

**Günther Förg, Katharina Grosse, Hans Hartung,  
Georg Herold, Albert Oehlen, Sean Scully,  
Thomas Struth**

*The Code Factory*

Works from the Eighties and Nineties

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785 Berlin

23 February – 6 April 2024

Opening: Friday, 23 February, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *The Code Factory*, a group exhibition of works from the Eighties and Nineties by **Günther Förg, Katharina Grosse, Hans Hartung, Georg Herold, Albert Oehlen, Sean Scully** and **Thomas Struth** at Potsdamer Straße 77-87, in Berlin.

Titled *The Code Factory* by Georg Herold, the exhibition takes into consideration aspects present in the art of the last two decades of the 20th century: a fascination with social and political codes, mirrored by the advance of innovative technologies into everyday life and expressed in linguistic idiosyncrasies across all media of art.

Three works featuring bricks on canvas, from 1984 and 1985, represent Georg Herold's (b. 1947) contribution to the exhibition. Herold's use of language and material came from his preoccupation with what he described in 1986 as the 'way in which ideas become material'. In the 1970s and 1980s, the artist developed a body of work using materials such as roof battens, bricks, strings, neon tubes, wire, cardboard and caviare, employed to create constellations in which absurdity, irony and a precise measurement of reality were balanced. The deliberately incidental character of the works reflects a fundamental artistic conviction that process and calculated incompleteness serve as strategies against the myth of perfection and the concept of the masterpiece.

Three works by Albert Oehlen (b. 1954) play with similar themes. In *James Blood Ulmer II*, 1981, the subject of a lawnmower seems arbitrarily chosen, undermining notions of beauty, seriousness and conventional virtuosity. The title refers to the legendary Jazz musician and composer James Blood Ulmer, in a comically incongruous allusion to his musical genius. In *Ameisen*, 1982, a large canvas depicting several ants provides an unexpected view of the small and rather trivial creatures, depicted from a large-scale zoomed-in perspective, the effect of which is at once disconcerting and humorous. Finally, *M's Arm*, 1986, a painting on a monumental scale, presents the arm of Martin (Kippenberger), as part of an ongoing mutual inspiration and respect between the two artists.

Visual codes and associations are taken on in quite another approach in the three large photographs by Thomas Struth (b. 1954). Since the



Albert Oehlen, *M's Arm*, 1986  
Photo: def image

1980s, Struth had engaged very intensely with Chinese culture, undertaking several trips to the country. It was there that the street scene *Chong Wen Meng Dong, Beijing 1996*, 1996, and the two forest pictures, *Paradise 10, Xi Shuang Banner, Prov. Yunnan, China 1999*, and *Paradise 11, Xi Shuang Banner, Prov. Yunnan, China 1999*, both 1999, were photographed. While the former is reminiscent of his street scenes in composition and approach, the works from the Paradise group highlight questions around the environment, human interference, and ever-growing threats to the natural world, of increasing urgency since the 1990s.

Spanning different generations, two early *Untitled* works by Katharina Grosse (b. 1961), from 1999, are presented alongside two late works by Hans Hartung (1904–1989), from 1988 and 1989. Grosse's paintings are, at this point in her practice, contained within the borders of the work. They bear closer resemblance to Abstract Expressionism or Colour Field Painting than many of her later works, in which the painterly movement often extends beyond the confines of the canvas. Hans Hartung's works *T-1988-K44*, 1988, and *T1989-U19*, 1989, present loosely applied clouds of colour which allow the paint to react to movement and gravity, as if anticipating the younger painter's famed technique.

The paintings *Heat*, 1984, and *Empty Heart*, 1987, by Sean Scully (b. 1945) are strictly structured, divided into a grid-like pattern of stripes, bars and fields of colour that contrast, interpenetrate or overlap. At the same time, the tactile quality of his paintings captivates the viewer. The almost sculptural appearance of the works opens up into the room, reinforced by the combination of multiple canvases of varying sizes and depths into a single work, as in *Heat* in this exhibition.

Three sculptures by Günther Förg (1952–2013), *Untitled (Torso 1)*, *Untitled (Torso 4)* and *Untitled (Torso 6)*, from 1989 and 1990, fill the centre of the space. Förg had expanded his practice to sculpture in the mid-1980s, which once again reflected his desire to play with surfaces. His torsos are originally sculpted by hand, then cast in bronze, allowing him to expressively shape the material. The result is a relief-like, fissured surface in which the artist's 'handwriting' leaves its mark.

The works in the exhibition illustrate the longevity of artistic concerns which keep reappearing in the painting, sculpture and photography of these seven gallery artists across nearly three generations.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

19 January – 24 February 2024

**Günther Förg**

*Häuser und Fenster*

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

19 January – 2 March 2024

**Jake Longstreth**

*American Heat*

Goethestraße 2-3, 10623

19 January – 2 March 2024

**Jake Longstreth**

*Springtime at the Scottsdale, Arizona Walmart*

Bleibtreustraße 15/16, 10623

7 March – 13 April 2024

**Barry Flanagan**

*Sculpture is always going on*

Bleibtreustraße 45 & 15/16, 10623

7 March – 28 April 2024

**Tal R**

*Rosa See*

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

Paris:

2 March – 6 April 2024

**On Paper**

Giulia Andreani, Louise Bonnet, André Butzer, Carroll Dunham, Ida Ekblad, Barry Flanagan, Günther Förg, Katharina Grosse, Mark Grotjahn, Jake Longstreth, Victor Man, Danielle Mckinney, Albert Oehlen, Adam Pendleton, Richard Prince, Eleanor Swordy, Tursic & Mille, Rinus Van de Velde, Grace Weaver  
46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

London:

27 February – 13 April 2024

**Adam Pendleton**

*These Gestures Towards You*

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

9 May – 8 December 2024

**Katharina Grosse**

1976 Antelope Hills Road

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