

Mark Grotjahn

Kitchens

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785 Berlin

25 April – 8 June 2024

Opening: Thursday, 25 April, 6 – 8 pm

Artist Talk: Thursday, 25 April, 5 pm

'In Conversation: Mark Grotjahn with Klaus Biesenbach'

Neue Nationalgalerie, Potsdamer Straße 50, 10785 Berlin

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *Kitchens*, an exhibition of large-scale butterfly drawings by **Mark Grotjahn**, and the artist's inaugural solo presentation with the gallery, at Potsdamer Straße 77-87, in Berlin.

Over the course of three decades, Mark Grotjahn has produced a diverse oeuvre which pushes the boundaries of visual language. Encompassing painting, drawing and sculpture, his multimedia practice foregrounds the tensions and intersections between the abstract and figurative divide. The artist works in distinctive series with a meticulous, almost obsessive drive. Treading the line between geometry and gesture, Grotjahn has developed a unique pictorial lexicon that is at once idiosyncratic and continually evolving. Since his initial 'Sign Exchange' project in the 1990s, alongside other significant bodies of work, the artist has gone on to create his renowned and ongoing series of 'Butterfly' drawings, with '50 Kitchens' – first shown at LACMA in 2018 – amongst them. Comprising angular motifs, a capricious sense of symmetry, reductive forms and a vibrant palette, Grotjahn seeks to challenge and upturn the hermetic structures of artistic production.

The 'Kitchen Drawings' originate from the 'Butterfly' compositions, which Grotjahn has made since 2001. Conceived as one work, the series originated from a single composition created to hang in Grotjahn's kitchen in his home. With the first drawn in black and cream pencil on a sheet of paper, the subsequent works in the series followed on from one another in chromatic pairs. Some of these are more tonal, while others explore radiating, almost complementary colours. Hung precisely to the artist's specifications, they form a prismatic display. While the individual works are reminiscent of Op art painters, they invite movement from the viewer, more in line with the Kinetic artists of the 1970s. Impossible to view as a whole at any given moment, the works appear to shift and change, pulsating beneath the viewer's gaze. Resulting in multiple points of view through space, as well as in motion, the different serial elements play off one another. In addition to movement, both light and the differing hues which result from the sun's changing intensity play an important role. In this way, the work is as much comprised of the paper and coloured pencils from which the independent drawings are executed, as the viewer's own temporal and wavering perception.



This time-based element corresponds to the succession in which Grotjahn's individual compositions are made: drawn one on top of the other on the artist's table, each new drawing seamlessly incorporates residual traces from earlier works. Michael Govan, director of the LACMA, likens this sense of flow to 'the residue of our life events of one year, [which] may become the ground of the next. The color of each one of our years is distinctive but somehow related to one another in ways that aren't systematic even though our day to day rituals may be repetitive. The small unexpected interruptions, messy bits, and mistakes of our lives remain inscribed in our memory. We draw around them to fill in a picture of our experience.'¹

Colour, form, space, movement and time thus combine to form force-fields which are not unlike the polyphony of music. Tension fields and quiet movements supersede one another as the viewer turns to look at the successive drawings in the exhibition space.

Mark Grotjahn (*1968, Pasadena California) lives and works in Los Angeles. The artist's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in institutions including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2018); Casa Malaparte, Capri (2016); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; Kunstverein Freiburg (both 2014); Aspen Art Museum (2012); Portland Art Museum (2010); Kunstmuseum Thun (2007); The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2006); and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2005). Grotjahn's works are in the collections of The Broad, Los Angeles; Cleveland Museum of Art; de la Cruz Collection, Miami; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate, London; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

¹ M. Govan, *50 Kitchens*, Los Angeles: Mark Grotjahn Studio, 2024.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

7 March – 28 April 2024

Tal R

Rose See

Goethestraße 2-3, 10623

19 April – 1 June 2024

Sean Scully

Dark Yet

Bleibtreustraße 45 & 15/16, 10623

3 May – 1 June 2024

Tursic & Mille

Stains, Stars and other Catastrophes

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

Paris:

13 April – 25 May 2024

Ida Ekblad

STRANGE FREEDOMS

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

London:

23 April – 25 May 2024

Instinctive Gestures

Ida Ekblad, Jeff Elrod, Katharina Grosse, Mark Grotjahn,

Hans Hartung

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

9 May – 8 December 2024

Katharina Grosse

The Super Eight

1976 Antelope Hills Road

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