, they found an inventive location to host their

exhibition: Swiss manufacturing giant Sulzer's 1930s industrial complex. And there has been no looking back.

Getting down to the business of art

None of the three founders are artists, simply art lovers. Tom Stierli, for example, is a qualified industrial engineer, who spent six years in a suit and tie as a management consultant with international consulting firm Accenture. An entrepreneur at heart, however, he left Accenture in 2002 to found a restaurant chain and a babysitting service. Jung Kunst though, remains a non-profit event.

Once the trio decided to set up the event, Landolt – who had contacts within the art world – invited a few artists for a brainstorming session. Soon afterwards, word began to spread.

The first Jung Kunst show primarily featured local artists.



The four-day event presents art enthusiasts with a chilled atmosphere; Event founders Andreas Schmucki, Martin Landolt and Tom Stierli

Today, however, artists come from across the nation. Some apply directly in the hopes of exhibiting their work, while others are recruited by the founders – who do their homework, by making the rounds at art-school diploma exhibitions.

The only restrictions are that artists must be no older than 35, and creating art has to be their main vocation – not a part-time hobby.

For some of the artists, Jung Kunst has provided an important stepping-stone. “When I participated in this exhibition, I was surprised to have sold all my work in the first two hours,” said Joanna Archetti, Jung Kunst exhibitor in 2007. “Although this was not my first exhibition, it helped me discover other important opportunities in my career. I can now live off my art!”

Mark your calendar

The show – which runs for only four days each October – displays paintings, photos, street art, film, drawings, sculptures and mixed media. While there is no official price limit, the creators’ goal is for prices to remain affordable.

“We are keen to get first-time buyers [and] set prices that remove inhibitions, so many prices [start] around 100 francs; but you can also buy small, original sketches at our shop for as little as 10 francs,” Stierli told me.

“When we started Jung Kunst, one of our mottos was ‘Original Rather Than Posters’ because we saw many people would happily

Enjoy art at Jung Kunst

October 28-31

Sulzerareal
City Halle
Pioneerstrasse, Winterthur
Five minutes walk from Winterthur’s main train station

Thursday & Friday: 16:00 ‘til late

Saturday: 11:00 ‘til late

Sunday: 11:00–20:00

www.jungkunst.ch

buy a poster from Ikea, and then spend some 300 francs framing it,” Stierli explains.

“We want people to try to experience the joys of buying original artworks for the same amount of money.”

The event itself is a fun night out for young and old. Open late each evening, visitors come for a bite to eat, a leisurely drink, a chat, and of course to peruse the art on offer. It’s no problem for children to roam the exhibits, while their parents lounge on pillows watching art videos or live music from up-and-coming Swiss bands. All in all, a vibrant art setting to relax in, or get your own creative juices flowing.