



Lothar Romain
Peter Basseler

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Peter Basseler, who lives in Berlin and Chicago, stands alone in the contemporary art landscape. The small-scale showcases, produced by a time-consuming process (sometimes taking over a year) since 1970, cannot be allotted to any particular trend. They have nothing in common with the Modern movement's object cases, they are not assembled from found items, not »ready mades«, but have their roots in pre-Modernism – if anywhere.

There is nothing prefabricated in Basseler's showcases: everything has to be designed and made for a particular scenario, right down to the smallest detail. The thumb-high figures' gestures and facial expressions are central to the effect of the scene as a whole, and fascinating in their psychological refinement and their craftsmanship.

The dioramas are modern fairy-tales from a world that hovers between reality and fiction, beyond all places, times and norms. Sober observation of reality are refracted through visionary imaginative images, each one sliding into the next. Every scene is a moment that persists and is stretched to last within a fusion process of this kind.

Basseler's work is outstanding in its unusually rich intensity, which has a magnetic effect on many observers and brings higher-than-average numbers of visitors to Basseler's exhibitions.

Basseler has been awarded major art prizes. In 1984 he got a scholarship to the Deutsche Akademie Villa Massimo in Rome. In 1987 he won the Lower Saxony Art Scholarship.

Lothar Romain studied German, art history and theatre. He started his career as a television editor for the Südwestfunk and the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, then became arts editor of *Vorwärts*, and finally chief editor at the Carl Hanser Verlag. He was professor of art history at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich before becoming president of the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin in 1996. Romain's publications include *Über Beuys* and *Positionen – Malerei aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. He was a member of the *documenta* committee in 1977 and 1987.

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