

Andre Butzer at Carbon 12

[Anna Seaman](#)

March 25, 2014

When Andre Butzer started painting, he had a "utopian" idea that painting was derived from a place in outer space and would help painters with a "kind of heavenly advice". So he created a fictional place called Nasaheim; a combination of Anaheim and NASA, that could also be described as an outer space Disneyland.=

The symbol for this place is the letter N and the N-paintings are what make up the bulk of his current show at Carbon 12 gallery this month.

The paintings, he explains, are intended to represent the barrier or threshold between the physical life and the heavenly world that he has imagined.

"The threshold situation is maybe what painting consists of as a spatial organisation, because it is not a space, it is a field that has the characteristics of a threshold so the N-paintings try to be that threshold."

Black and white paintings, which form the same N-shape populate all the walls but look closely and the seemingly straight lines are not so.

"They look geometric but they are not," Butzer says. "They are not about measuring worlds, a process that is done with a ruler because painting it is not about measuring the world it is about measuring heaven."

Butzer is a German artist who has reached prominence with exhibitions all over the world and is presented in Dubai in collaboration with Galerie Max Hetzler in Berlin.

This is his second show with Carbon 12 and he explains that he has been working for his entire 20-year career to reach the ability to express his ideas in such a distilled fashion.

"It was a long preparation for this. It became more and more about finding the beginning of painting, looking for the foundation of what I do. It was a declining process in order to find the essential parts. That is when I think creation starts."

So why do all his paintings look the same?

"Variation introduces an element of choice, which is something the threshold does not have. It either is or it is not and nothing is not so good."

And what about the cartoon-like figures that he is known for and of whom we see a couple in the exhibition?

"They too are fields and not characters," he says. "Maybe they are trying to communicate the revelation of having seen the light from beyond the threshold."

Honestly, we left Carbon 12 feeling a bit bemused by Butzer's conceptual world of painterly heaven but we have to give him credit for presentation of his idea. There is a lot to be said for going out on a limb and expressing something as intangible as the space between the physical and the transcendental world.