



## PHILIP MUELLER

Philip Mueller's (b. 1988, Austria) cacophonous, large-scale paintings fill the space with intense colour and form manipulation, revealing narratives that perplex, entertain and entice with references too near to familiarity to ignore.

Mueller's expansive body of work consists of a universe of complex characters; slowly materializing within his large and expressive compositions.

In January 2016, CARBON 12 held Philip Mueller's fourth solo exhibition titled [Dreams in Blue, the Year Philip Mueller didn't Wake up](#), where audiences were first introduced to the **Black Flamingo Sad Boys**, a gang of hedonists populating Mueller's paintings and who were, at the time, living in the Alps. From this moment onwards, these figurations took on a concise direction, and the narration became meticulously clear and precise.

The **BFSBs**, often as written references in some works, are characters that derive from Mueller's daily life and occupations. Some refer to historical or mythological figures, like Chronos or, in older works, Beethoven and Hercules ([Hercules killed Beethoven](#) from 2013). Pop figures such as the Cookie Monster, Fassbinder, Sophia Lauren or Falco, also make appearances throughout the works. Most of the characters are masked by fear of "common people's" envy and jealousy and have been brought into a Neo-Romantic light in the highly painterly works of the artist. In order to be deemed a [BFSB](#), you need a painted leather jacket, and your portrait on a surfboard.

In the summer of 2017, Mueller sent his protagonists on a long and creative vacation Santo Stefano island - an anti-resort beach resort and a former prison-island, inspired by the story of Emperor Tiberius - and went forth to baptize **Beach Resort Tiberio** (**Tibe Beach** or **Tibe** are written references in many works). The characters abandoned their masks, and started to show their flesh, often tattooed in a very recurrent manner and style.

The **Tibe** series began with [smaller portraits](#), with the exception of 2 larger ones which gradually led to what Mueller refers to as [scenic paintings](#); particular situations wherein the narrative is captured and painted almost as a cinematic moment ([Beach resort Tiberio](#), [Summer of no love Torre beach](#), is one of the first references).

Their eternal, futile pursuit for short-lived pleasures paved the way for the sub-series [Autodromo di Castelo d'Oro](#) (The Golden Castle Car Circuit), where Mueller's alter ego **Philis** (the ghost-like character whose first official apparition was in the 2015 painting, [Cafe Ritter](#)), drives legendary 60's, 70's and 80's cars (the first car was a Lancia Delta Integrale from the 80s) in reckless abandon, around an absurd circular circuit.

It is of notable significance that **Philis** (the ghost-looking character), the **gorilla** (appearing in numerous works), and **Chronos** (Mueller's newest character) are the artist's alter egos appearing in the paintings, similar to Alfred Hitchcock's cameos in his own movies.

In the autumn of 2020, Philip Mueller concludes the resort series in [The Last Days of Soft Machine](#). With rich, picturesque imagery and a heavily injected use of saturated color, the paintings convey a stark contrast between grandiose illusions of opulence and their very transience. Consisting of several sweeping panoramic views, the body of work delineates the detrimental culmination of the **BFSBs'** exhaustive lifestyle of excess, in the event of one last great celebration.

Moving forward, his paintings observe the infamous **BFSBs** as they seek new refuge on the Naxos island racetrack. The paintings were made during the artist's stay in the island of Naxos, Greece, and were shown in 2020, at CARBON 12's online exhibition titled [NRT - Sunglasses After Dark](#). Turquoise pools and luscious greenery permeate this series of works, which simultaneously explores these new characters of the **Naxos Racing Team**. They fill and occupy these various spaces with their presence, featuring the spontaneous appearances of figures situated in both Norse and Greek mythology - such as Valkyries and the Minotaur.

In their latest adventure, the BSFB's have found their way to Bomarzo, Italy, where they seek refuge once more in Sacro Bosco (Sacred Woods), which is home to the Garden of Monsters (Parco dei Mostri), a post-High Renaissance sculpture park commissioned by Prince Pier Francesco Orsini in 1552. Mueller has visited the remote town several times where he would reside in a flat located on a hill facing the park. In the flat, there was a bathroom accessible by a set of stairs that had a window overlooking the Garden.

The series, exhibited at DIANA in 2022 and titled [The Garden of Giants](#), are mostly small paintings, mimicking a view from a window overlooking the Garden. Each painting shows the mood of a specific hour of a single day as the BSFB meander in the park. Viewers can indulge in the chaotic scenes that take place and can witness for themselves what happens throughout this day, taken through important stages of the day's feast.