

## SVEN HELBIG



***Skills (Vanitas) (2022)***  
**Photograph, C-Print with Frame**  
**90 x 165 cm, Edition 1/3**

*Skills for Peace*, the fourth edition of the *POINTS of RESISTANCE* exhibition series, derives its name from the still life *Skills*, by the renowned German composer Sven Helbig. Created in the style of baroque vanitas painting, it depicts, among other things, a vaccine vial, a skateboard, his iPhone, and the cables of his first computer under the neutered protective gesture of Hermes, the messenger of the gods, in addition to the common attributes of the still life genre. The central score features Strauss's setting of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The deformed Hermes thereby reveals the dual questions: that of the divine idea, and that of the self-conquest of man without God as proclaimed by Nietzsche. The question remains: what in today's secular present can all people of this earth connect with after

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thousands of years of cultural history? It is peace, one should think. We should have the skills for it - after all that was. *Skills for Peace* lives in this field - between hymn and melancholy.

Sven Helbig's photographic work *Skills*, was made in parallel to his new Symphony, also entitled *Skills*, to be performed on Easter Sunday within the *POINTS of RESISTANCE: Skills for Peace* exhibition in the Zionskirche.

#### ARTIST STATEMENT:

"In my parents' living room stands an elaborately hand-forged copper kettle – my grandfather's masterpiece, hammered out of a single piece of copper. Growing up in a family of craftsmen, I have been familiar since early childhood with the attitude of perfecting a thing for its own sake.

The deepening concentration and slow maturing of execution, the craft shares with spiritual rituals, with arts, sports and the sciences. I am touched by the sight of almost ideal expressions of human activity, be it a forged piece, a perfectly build sentence or an athletic performance. I dedicate my album *SKILLS* to this fascination."

#### BIO

Sven Helbig (born in Eisenhüttenstadt in 1968) is a German composer, director and music producer. Helbig's symphonic images are closely connected to his life, experiences, aspirations and also the voids between epochs, systems and continents. In 2003 he produced the project "Mein Herz Brennt" (My Heart Burns) based on song ideas by Rammstein. A year later he performed "Battleship Potemkin" with the Pet Shop Boys, and in 2009, he recorded with the Fauré Quartett as producer of their "Popsongs" album. The friction between the feeling of security of yesteryear and the challenges of the present is one of his central motifs. In this respect, Helbig's little symphonies are in fact substantial works, for they continue to expand within their framework. Helbig's versatility has made him a much sought-after producer for crossover projects; he has worked as a producer, composer and arranger with Snoop Dogg, Polarkreis 18, opera singer René Pape, pianist Olga Scheps and more. Helbig's work builds on the tradition of the Gesamtkunstwerk (all-embracing art form) and he often takes responsibility for content, music and production at the same time. Helbig currently lives and works in Dresden.