

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEORG KARL PFAHLER



13 APRIL – 21 MAY 2022

PRIVATE VIEW: TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2022, 6-8PM

SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to announce German painter Georg Karl Pfahler's inaugural presentation in London, a comprehensive survey of defining works from throughout the artist's career. The exhibition showcases a collection of paintings and works on paper that celebrate the legacy of Germany's first Hard Edge painter.

Pfahler developed his mature style in 1958 with his first series, *Formativ*. However, it was not until 1962 that Pfahler began incorporating his signature block-like forms alongside crisply defined areas of colour that embody his first Hard Edge paintings. These features epitomise his subsequent series, including *Metro*, *West-Ost-Transit*, *Espan* and *Fra Firenze*, all represented in this exhibition.

In 1963 Pfahler developed a new form of painting which was to be binding on him through the 1960s and 1970s. The artist gave primacy to colour over form, he advocated the autonomy of colour and championed the physical quality of paint. In 1968 he declared 'Colour has a value of its own, colour is weight, colour is quality, colour possesses an inherent limitation, of itself, through itself, through other colours, colour creates space, colour is form and space'.

The colour forms rounded at the edges so typical of Pfahler's work appeared in 1963 for the first time. By dissolving the edge out, his paintings acquired a sensual presence. The *Metro* paintings saw the artist manipulate his medium to construct compositions that have more in common with architecture than traditional painting. Pfahler projected architectural space onto his monumental canvases using pure colour as building blocks, resulting in enthralling spatial explorations of line and colour. In his *West-Ost-Transit* series, he similarly constructs compositions of colour in which a pictorial space opens both to the front and back.

12 BERKELEY STREET
LONDON W1J 8DT
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

SIMON LEE GALLERY LTD
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND 4316341
GB 788 061 692

From 1975, Pfahler's works presented a deep departure in colour and form from his previous series. His paintings acquired a new direction maintained through the 1980s and into the early 1990s. The bright luminosity of his earlier paintings was replaced by a more subdued duotone structure, as seen in his *Espan* and *Fra Firenze* series. These works became increasingly dynamic, as he introduced sweeping blocks of coloured shapes set against minimalistic black or white backgrounds. In these paintings vibrant hues jostle against one another, in combat for compositional dominance. Pfahler dedicated his entire career to the investigation of the relationship between colour, shape and space until his death at the age of 76.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Georg Karl Pfahler

Georg Karl Pfahler was born in Emetzheim, Germany in 1926 and died in 2002. He studied at the Kunstakademie Stuttgart under Willi Baumeister, graduating in 1954. Pfahler raised to prominence in the early 1960s as one of the first hard-edge painters in Europe. In 1965 he was included in the seminal group exhibition *Signale* at the Kunsthalle Basel. He represented Germany at the Venice Biennale in 1970 alongside Günther Uecker, Heinz Mack, and Thomas Lenk; and at the São Paulo Biennale in 1981. Other notable solo exhibitions include a major retrospective at Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, Germany (2001) which travelled to Von Der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany (2002); Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany (1990); Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland (1988) which travelled to multiple institutions in Poland; Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany (1985) and Kunsthaus Zug, Zug, Switzerland (1979). His work is represented in major institutions and private collections including: Städel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, Germany; Bundestag, Berlin, Germany; Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nürnberg, Germany; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany; Folkswang Museum, Essen, Germany and Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany.

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery
www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Georg Karl Pfahler, *Ost-West Transit Nr. XVI, 1969-1970*. Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 200 x 5 cm (78 3/4 x 78 3/4 x 2 in.) Courtesy of the estate of Georg Karl Pfahler and Simon Lee Gallery. © Georg Karl Pfahler Archive.

For further press information, images and requests please contact Zoe Gorell: zoe@simonleegallery.com / +44 (0) 207 491 0100.

12 BERKELEY STREET
LONDON W1J 8DT
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

SIMON LEE GALLERY LTD
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND 4316341
GB 788 061 692