



Jiří Georg Dokoupil & Julian Schnabel  
**Collaboration Paintings**

## In the Beginning There Was a Carpet

In October 2015, I visited the studio of Jiří Georg Dokoupil in Berlin to see his new soap-bubble paintings together with Julian Schnabel. A few days earlier Julian and I had been together at the CFA Gallery, in the neighbourhood of which a flea market took place. Julian had discovered a conspicuous, large-format geometric carpet there, enthusiastic about the idea of using it as a support for painting and since he wanted to make the painting in Berlin, I suggested asking Georg if Julian could do it in his studio. The two knew each other already since the Eighties.

When Julian and I visited Georg in his studio, he was busy on two floors, simultaneously working on various different series of painting concepts. The largest area on the first floor was full of emerging soap-bubble paintings, impressive in their wide variety of colours and formats.

The bubble paintings were all over paintings, paintings consisting of marks that were all the same size that covered the whole panel as a pattern. Julian, questioned: “What would it be like if you did not cover the whole painting with bubbles? And made some larger bubbles that would have their autonomy and sit in the space where you could notice them more and they could be protagonists.” This notion was contradictory to Georg’s idea, which ultimately was against hierarchal notions of composition. Georg said: “Why don’t you show me what you mean?”

*Reiner Opoku*

The next day we returned to his studio to find two white canvases of modest sizes sitting on top of plastic covered pieces of linoleum that was protecting the floor. Julian asked Georg to make two large blue bubbles that went past the edges of the canvas on to the plastic which he did. Then Julian sprayed some lines on the plastic and suggested that the whole thing was the painting. Thus began the collaboration paintings of the two.

No sooner said than done. Immediately the cut-outs of the supports were determined, in order to work on them together. Next paintings appeared that were a material mix of foils, canvases and linoleum floors, covered with unfinished bubbles, color gradients, blobs, footprints and all kinds of markings.

A dynamic process full of intuitive moments began, in which one started something and the other added to it. For two days, the two artists were in a joint, in an almost performative flow of work, in which new possibilities opened up again and again, which were either immediately discarded or pursued further.

The result of this spontaneous and joyous moment; the equal work of both artists on unforeseen collaborative paintings; the respectful dialogue and interaction of the two, during this intensive working phase, made this extraordinary group of paintings, the likes of which I had not seen before.

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## Two Czechoslovakians Walk into a Bar

### Collaboration Paintings

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