

Esther Schipper

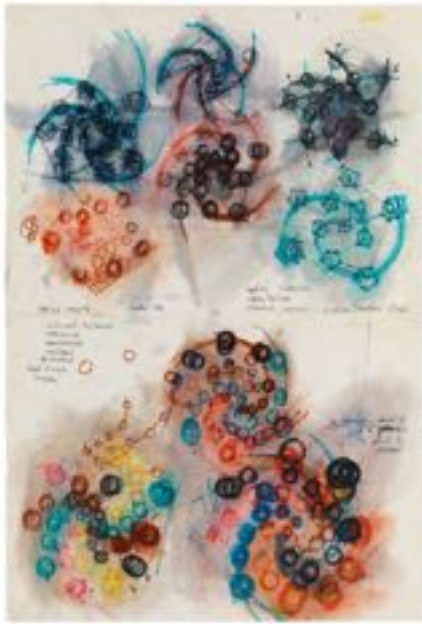
Stefan Bertalan (1930–2014)

Major works

A proposal by Bernard Blistène

Esther Schipper, Paris

March 21 – May 10, 2025



Stefan Bertalan, **Untitled**, 1976, felt-tip pen, pencil and ball pen on paper, 65 x 46 cm (25 5/8 x 18 1/8 in) (unframed), 70 x 51 x 4 cm (27 1/2 x 20 1/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed). Photo © Jens Ziehe

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition in Paris of Stefan Bertalan (1930-2014), conceived for the occasion by Bernard Blistène, Honorary Director of the Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris. The exhibition presents an exceptional group of thirty works on paper by the artist, as well as photographic works, covering most of his activity and highlighting the great diversity of Bertalan's practice over several decades.

A key figure in the Romanian neo-constructivist avant-garde of the late 1950s and 1960s, Bertalan co-founded Groupe 111 in 1965 with Roman Cotosman and Constantin Flondor, the first experimental collective in communist Romania. This was soon followed by the famous interdisciplinary group Sigma (1969-1980), which he co-founded with Constantin Flondor and Doru Tulcan, and which brought together artists, thinkers and researchers from a variety of disciplines.

From the 1970s until his death in 2014, Stefan Bertalan's research into cybernetics and system theory informed his search for overarching patterns and systems in natural forms. Close observation of organic processes and systematic studies of shapes found in organic, vegetal, and mineral forms eventually led to the artist's development of an interconnected cosmology of all things.

Lastly, Bertalan's role as a teacher and his research into cinesthetics, in which his relationship with music and its many interpreters are intertwined, accompanied him in the last years of his life. This work, which has not yet gained wide recognition, possesses a pioneering dimension whose impact remains to be rediscovered.

A major Stefan Bertalan retrospective, with around two hundred paintings, drawings, photographs and archives from public and private collections, conceived by Bernard Blistène for the Art Encounters Foundation, will take place at the Isho Centre in Timisoara (Romania) from April 3 to June 29, 2025, followed by a presentation at the Bucharest Museum of Contemporary Art at the end of 2025, and a European tour.

Biographical details:

Stefan Bertalan was born in 1930 in the village of Răcăștie (Hunedoara County, Transylvania) and died in 2014 in Timisoara. From 1956 to 1962 he studied at the Ion Andreescu Academy of Fine Arts in Cluj-Napoca, from which he graduated, before being appointed professor at the Timisoara School of Fine Arts in 1962. From 1970 to 1981 he taught at the Polytechnic Institute within the Faculty of Architecture in the same city, which he left to emigrate to Öhringen, near Stuttgart, in Germany, until 2012, but from 1990 he returned regularly to Timisoara, his favorite humanist and intellectual city, where he died in 2014.

A comprehensive catalogue, with essays and archival materials, is forthcoming to coincide with the future institutional exhibitions of the artist's work.

Previous publications include:

Ileana Pintilie, **Stefan Bertalan, Drumuri la răscruce / A la croisée de chemins / Crossroads**, with a critical anthology by Georg Lecca, Timisoara, Fundatia Triade, 2010.

Stefan Bertalan, **Măscăriciul emigrant, Der verbannte Hofnarr / Az emigráns bohóc / The Emigrant Clown / Le pitre émigrant**, Galeria Quadro & Esther Schipper, Cluj, Klausenburg, Kolozsvár, 2011.

Ileana Pintilie, **Stefan Bertalan, Überlagerungen / Suprapuneri / Overlappings / Superpositions, Fotografie experimentală din anii 1970-1980 / Photographie expérimentale des années 1970-1980 / Experimental photography from the 1970-1980s**, Timisoara, 2015.

Erwin Kessler, **Stefan Bertalan, inner emigration / emigrarea interioară / le migrant de l'intérieur**, Bucharest, Editura Vellant & Esther Schipper, 2016.

Victor Neumann, **Stefan Bertalan, Timisoara and the avant-garde of European art**, catalogue, Timisoara Art Museum, 2016.

His institutional exhibitions include:

Ștefan Bertalan, Cornel Brudașcu, Mircea Spătaru, Museum of Art, Chisinau (2024); **Changes**, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (2022) ; **Parlament der Pflanzen**, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Liechtenstein (2020) ; **La Brique, The Brick, Cărămidă**, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, Mulhouse (2019); **The Encyclopedic Palace** – La Biennale di Venezia designed by Massimiliano Gioni, Venice; **Ștefan Bertalan**, Muzeul de Artă, Timisoara (2012); La Biennale di Venezia, the Romanian pavilion, Venice (1995); **Derjenige, der sich selber bestraft**, Bucarest, Timisoara, Cluj-Napoca (2009); **Drumuri la răscruce/ A la croisée de chemins / Crossroads**, Galeria ArTe, Bucharest (2005); **Autoportretul an arta contemporană românească**, Muzeul de Artă, Timisoara (2001); **Creation and European Synchronism. Timișoara's Artistic Movement of the 1960s and 1970s**, Muzeul de Artă, Timișoara (1991-92); Architekturgalerie am Weissenhof, Heilbronn (1990); **I lived with a sunflower plant for 130 days**, Kalinderu Hall, Institute for Architecture, Bucharest (1979).

Museum collections: Centre Pompidou, Paris; mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; MARE/Muzeul de Artă Recentă, Bucarest.

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The exhibition:

Stefan Bertalan's work is multifaceted and fundamentally experimental, with a considerable body of extremely rich experimentation. The exhibition brings together a significant selection of drawings and works on paper, to give an overview of the development of the artist's creative process.

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Untitled, not dated
Indian ink on paper
30 x 43 cm (11 3/4 x 16 7/8 in) (unframed)
51,5 x 63,5 x 4,2 cm (20 1/4 x 25 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 024)



Untitled, 1967-1970
White ink on watercolor primed paper
70 x 100,2 cm (27 1/2 x 39 1/2 in) (unframed)
79 x 109,2 cm (31 1/8 x 43 in) (framed)
(STB 117)



Untitled (zborul) / Untitled (the flight), 1972
Pencil on paper
35 x 50 cm (13 3/4 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)
44,5 x 59,5 x 3,5 cm (17 3/8 x 23 1/4 x 1 1/8 in) (framed)
(STB 149)



Network, 1973-1974
Colored pencil on paper
34,7 x 48,9 cm (13 5/8 x 19 1/4 in) (unframed)
55,3 x 69,5 x 4,2 cm (21 3/4 x 27 3/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 2694)



Untitled (Network, coloured), 1975
Felt-tip pen on paper
35 x 50 cm (13 3/4 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)
51,7 x 63,7 x 4,2 cm (20 3/8 x 28 1/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 012)



Untitled, 1976
Felt-tip pen, pencil and ball pen on paper
65 x 46 cm (25 5/8 x 18 1/8 in) (unframed)
70 x 51 x 4 cm (27 1/2 x 20 1/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 041)



Untitled, 1977
Indian ink on paper
50 x 72 cm (19 3/4 x 28 3/8 in) (unframed)
71,5 x 93,5 x 4,2 cm (28 1/8 x 36 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 119)



Untitled, 1977-1978

Colored pencil, felt-tip pen and India ink on paper
70,3 x 50,3 cm (27 5/8 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)
92,9 x 72,9 x 4,2 cm (36 5/8 x 28 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 134)



Untitled (Network), 1978

India ink on paper
35 x 50 cm (13 3/4 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)
55,6 x 70,6 x 4,2 cm (21 7/8 x 27 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 035)



Triunghiuri scalenice. Școală / Scalene Triangles. School, 1978

Red chalk, pencil on paper
32,5 x 46 cm (12 3/4 x 18 1/8 in) (unframed)
37,5 x 51 x 4 cm (14 3/4 x 20 1/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 045)



Untitled, not dated

Pencil on paper
35,5 x 50 cm (14 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)
40,2 x 55,2 x 4 cm (15 7/8 x 21 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 043)



Untitled, 1979

Felt-tip pen, pencil and watercolor on paper
31 x 43,5 cm (12 1/4 x 16 7/8 in) (unframed)
53 x 65,8 x 4 cm (20 7/8 x 25 7/8 x 1 5/8) (framed)
(STB 013)



Sunflower, 1979

Felt-tip pen, crayon, pencil and gouache on paper
50,7 x 65 cm (20 x 25 5/8 in) (unframed)
71,6 x 86,4 x 4,2 cm (28 1/4 x 34 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 080)



Untitled (Elderflower), 1979

Colored pencil and graphite on paper
35 x 50 cm (13 3/4 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)
55,6 x 70,6 x 4,2 cm (21 7/8 x 27 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 221)



Untitled (RNA), 1977-1980

India ink on paper
30 x 42 cm (11 3/4 x 16 1/2 in) (unframed)
51,7 x 63,7 x 4,2 cm (20 3/8 x 25 1/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 009)



Untitled, 1981

Red chalk, pencil and watercolor on paper
33 x 48 cm (13 x 18 7/8 in) (unframed)
53,6 x 68,6 x 4,2 cm (21 1/8 x 27 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 191)



Untitled, 1982

Red chalk, India ink and pencil on paper
46 x 66 cm (18 1/8 x 26 in) (unframed)
53,9 x 72,9 x 4,2 cm (21 1/4 x 28 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 025)



Untitled, 1982

Charcoal and fineliner pen on paper
46 x 33 cm (18 1/8 x 13 in) (unframed)
76.8 x 54.4 cm (30 1/4 x 21 3/8 in) (framed)
(STB 058)



Prima apariție / The First Apparition, 1981-1987

Indian ink, gouache and pencil on paper
50 x 35 cm (19 3/4 x 13 3/4 in) (unframed)
71.7 x 56.7 cm (28 1/4 x 22 3/8 in) (framed)
(STB 055)



Untitled (Knospfenfigur), 1986-1987

Crayon and pencil on paper
62 x 48 cm (24 3/8 x 18 7/8 in) (unframed)
84,4 x 69,9 x 4,2 cm (33 1/8 x 27 1/2 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 085)



Untitled, 1987

Pencil and watercolor on paper
62,8 x 48,2 cm (24 3/4 x 19 in) (unframed)
85,4 x 70,8 x 4,2 cm (33 5/8 x 27 7/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 1294)



Untitled, 1987

Fineliner pen on paper
32 x 24 cm (12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in) (unframed)
50,6 x 42,6 x 4,2 cm (19 7/8 x 16 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 2494)



Pălăria / Hat, 1981-1988

Gouache, oil crayon and ballpoint pen on paper
56 x 78 cm (22 1/8 x 30 3/4 in) (unframed)
64 x 86 x 4,2 cm (25 1/4 x 33 7/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)
(STB 048)



Regressus ad alium cepa / Return to Onion, 1989

Gouache and oil crayon on paper

41,5 x 27,5 cm (16 3/8 x 10 7/8 in) (unframed)

63,4 x 49,4 x 4,2 cm (24 3/4 x 19 1/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)

(STB 074)



Untitled (Zellteilung), 1986-1991

Gouache and Indian ink on cardboard

64,2 x 46 cm (25 1/4 x 18 1/8 in) (unframed)

76,3 x 57,8 x 4 cm (30 1/8 x 22 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)

(STB 064)



Ein Bild Herrn Kober gemacht, 1994

Gouache paper cut on paper

75 x 55 cm (29 1/2 x 21 5/8 in) (unframed)

81,6 x 61,6 x 4,2 cm (32 1/8 x 24 1/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)

(STB 672)



Untitled (Shells), 1999

Pencil and red chalk on paper

35 x 50 cm (13 3/4 x 19 3/4 in) (unframed)

55,6 x 70,6 x 4,2 cm (21 7/8 x 27 3/4 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)

(STB 1768)



Untitled, 2007

Ballpoint pen, fineliner pen, pencil on paper

40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in) (unframed)

58,6 x 48,6 x 4,2 cm (23 1/8 x 19 1/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)

(STB 2249)



Untitled (Alban Berg Violinkonzert I), 2007

Fineliner pen and ballpoint pen on paper (recto and verso)

40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 in) (unframed)

58,6 x 48,6 x 4,2 cm (23 1/8 x 19 1/8 x 1 5/8 in) (framed)

(STB 2251)