

What's new, Bernhard Musil ? Interview by Nadine Dinter

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Nadine Dinter March 4, 2025



I met Bernhard through a mutual friend and was immediately drawn to his energy and images. The fusion of his fashion background with his artistic photo series gives his work a distinct edge. That made me all the more delighted to do this proper recap – enjoy the read!

Nadine Dinter: *Life is Pink* is the title of your latest exhibition, which recently showed in Vienna and is now heading to a new location. Tell us a little about this series.

Bernhard Musil: *Life is Pink* explores the contrast between a color often associated with naivety and kitsch and the complexity of urban spaces. It presents a slightly grotesque world that oscillates between the light and dark sides of human existence. Ranging from the dreary to the sarcastically humorous, *Life is Pink* is a deliberately playful yet multilayered statement.

In the show, we see wide selection of images – brutalist architecture, sexy beards, luscious accessories – all tinted pink. When did you start seeing the world through a pink lens – when did the project begin?

BM: My view has always been guided by a pink radar. The first photo in the selection was taken in Vienna in 2004 – long before *Life is Pink* became a fully formed idea. A few years later, my good friend Nir de Volff staged a dance performance in which all the dancers wore pink and spray-painted the words “Life is Pink” on a wall. Those moments were in the back of my mind as I rode a bus through Montreal in 2011. It was a gray and rainy winter’s day when I passed a trailer park and saw a woman with a neon pink scarf wrapped around her head. I grabbed my camera, captured the moment, and suddenly, everything clicked: *Life is Pink* was born.

You’re not just using pink for visual delight; you’re also brightening perspectives on everyday life. Does pink give you a special energy to fight the gray?

BM: Everyday life can be gray enough, so why not focus on glimpses of color? I see it as a subtle form of resistance to monotony. For me, pink is more than a color; it’s a way of living, an almost childlike refusal to accept the status quo as unchangeable. At first glance,

Life is Pink might seem purely playful, but the series offers more than just escapism. The color initially draws viewers in, but then they are invited to embrace the melancholic beauty of the motif.

Coming from the world of fashion and photography for luxury brands, having worked with renowned industry figures and traveled extensively, how do you balance commercial work with your artistic projects?

BM: Simply put: I'm a commercial whore. I worked in PR and marketing long enough before committing fully to photography. When it's a job, I'm a team player, focused on pleasing my client. Of course, I try to guide them into the Musil universe, but if that's not what they want, I accept it. Over the years I've learned that if I take it personally, the only person who truly suffers is myself. If I want to show my soul through my work, I have other playgrounds. Nevertheless, there are moments when art and commerce align, and that can be a truly magical experience. Working with Manfred Thierry Mugler for Friedrichstadt-Palast, for example, was not only one of those moments but also a huge honor.

You have another series called *Royal Chaos* – tell us about it.

BM: Basically, *Royal Chaos* is double exposure on steroids – up to 30 pictures superimposed on each other. It invites viewers to plunge into a controlled chaos of imagery from seemingly unrelated fields and eras. It functions like a Rorschach test, a matrix for numerous subjective visions. The images offer a composite of individual associations, woven into a multidimensional space of shifting forms and colors. If you want to immerse yourself into this world visit: royal-chaos.com.

What's your approach and creative process when taking photographs? How do you develop ideas and bring them together, as in the series *Life is Pink*?

BM: My approach and process depend greatly on what I'm photographing. In commercial work, I focus on understanding what's required and delivering the best possible results. In staged photography, such as fashion editorials or portraits, I prefer to be well-prepared and focused while creating a strong vision with my team. Still, I try to avoid being too rigid, allowing spontaneous ideas to add a bit of spice to the production.

In projects like *Life is Pink*, on the other hand, I just want to be free. Sure, there is a general concept guiding my choice of motifs, but the main emphasis is on having fun with it. The motto here is: capture strong moments first – the rest will come together later, once you are in front of the computer inspired by good music and maybe some wine.

You divide your time between Berlin and Vienna. Which places in each city inspire you most as a photographer?

BM: I love to stroll through cities – especially at night – and observe their beauty and harshness. It's hard to pick specific favorite spots because, for me, inspiration comes from a city's soul and its people. Vienna and Berlin evoke very different emotions in me. Vienna feels romantic, laid-back, and constantly chasing the beauty of the past. Berlin, in contrast, feels vibrant, restlessly changing, and quite brutal at times. Berlin is like techno dancing on a volcano, destroying and renewing itself in the process, whereas Vienna waltzes through a graveyard of lost grandeur.

Do you work alone, or do you collaborate with a team in a studio? And what camera are you using lately?

BM: It depends on the project. For fashion, beauty, or portraits, I am only as strong as my team. In these fields, interesting work needs the support of a talented model and trusted experts – stylists, makeup artists, etc. When it comes to art projects, it's a different story. In projects like *Life is Pink* or *Royal Chaos*, it's just me and my intuition. It's a liberating yet daunting process. At times, I imagine myself as a lone wolf – a hunter stalking its next image.

What's your advice for the next generation of art photographers?

BM: Never listen to the voices – internal or external – telling you to be “realistic” or saying “no.” Let your passion guide you; it will pave your way to fulfillment. As my mentor once told me: Don't overthink it. You'll feel when it's right!

For more information, check out the artist's IG account [@bmusil](https://www.instagram.com/bmusil) and visit his website at www.be-musil.com.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Life is Pink debuted at Galerie Soldo in Vienna from January 31 to February 27, 2025. It's next stop is Berlin Design Week in May. *Royal Chaos* returns to Vienna at k47.wien in fall 2025.

