

Reinhard Mucha

Kasse beim Fahrer

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Sprüth Magers, Berlin

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Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are pleased to announce Reinhard Mucha's exhibition **Kasse beim Fahrer** at the Berlin gallery, where Mucha's eponymous, spacious installation **Kasse beim Fahrer 0.2**, [2022] 1987 (**Buy Ticket from Driver 0.2**) not only transforms the space into a fairground, but also addresses the core topic of exhibiting and displaying in a special way.

The carousel-like main attraction rises in the center of the gallery space: The lights are on, the ride starts, and the carousel turns – or so it seems due to the circular and dynamically staggered arrangement of chairs. The freestanding installation appears as a unit rotating in itself – yet always firmly anchored to the wall by its own reflection in the accompanying wall piece: a felt-covered cube with a glass pane in front.

The counterpart to this “wall anchor” (Mucha) is the two-part work ensemble on the opposite wall – **Die Deutsche Frage / Dornap**, Für Philip Nelson (**The German Question / Dornap**, For Philip Nelson) from 2007 – consisting of a wall-mounted and freestanding display case in which not only the visitors themselves but also the carousel is reflected, thus making viewers and the space an elementary part of the work. Also on a formal-aesthetic level, both – the carousel and the work ensemble – form a strong connection. The dark red of the tabletops is echoed in the reverse glass painting and the Balatum flooring of the wall-mounted display case, while the suitcase locks in the freestanding display case serve as the formal counterpart to the drawer keys of the carousel.

Reinhard Mucha draws from life. His raw materials are everyday utilitarian objects – ladders, tables, chairs, fluorescent lamps, barrier cords, or adhesive tape – which, assembled with great precision, turn into something new without denying the origins and original pragmatism of the various objects. The focus here is on the concrete, sensually tangible things of everyday life – unambiguously recognizable for what they are – as a clear contrast to Joseph Beuys's mythologically charged cosmos of materials.

Through this clarity in the disclosure of individual components, Mucha adds narrative elements to the work and thus goes beyond the claim of Minimalism, which is determined solely by form and material. He is familiar with the language of Minimalism when he uses industrial objects or combines tabletops, ladders, and chairs in an additive way, but he intuitively translates this legacy of minimal art and its material content into a representation of individual experience and puts this on display.¹

The vibrancy of Mucha's works is derived from finely balanced contrasts: dynamic and standstill, precise craftsmanship and apparent improvisation, disclosure and concealment, lightness and seriousness. He intriguingly turns ordinary objects into part of the spectacle – a meeting place, a freely accessible site of entertainment in public space. With his 'fairground attraction,' Mucha thus not least of all questions the mechanisms of the art industry, as well as the role of the institution, reflecting on the relationship of the artwork to the art system.

The conditions of exhibiting itself become a subject, pedestals, lighting, and barrier ropes incorporated into the work. Here, objects that otherwise present and stage art are an integral part of the artwork – the actual material. In this context, Mucha's characteristic display cases embody both the exhibited object and the presentation apparatus; object and display case are inseparable, seem to be one.

Mucha's works refer to contemporary history, to art history, to his personal history, to previous works, to itself. The carousel is a reconstruction of the work **Kasse beim Fahrer** from 1987, which was on view at the Kunsthalle Basel that same year. The exhibition poster from that time is presented in the first room of the exhibition as part of the **BBK-SL-KNY-Edition**, 1990, 1999, while the poster for the current exhibition hangs in the gallery space next to **Kasse beim Fahrer 0.2**. Each exhibition situation adds a new level to the work and transforms it once more. A permanent system of reflection is created, in which art and life repeatedly intertwine. That which has fixed forms is nevertheless permanently in the flow of time as part of history.

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Since his beginnings at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in the 1970s, Reinhard Mucha has put the possibilities of art to the test. What is sculpture, and what can it achieve?² How does it function in the complex process of being presented and at the same time of constantly presenting? The unique, poetic condensation of the elusive 'memory' of these great themes lends his work an omnipresent aura and makes Mucha one of the most influential German sculptors and conceptual artists of his generation.

Reinhard Mucha (b. 1950 in Düsseldorf) lives in Düsseldorf. Since September 2022, a comprehensive survey exhibition of his work has been on view at K20 and K21, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Other solo exhibitions include those at Kunstmuseum Basel (2016), ifa-Galerie Friedrichstraße, Berlin (1996), Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld (1990), Kunsthalle Basel and Kunsthalle Bern (1987), Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris (1986), Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (1985), and Kabinett für aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven (1983). He participated in documenta IX and documenta X (1992 and 1997) and represented Germany at the 44th Biennale di Venezia (1990), together with Bernd und Hilla Becher.

¹ See: Jens Bülskämper, "In Düsseldorf baut REINHARD MUCHA sein System immer weiter aus", in: *Monopol*, no. 10, 2022, p. 114.

² See: Susanne Gaensheimer, "Preface," in: *Der Mucha – Ein Anfangsverdacht / An Initial Suspicion* ed. idem and Falk Wolf, exh. cat. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2022), p. 7.

For further information and press inquiries, please contact Felix Lorenz-Wohnhas (felix@spruethmagers.com).