

VERZAUBERT – *proud to be proud*

On occasion of the Berlin Pride Weeks with works by Pancho Assoluto, Rick Castro, Andreas Fux, Florian Hetz, Norbert Heuler, Jan-Holger Mauss, Male Shibari, Thomas Synnamon, Stefan Thiel and Elmar Vestner

July 18 – August 1, 2026

Opening: Friday, July 17, 7 – 9.30 pm

CSD Special Opening Hours: July 26, 2 – 5 pm

The news is overflowing with reports of current despots who want to turn back the wheel of history and are working to shape a vision of humanity that is “good enough” to serve their own interests—and on their own terms, no less.

The achievements of democratic societies—guaranteeing the sanctity of human life and protecting the autonomy of every individual—have been brutally shattered. Recently, the very concept of “citizen” has once again become a subject of contention. Who is a citizen, and who is allowed to be one? The authority to define these terms is claimed by those in power who seek to dictate the composition of “their” society. Diversity is a thorn in their side. It does not sit well with them that the rights—asserted with self-confidence and fought for over decades (actually centuries)—of a wide variety of social groups paint a picture of a contemporary, diverse population.

The color palette is to be white, heterosexual, and, of course, male once again.

To mark Berlin Pride Weeks, Semjon Contemporary is opening its gallery to artists whose work explores their love for men and their desire for them. Here, too, the world is colorful.

Semjon H. N. Semjon, Juli 2026

The term “verzaubert” (enchanted) was used, particularly during the years of the German economic miracle, as a synonym for male-male love. It was only through the struggle for recognition, freedom from criminal prosecution, and equal civil rights that the negatively connoted term “schwul” (gay) was confidently turned on its head.

However, “enchanted” can also describe a state of being—here in a photograph—perhaps captured by a camera or generated by a photographer using AI. Ambiguous.