

**BEAT FRUTIGER
(FRU.CH)**

ARTIST CURRICULUM VITAE

WITH EMBEDDED HYPERLINKS FOR DIGITAL VIEWING

Introductory, general statement on personal practice

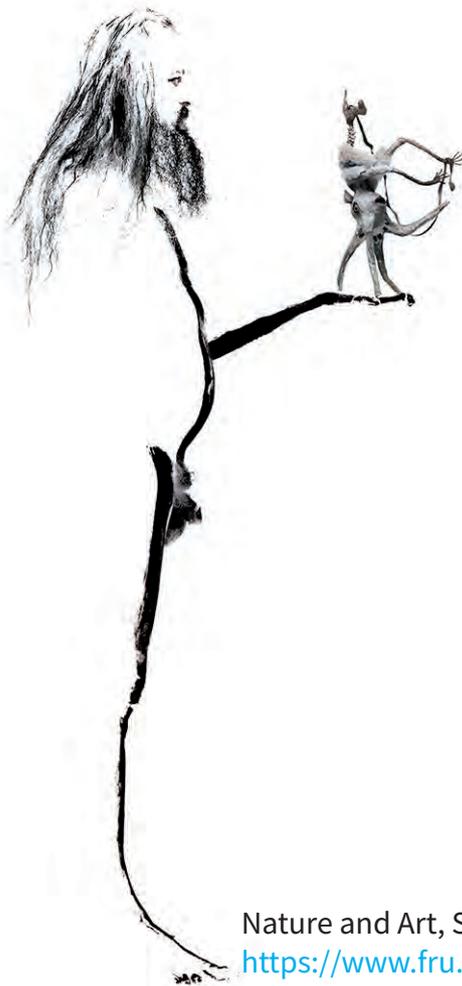
I am concerned that humans are no longer natural beings, but works of art.

We know subconsciously that for 300,000 years, the human body has been the most widespread, most frequently used, and culturally most important medium for human creativity—from make-up to surgery and from clothing to hormone therapy. **Body art or body decoration is an expression of individual aesthetics, cultural development, self-presentation, and social affiliation.**

In contrast to art according to Théophile Gautier's statement, „Il n'y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien“, art on the body originally always had a purpose, a use or a message: magic, healing, camouflage, protection, tradition of mythology, expression of state of mind, masquerade in storytelling, etc. I am concerned with how much art today is beautiful and useless.

The purpose of my current creative exploration is to raise awareness of the value of touch in a visual and digital culture.

The invention of photography led to a split in image design: on the one hand, the documentary-technical approach to photography, which is associated with reality; on the other hand, the manual-interpretative approach of painting, which expresses an ideal or an idea. **With today's technical possibilities, it is no longer possible to separate photography and painting, and a synthesis of the two approaches is interesting, especially when it takes place very close to the skin.**



Nature and Art, Self-Portrait with Nasobem, 2024

<https://www.fru.ch/pdf/ausstellung-nichts-heiliges-schiele.pdf> (page 6)

The development of the activity 1979-1991, first publication

As part of my training as an art teacher, I had a formative experience in 1979: a body painting happening at Marzilibad, a public swimming pool in Bern. I published a detailed description of this in my first book, *Schminke Maske Körperkunst (Make-up, Mask, Body Art)*.

<https://www.fru.ch/schminkemaske/assets/basic-html/index.html#page12>

This experience was followed in 1985 by further training as a make-up artist. At first, there was great interest in transforming the human form into other materials. From 1988 onwards, this resulted in numerous statues, the most important of which are:

1988 at the exhibition centre in Basel during Art Basel (illustration below and next page)

2005 at the Skulpturenhalle Basel (Bunte Götter) <https://www.fru.ch/werbung.php>

2014: Two women in Berlin at Fitzenreiter: <https://www.fru.ch/bilderfru/body15.jpg>

2015: "Wabi Sabi Moe" calendar: <https://www.calvendo.de/galerie/wabi-sabi-moe-hinreibend-vergammelt-erotisch-akt-bodypainting-2/>

The first publication appeared in 1991: *Schminke Maske Körperkunst*, with the following statement: <https://permalink.sn.ch/bib/sz000936228>



Das ist keine Statue, 1988

Human beings are driven by an irresistible desire to change their outward appearance. Described in the Bible as a consequence of the Fall, this fact is related to the relationship that human beings have with the rest of creation. Through the knowledge of 'good and evil,' they become aware that they have been torn from their origins and become alienated from nature. A visible expression of this is that human beings artificially alter their natural appearance. They are unique in this respect: there is no other living creature that attaches such importance to its outward appearance in the same sense and to the same extent. With the help of clothing, hairstyles, deformation (e.g. of the skull, waist, feet, through weight loss, weight gain, body-building, etc.), tattoos and body painting, humans completely redesign their natural appearance and change it again and again throughout their lives. Their creative drive is therefore evident first and foremost in themselves. In this way, human beings become works of art in the true sense of the word, either wholly or in part, whether their own works of art, those of another person, a group or society. In doing so, they convey messages and reveal characteristics far beyond simply covering nakedness and concealing their nature.

Basler Zeitung

Montag, 20. Juni 1988
Nr. 142

Teil III

Basel-Stadt.

Body-Painting und Fotoästhetik



Die Dame lebt.

Foto Hannes-Dirk Flury

cf. Masken, Make-up-Art, Body-Painting, Fotografie, Performances, Videos, Installationen und Aktionen – dies alles ist in der «1. Internationalen Make-up-Art», die sich im Kongresszentrum der Basler Mustermesse eingerichtet hat, zu sehen und zu erleben. «Make-up» wird hierbei selbstverständlich nicht im klassischen Sinne, also mit Rouge, Lidschatten und Lippenstift zelebriert, sondern als Kunstform, die den Menschen grundlegend verändert. Bemalte Körper und die damit verbundenen kulturellen Aspekte sind als kulturelle Ausdrucksform sozusagen uralte. Heute wird diese Tradition neu entdeckt. Bemalte Körper werden zu lebendigen Skulpturen, «atmenden» Kunstwerken, die ebenso faszinieren wie amüsieren.

Was sorgsam bemalt wurde, wird

abends unter der Dusche wieder weggeputzt. Deshalb ist die Fotografie das zusätzliche, vermittelnde Medium, welches das Resultat in einer weiteren ästhetischen Dimension festhält. Was dabei herauskommt, bewegt sich zwischen Werbung und Kunst, zwischen «kultischem» Kunsthandwerk und Dekor.

Die «1. Internationale Make-up-Art» wurde von den Basler «Gimmick Studios» und «Der Maske» in

Köln organisiert. Hanspeter Martin, einer der Organisatoren, sieht in der «Make-up-Art» eine Bereicherung der «Art». Leider werde, wenigstens bis anhin, das visuelle Spektakel von den «Art»-Machern eher als Konkurrenz empfunden. Dies soll sich aber, so hofft Martin, im nächsten Jahr ändern.

Die «Make-up-Art» ist heute noch zwischen 10 und 20 Uhr geöffnet.

Un-art-ig

We Can't Art Bar 88

hei. Die Türe ist schwarz, die Eintrittskarte orange und geöffnet wird erst ab 10 Uhr abends – auf Klingelzeichen. So geheimnisvoll sich dies anhört, so geheimnisvoll ist es auch tatsächlich: Eine Hausgemeinschaft hat nämlich klammheimlich in einem Hinterhaus an der Feldbergstrasse eine Bar samt Galerieraum eingerichtet, als Parallelveranstaltung zur «Art».

Und dies nicht zum ersten Mal. Schon letztes Jahr luden «Die Zwölf Geschworenen» während der Basler Kunstmesse in ihre Räumlichkeiten, boten Drinks und Kunst an und liessen das Ganze unter dem Namen «Elephant Château Bar» seinen ungehemmten Lauf nehmen.

In diesem Jahr nun heisst ihre Alternativ-Art-Galerie-Bar «We Can't Art Bar 88». Sieben Nächte lang wird Kunst präsentiert: von Video-Installationen über Bilder und Zeichnungen bis zu Fotografien. Und damit das Ganze nicht zu langweilig wird, sorgt eine schummrige Bar für Small Talk und die nötigen Kontakte unter den zumeist schwarz gekleideten Szene-Gängern.

Der Zufall will es zudem, dass im gleichen Haus noch ein Kabinett besichtigt werden kann: ein Cocteau-Kabinett. Hier kommt es nur allzu gerne vor, dass der Besucher nicht nur ob der Cocteau-Objekte, sondern auch der Wohnungseinrichtung wegen kaum mehr aus dem Staunen kommt: «Gibt es das denn?» oder «Wohnen Sie (gemeint ist der Kabinett-Besitzer) tatsächlich hier?» Mehr vermag der Besucher zwischen der prunkvollen Empire-Einrichtung und den Cocteau-Gegenständen nicht hervorbringen, greift nach dem nächsten Glas, beruhigt sich mit einem Schluck Wein, schiebt sich ein Brötchen zwischen die Zähne, setzt sich und hält sich an der Zeitung «Von Art zu Art» fest.

Tatsächlich: «We Can't Art» – jene Art von Kunst, wie sie in der Mustermesse praktiziert wird, können (und wollen) «Die Zwölf Geschworenen» wirklich nicht. Es kommt gerade wie's kommt, zwischen 22 Uhr und den frühen Morgenstunden während den sieben «Art»-Nächten.

Development of activity 1991-1995

Naturalism, lunar calendar, still lifes, second publication

From 1991 onwards, interest in topics with interesting content grew. This led to a series of 13 mythological female figures in elaborately staged studio backgrounds for a lunar calendar. Right from the start, for copyright reasons, all work is carried out in-house, from the concept and studio design to body painting and make-up, photography, and the exhibition at the PEP+NO NAME gallery with a performance at the opening.

What was particularly astonishing about this work was how strongly the masking affected the behavior of the model (Mariella Lucrezia). Especially with the maenad, she was shocked by the bloodthirsty traits hidden in the depths of her soul and the pleasure she could feel in them. The psychology behind body art is awakened!

Triggered by research I conducted for my teaching as a drawing instructor, my focus shifted toward the genre of still life—both in its formal aspects and in its thematic, cultural, and symbolic dimensions. Publishing is addictive, and thus 32 “Still Lifes” were created for an expanded exhibition catalogue, enriched with biographical experiences and anecdotes from my work as a body painter. Since no publisher could be found, the publication was released in collaboration with the NO NAME GALLERY in Basel.

<https://permalink.sn.ch/bib/sz000060004>

The exhibition, which received a great deal of attention, was featured in the cultural magazine NEXT on Swiss television, with the presenter Monika Schärer herself serving as the model for the program.

<https://www.srf.ch/play/tv/next/video/next-vom-27-08-1995?urn=urn:srf:video:a761d04b-216f-40c6-9d52-9ae4da642a55>

Maenad / Lunar calendar



Früchte und Fröchtchen / Still Lifes



The development of the activity 1996–2010

Crisis, abstraction, esotericism, and the “book” as an art form

After the success of the “Still Lives,” a profound crisis set in, triggered in part by economic and ecological factors. Economically, photographs as “copies” were practically worthless compared to paintings as “originals”, attracted hardly any interest from buyers compared with my earlier watercolors, and could not be sold at prices that covered the costs. Ecologically, for the first time a fee was imposed on the waste generated by my elaborate studio installations, which prompted me to stop doing them. Economically, photographs as “copies” were practically worthless compared to paintings as “originals.”

The problem of originals is solved by exposing the photographs directly onto 30cm x 40cm baryta paper using a large camera made by the artist himself, meaning that each sheet is an original. The human body was painted white against a black background and then photographed. They are called “Silberzeichen” (“silver marks”).

Stylistically, these works are influenced by East Asian ink painting (which I became acquainted with and began studying in 1975) and by the art of various indigenous peoples.

Text in Schweizer Illustrierte, September 30, 1996:
(Picture below)

“Silvered” Body Paintings

Silver symbolizes purity; its alchemical sign is the moon. The moon represents the feminine, intuition, and dreams. Silver also plays a central role in the chemical process of photography.

Drawing on this symbolic repertoire, make-up artist Beat Frutiger, 44, creates his silver images: “Fru” transfers expressive full-body body paintings directly from the female body onto paper as negative prints (image: “Frog Woman”). The works—on view at the No Name Gallery in Basel until October 26—were created intuitively or were inspired by dreams that the artist recorded in a book exhibited alongside them.



Since finding a publisher for further book publications seemed hopeless, and the technology at the time made it possible to produce color books on a private printer, four small booklets were subsequently created—some still featuring hand-gilded initials in an archaic script—each one an original artwork made as a unique piece. The photographs contained in them were exhibited either as originals on baryta paper or as color prints in the NO NAME GALLERY.

The “Siberzeichen” of the first volume received third place at the KirchzARTen FOTOsalon. They were highly controversial within photographic circles and remain so today as digital images. For example, they were rejected at photoSCHWEIZ 20 on the grounds that the images belong not to photography but to the fine arts.

Recently, I republished the four booklets as a kind of facsimile of the original artistic versions:

Major Arcana: <https://www.epubli.com/shop/grosse-arkana-9783759873019>

The virtues and their vices:

<https://www.epubli.com/shop/die-tugenden-und-ihre-laster-9783752981810>

Witchcraft: <https://www.epubli.com/shop/hexereien-9783759873323>

Dreaming: <https://www.epubli.com/shop/traeumen-9783818707644>

“The Major Arcana” (Silberzeichen = original negatives on baryta paper)



The development of activities 2007–2013

Playing with formats and digital photography

ChatGPT: At the end of the 1970s, my watercolor teacher declared, “Panoramic paintings are out!” So I painted panoramic works, some as long as ten meters, depicting the train journey from Basel to Paris. Panorama is the opposite of blinkers; it reveals the vastness of the sky and the sea (Schleswig-Holstein, 1986), <https://www.fru.ch/>), it can vividly illustrate the course of an action (Bernd Bauer’s action, 1985, watercolor, approx. 18 cm × 300 cm), <https://www.fru.ch/aktuell.php>), it changes the perspective (Deco, 2013), it can depict the same people multiple times in one image (Aliens, https://shop.meinbildkalender.de/shop_fru/27743/) and above all, it has more pixels and therefore shows more detail. I have continued to use the technique of panoramic photography to this day in order to create larger images with greater detail, now mostly vertical with a height of 24,000 px (<https://www.fru.ch/werkverzeichnis.pdf>).

Deco, analog photography 2013, digitally edited, model: Nilya



The development of activities in 2013 – Corona

The search for presentation opportunities Calendar between distinction and censorship

The last retrospective exhibition took place in 2011. It received little attention, and exhibitions were economically uninteresting. In 2013, the CALVENDO publishing house offered photographers an opportunity to showcase their work and earn a small income. After 2013, retirement allowed more time for personal artistic work—time that had previously been consumed by a full-time position plus additional projects in adult education.

Until that point, censorship for youth protection or other reasons had been hardly noticeable. However, a new prudery began to spread, fueled by social media regulations. For example, the exhibition curator of Make-Up in 2013 at the Museum of Cultures in Basel had the idea to display the image Deco as a large three-dimensional sculpture, but this was prohibited by the museum management. Similarly, the CALVENDO jury has demonstrably grown more prudish since 2013. In 2025, a large number of works were removed from their catalog, with the explanation that they sold too little.

<https://www.calvendo.de/galerie/autor/beat-frutiger-fruch/>
https://shop.meinbildkalender.de/shop_fru/

Four of the more than 30 calendars also received awards: Fremde Wesen and Bestiarium won a GREGOR AWARD, while Fremde Wesen, Dialog mit Statuen, and Verwandelte Frauen received CALVENDO GOLD. Wenn es nicht mehr wichtig ist was published in 2013, when I retired; Erscheinungen and Fremde Wesen in 2014; Zitaten in 2015; Zeitmetaphern in 2017; and Besen und Pinsel in 2019. My main interest lies in existential and philosophical themes, as in Erscheinungen, which includes quotes from the work of Tony Parsons, all there is.



The development of activities post corona 2020–2023

Return to roots, major themes, and videos

Exhibitions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I created five “holy hermits,” using myself as the model. I resumed practicing East Asian ink painting, and the style of my photographs returned to that of around 1996. Writing down my thoughts about the images once again led to book form. From 2023 onwards, exhibition opportunities in the spaces of the Verein Kunst Zürich Süd became economically feasible. Since the creation process and techniques behind the images remained a mystery to viewers, I decided to document my working processes in making-of videos. During my training, I had learned to work with video, and by now the technical possibilities had advanced enough that filming no longer caused stress with the equipment.

The COVID-19 pandemic was the first major theme, followed by 12 LEVELS, TOTENTANZ, COMMITMENT, and NICHTS HEILIGES.

Corona

12 Images – 12 Haiku – 12 Questions on Hermits, Vanitas, and Happiness

During the shutdown months of March and April 2020, twelve images accompanied by haiku verses were created. They all reflect personal everyday life as well as media coverage. In dialogue with the images, current world events, and the reporting on them, the commentary in this booklet ultimately emerged. Five of the images, depicting five “holy hermits,” were selected for the Corona Project time-document by photoSCHWEIZ.

<https://www.fru.ch/bilderfru/fotocorona.mp4> (photoSCHWEIZ)

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/96039677/CORONA> (BEHANCE with VIDEO)

<https://www.epubli.com/shop/corona-haiku-zenga-photo-9783752944143> (BOOK)

Saint Beatus, my namesake, or “beatus ille homo, qui sedet in sua domo,” inspired by the call to “stay at home!”

Saint Jerome with the skull, with Death looking over his shoulder, was also the first of the dance of death images.



12 Levels



Foreword: Midlife

Stage 4: Suffering & Enduring

Afterword: On the market

12 images and a commentary on John of the Cross's ladder and the ox story as a path to enlightenment.

The vesper by Andreas Fischer on Sunday, September 22, 2019, at the Kirchengemeindehaus in Kaiser-augst inspired Fru to read *The Dark Night* by John of the Cross. Drawing on *The Dark Night* and the headings for the ten stages of the “secret ladder” twelve images were first created as body-painting photographs, combining classical Zen painting (Zenga) with modern techniques of body painting and photography. The texts accompanying the images were developed afterward. While the headings represent universal patterns of humanity, the images are a personal interpretation, and the texts serve as a modern, critical commentary on these human behaviour.

<https://www.fru.ch/kalender/12levels.htm> (INFO)

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/100535173/12-LEVELS> (BEHANCE with VIDEO)

<https://www.epubli.com/shop/12-levels-haiku-zenga-photo-9783752970012> (BOOK)

Totentanz

About death, but even more about life.

Fru's art brings worlds together. In his *Totentanz* images, he combines photography, drawing, body painting, and Japanese ink painting. The texts create unexpected and often humorous connections: medieval depictions of hellish torments are described as a “conspiracy theory of gigantic proportions,” and #stay@home already existed in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Fru recounts archetypal near-death experiences from his own biography, often using the phrase, “That was close.” The texts are full of transformations. Death transforms from *la petite mort*, as the French call orgasm, to the final, absolute, eternal finish. “Everything flows,” said Heraclitus. Yet behind it remains the constant of death. “The only thing I can be sure of in life is death,” writes Fru, adding: “I could try life once more.” Let us follow his example—with enjoyment in viewing and reading! (From the foreword by A. Fischer)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJizkodGBI8> (FILM)

<https://www.fru.ch/pdf/dance-of-death-catalogue.pdf> (EXHIBITION CATALOG)

<https://www.fru.ch/kalender/totentanz.htm> (INFO)

<https://www.epubli.com/shop/totentanz-haiku-zenga-photo-9783754132265> (BOOK)

<https://www.saatchiart.com/en-ch/art/Photography-DANCE-OF-DEATH/2119551/10596665/view>

Commitment

About power, devotion, and sexuality; saying no, and the illusion of freedom.

“Fru regards the motif of the ‘bound naked woman’ as a kind of dream image, and as an experienced dreamer and interpreter of dreams, he began to amplify the motif. That is—in the language of the Swiss psychiatrist C.G. Jung—he explored the motif in humanity’s fairy tales, myths, legends, as well as in art, literature, film, theology, and philosophy.”

“No, this is not pornography. Every Rosamunde Pilcher novel is more erotic than this. This is art. And spirituality. It elevates what is so-called perverse into God’s world. The Latin word pervers means ‘turned the wrong way, reversed.’” “In this book, certainties—even those carved in stone—are put into flow.” “And anyone hoping for clear-cut opinions will be disappointed.” (Andreas Fischer, Pastor)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xz1BCzcoyS4> (FILM, ages 18 and up)

<https://permalink.snl.ch/bib/sz991019252312903976>

Nothing Sacred

Reflections on resilience within a greed-driven growth model, for all those who are firmly convinced of something and realize they are stuck in a dead end.

The final work in the Haiku Zenga Photo Books series is an explosively ecstatic unfolding of the famous temporal poem by Kohelet, the Preacher Solomon: “For everything there is a season under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die...” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). As one would expect from the master of body painting and free association, Fru interweaves shamanism and Sufism, koan and haiku, poetry and statistics, leaps from AI to the Stone Age, lets hair grow into a primeval forest, generates brilliant texts from collaged quotations, and does not shy away from definitions and concepts. (Andreas Fischer, Pastor)

A time for vessels and a time for contents

<https://www.epubli.com/shop/nichts-heiliges-haiku-zenga-photo-9783818710026> (BOOK)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uO4Oj7UQhJ8> (FILM)

<https://www.fru.ch/kalender/nichts-heiliges.htm> (INFO)



Creativity and art on the body have existed as expressions of the drive to create long before the existence of Homo sapiens. They were ecologically harmless, persisted among indigenous peoples until recent times, and only with the invention of photography did they leave lasting traces. With the detachment of creativity from the skin and its turn toward the environment, ecological problems increase—whether in clothing fashion, objects, or architecture—though these creations leave enduring marks that can delight or annoy us. Additionally, they impact the economic and social balance; all those magnificent works of art, from the pyramids to Versailles, were only possible through exploitation, and it is fair to ask where this still applies today. Body and skin art stand in contrast to this.

This approach also allows central human themes and contents to be explored and expressed creatively—if one wishes. Dance and performance have long proven this, while body painting, in my view, often still remains in kindergarten. As one can see in the development of my own works, the tension between expansive creativity (ten-meter-long watercolors that cannot be exhibited, studio installations generating mountains of waste) and simple form (for example, the circle with profound content—“Vessel and Content”)

has always been central. In this sense, the image on the poster for the exhibition Nothing Sacred, titled “Vessel and Content”, represents a kind of goal or ideal toward which the work should strive.

I would like to use it to exemplify the kinds of turns that often occur in my creative process. I was still working on the images for Nothing Sacred when a new theme emerged: a homage to Egon Schiele. I have long admired his works. While reviewing his paintings, I came across Child with Halo on a Flower Meadow. .

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Egon_Schiele_-_Kind_mit_Nimbus_auf_einer_Blumenwiese_-_ca_1909.jpeg)

I was immediately fascinated by the contrast between emptiness and fullness, yet this contrast had already been explored in another work, and I began to reflect on what else the image might express. The child’s body, seemingly filled with the flower meadow, reminded me of an incident I once had with a model. She was deeply offended when I compared the role of the model to a cake mold. The naked body (without anything) is the vessel to be filled creatively.

So I decided to condense these thoughts into an image, as simple as possible: there is the Enso, representing emptiness (corresponding to the halo), and there is the empty body, filled with reflections of this emptiness (corresponding to the floral dress). Lao-Tse already describes in the Tao Te Ching the “use of non-being.”

The drop may sometimes know that it is in the ocean, but it rarely realizes that the ocean is also in it. (Anandamayi Ma)

Current practice from the end of 2023

Colour and large formats, homage to Egon Schiele

Celebrating the touch

From 2023 onwards, I will begin an intensive study of the work of Egon Schiele. My engagement with his drawings and watercolours brings more colour to the pictures. It is interesting that, from my perspective, some of Schiele's pictures look like body painting:

'Standing Girl' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4reASd65QE>

'Standing woman in a patterned blouse' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvVLd-JvekU>

'Male nude, self-portrait' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeiSu_tNCaQ

'Male nude with raised arm'. <https://www.fru.ch/werkverzeichnis.pdf>

The experience of the rich detail in early analog panoramic photography with medium-format film has led, from 2023 onwards, to the creation of vertical formats using panoramic photography techniques, composed of multiple individual images so that the prints can be produced at 300 dpi in their natural size. In this process, the brushstroke on the skin becomes so similar to the brushstroke on canvas that a layperson cannot distinguish between them. Additionally, when viewed up close, photographic details become visible that can only be interpreted as photography.

If a blind person asked me, "Do you have two hands?" I would not verify it by looking. Yes, I do not know why I should trust my eyes if I were to doubt at all. Yes, why should I not test my eyes by seeing whether I can observe both hands? What is to be tested by what?!

Action begins (genetically) with having a hand, a mouth, eyes, ears, and feet. Knowledge becomes possible due to the organ structure of the human body.

The certainties of the body are conditions for knowledge, not knowledge themselves. That is why we possess them; we do not know or recognize them. For us as present adult humans, they are the facts of bodily use clothed in words—nothing more, nothing less. Therefore, they are neither true nor false, nor can we err in them, just as the grasping motion of the hand has no truth value and no possibility of error.

—Dietmar Kamper & Christoph Wulf (eds.), *Das Schwinden der Sinne*, edition suhrkamp, 1984

These quotes from the Orwellian year inspire me, in an age of emerging artificial intelligence, to dwell closely with body art, to enjoy it, and to gain new insights through it. It is time to celebrate touch.

Without rejecting technological progress, I consider it, in line with *Nothing Sacred*, appropriate to keep in mind the alternatives: "manual rather than technical," "natural rather than artificial," "economical rather than wasteful," and in production, "affordable rather than expensive." In this sense, it is important to me that the concept outlined in my introductory statement—of an art that offers a meaningful and genuine alternative to AI and large-scale technical spectacles—receives recognition and dissemination.

Unfortunately, this has become economically difficult: exhibiting the works is more expensive than producing them, and over the past five years, revenue from sales has amounted to only about 15% of exhibition fees. Who really profits from art?

Statement: Celebrating the Touch 2025

Let us talk about touch, since seeing with our own eyes can lead to doubt and images can be “fake.” For over 40 years, I have worked as a body painter directly on and with the human body. In *Celebrating the Touch*, I reflect on the significance of touch in an age of digital distance. The starting point was an AI-generated poem about the longing of the homo artificialis intelligens, with the line: “I long to touch, to truly feel.”

This longing for genuine, sensual experience runs as a red thread through the works presented. In photographed body paintings, I combine archaic symbols, biblical scenes, AI visions, and everyday gestures. Touch here is not merely physical—it is knowledge, communication, and a life force.

For me, the skin is not a protective barrier but a medium that reminds us that grasping, in the literal sense, begins with feeling.

Saalbooklet: www.fru.ch/pdf/manw25.pdf

Making of Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5xRajMQUWE

Celebrating Touch – Gesamtkunstwerk

At present, my focus is deliberately on the decline of tactile understanding in favor of visualization, on the paradox of the “visualization of concepts,” and, in connection with this, a critique of the primacy of sight. Artistic fixation for the sake of seeing had a harmless beginning in cave painting, yet today it increasingly poses challenges. I regret that communicating these explorations is becoming ever more difficult, as art is no longer a repository for cultural insight but a consumable in a capitalist consumer society.

Simultaneously, during my engagement with “I long to touch, to truly feel,” I received, in January 2025, an invitation to participate in the exhibition *Make Art Not War* at the Photobastei. I agreed on the condition that I could design a space dedicated to this theme. I subsequently worked on creating this room, which spans nearly 12 linear meters of exhibition space.

Exhibition at the Photobastei, September 2025: *Celebrating the Touch*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5xRajMQUWE> (MAKING OF FILM)

<https://www.epubli.com/shop/koerper-werden-durch-malen-koerper-9783819733758> (BOOK)

<http://www.fru.ch/pdf/manw25.pdf> /EXHIBITION ROOM SHEETS)

<https://youtu.be/V1udVp1gHal> (ARTIST TALK)

CV

Beat Frutiger was born in 1952 in Wabern near Bern, growing up practically on the cemetery. Two years of medical studies made him realize that he was either too unskilled, too lazy, or insufficiently ambitious for that profession. After successfully training as a drawing teacher, he accompanied adolescents in their creative experiments at the Sekundarschule/Progymnasium MuttENZ from 1981 to 2013:

<https://www.fru.ch/ausstellungschule.php>.

In 1985, he completed further training as a make-up artist and subsequently worked as a course instructor for mask-making courses until 2001. From 1996 onwards, he pursued additional training in hypnosis, communication and creativity techniques, and dream supervision. Following his SVEB 2 certification in 2001, he was a member for five years of the project group “Zertifikate Gestalten” at the Central Office for Teacher Continuing Education in Bern.

From 2003, he attended seminars on Core Shamanism with Carlo Zumstein for eight years. Around 2006, he engaged in an interesting collaboration and intensive exchange with facial and jaw surgeon Dr. Dr. Katja Schwenzer and the Basel High-Tech Research Center on the topic of “Face and Identity”: <https://www.fru.ch/schwenzer.php>. From 2007 onwards, annual seminars with Hans Hein on “Extended Intuition, Meme, and Synchronicity” became part of his routine and influenced his creative work.

After his retirement in 2013, his activities as a model expanded his circle of interesting contacts:

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ra7f_vU-qc&list=UUMFpRYRbmMB87fcNp7JSnGg&index=135&t=8s)

His acquaintance with Andreas Maria Kahn in Berlin (2013–14) led to collaborative works with artists in Berlin, for example as an artist contributing to Wilfried Fitzenreiter’s “Drei Mädchen und ein Knabe”: <https://www.fru.ch/bilderfru/body15.jpg> and as a model for the Holy Arrangements: <https://www.verlag-ralf-liebe.de/programm/207/holy-arrangements/> .

www.fru.ch

<https://www.fru.ch/ausstellungen.php> (Exhibitions)

<https://www.fru.ch/werkverzeichnis.pdf> (Works from 2023 onwards)