



English version of the interview on Ra2ed.com by Ghiwa Mattar

How can you describe your design experience with Audi, VW, Seat, Lamborghini and Bentley.

Markus Haub: That was an exciting time. I just finished my studies in Germany and started my first job in 1997 at Design Center Europe in Sitges near Barcelona/Spain. I knew most of the team already from internships I did there in summer '95 and '96. The studio was originally opened in spring 1995 and designed as a Volkswagen company studio for the brands VW, Audi and Seat. At that time Audi just presented the production TT and the new A6. Real Design icons. We worked on all kinds of projects, production cars or concepts (Seat Bolero and Formula), Golf, Bora, Audi A3 or A8, Seat Ibiza, also corporate identity and logos (for Seat). Later- in 1998, when Volkswagen group bought Bentley and Lamborghini- we also developed successors for the Arnage, Continental R or Diablo. It was interesting to work in parallel for different brands and our objective was also to differentiate them. At the time we were the only ones doing that in the company, today almost all brand studios can work for sister companies. In Seat they design Lamborghinis or in Potsdam they do Porsches. We had lot of room to propose new things. Unfortunately the political situation between the “motherstudios” and us was not very good. So many projects just went nowhere.

It was a dream studio, but the organization was bad. Deadlines or presentation dates were often changed. Hartmut Warkus was design director of the group at the time. He had a house in Mallorca and so he was stopping over in Barcelona and popped in the studio randomly. We never knew exactly when he was coming. Later in Renault I realized how well organized a design organization can be. The French were so much more German in that respect! Anyway the best thing was to have met there fantastic colleagues, designers and friends from all over the world like Toby Gilles, Jean-Pierre Ploué, Alexandre Malval, Davide Arcangeli, Fabio Filippini, Michael Ani, Chris Daniels or Raphael Zammit. I learned a lot from them. Not only design wise! There I also met Ulfert Janssen, worked later with him in Renault for many years and founded the Speedstar-Gallery with him some time later.

How did your job as a designer at Renault affect your artist side?

The move to Renault was a totally new step in my life. First, because it was a different brand and a new challenge which I needed at that time. Second because the design studio was right in the center of Barcelona and I found a big old apartment in the same street, where I had enough room to do “other things”. I felt very inspired by the flow of the city, the architecture, the light, the people and the nightlife and actually still live in that same place today. And third, because it was the year 2000 and somehow the digital age was just starting (or just reached me). At Volkswagen I already learned how to use photoshop, but in Renault everybody had his own computer, wacom-drawing board and also to build the models we were using computers a lot more. In the evenings I could use the equipment or printers to explore my digital-collage working technique. At home then I played with paint and varnish. I felt the necessity to do something outside of my work as a designer as a counterbalance. Something more free...No function, no purpose, just beauty. In 2001 I did my first exhibition in a friend's place (the legendary ‘Atmosfer Night’ in Chris apartment), later the second one in a small bar in Barcelona (SODA). Unfortunately it does not exist anymore.

Who do you prefer “Markus the designer” or “Markus the artist”?

Both are fine. Depending on what facet of myself we are talking about. Although I work a lot more as artist now, I would still consider me as both. I don't have a very profound artistic education, it all just happened somehow. My roots as a designer are much deeper.

Tell us more about your paintings project “Racing Legends”?

I started the series officially in 2008, although I was doing already a series of paintings based on the movie “Le Mans” with Steve McQueen in 2007. My friend Oriol Vilanova gave me the opportunity to exhibit a large number of paintings in the showroom of his company GentlemenDrive, which is a private sports car Club a bit outside of Barcelona. The year later the exhibition was shown at Meilenwerk (today Classic Remise) in Düsseldorf/Germany and then at the Cité de l'Automobile Collection Schlumpf, the national french car museum and one of the biggest car collections in the World. I still continue the series, which now contains almost 500 pieces. Most of them are sold.

Why did you choose to paint racing cars from the 60s and 70s?

In the last years I went to more and more classic car events all over Europe and see all the beauties and can always discover new models, which I have never seen before. I just love the shape of them in that time. Cars like the Ford GT40, Ferrari 250, Porsche 911, 908 or 917. The list is endless. It's also the time, when the first sponsor stickers or specially painted cars appeared on the race circuits. Very simple but beautiful graphics, Gulf or Martini Racing cars are legendary.

As a Photographer you chose to paint actual Photos using collage as a technique, what drew you to this medium?

As an artist I need something to start with. Not a white canvas. I like to take photos as a base. But I also want to add something to it to make it unique. That's the process, which I apply. Digitally and manually I transform the original photo, almost destroy it and then turn it into a piece of art. The surface is not just flat, it has a deepness and structure, because of the thick varnish, paint and scars from

cutting and scratching. I don't only paint cars, also cities like New York, Paris or Barcelona. My very first paintings actually were based on images of the movie "The Fifth Element" with Milla Jovovich. I just wanted to freeze the sequence and show the beauty in it. Later I did a large series of the movie "The Million Dollar Hotel", also with MJ.

If you had to choose between designing cars and painting them which one do you prefer?

Designing cars was for me always fun in the first stage of free sketching and no big restrictions. Later you have to make it work in 3D and make compromises with engineers or other parties involved. Its actually hard work and can take several months or longer. You need a long breath to not lose the original theme or idea. Painting is just easy because there are no requirements, unless I do a custom work for a client. Today I prefer painting!

Which era of car's designing do you prefer especially from an artist point of view?

I really like the 70s. The concepts or production cars Marcello Gandini did for Bertone (Lamborghini Countach or Bravo, Lancia Stratos Zero). Or Giorgio Giugiaros Maserati Bomerang from 1972, with its wedge shape and extreme straight lines, Maserati Bora or Lotus Esprit. The radical Pininfarina Ferrari Modulo or the fantastic and absolutely stunning Fiat Abarth 2000 Scorpione, which I saw (and heard) recently at the Concorso d'Eleganza at Villa d'Este in Italy. It seemed like there where no limits and everything was possible. They are more sculptures than cars! Funnily enough I have almost done no paintings of these models. Maybe they are just too radical for what I am doing.

<http://speedstar-gallery.com>