

Hans Josephsohn and Günther Förg — A Dialogue

5 September – 25 October 2025
Berlin: Potsdamer Straße 77-87

Opening: Friday, 5 September, 6 – 8pm



Günther Förg, *Untitled*, 1995, © Estate Günther Förg, Suisse / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Hans Josephsohn, *Untitled*, 1995, © Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St.Gallen, Photo: bernhardstrauss.com

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *Hans Josephsohn and Günther Förg – A Dialogue* at Potsdamer Straße 77-87, Berlin. In this first joint exhibition of the two artists, sculptures by Josephsohn with their tactile surfaces are juxtaposed with Förg's grid paintings from the 1990s. Reliefs by both artists from different decades are on display on the upper floor of the gallery.

Hans Josephsohn and **Günther Förg** came from different generations and only met a few times, but from the late 1990s onwards, Förg was familiar with Josephsohn's sculptures. Following his usual practice, he studied his fellow artist's work and was especially fascinated by its materiality. Through Förg's advocacy, Rudi Fuchs, then director of the Stedelijk Museum, became aware of the sculptor's work, which led to Josephsohn's solo exhibition in Amsterdam in 2002.

In contrast to Förg's keen interest in his contemporaries, Josephsohn was more solitary in his working habits. His work is characterised by a fascination with mass and forms in space, which he repeatedly recalibrated using specific and recurring shapes over the course of six decades of his career as a sculptor. Since the 1950s, the artist sought to increase the volume of his figures by working with quick-drying plaster, which he had cast in brass or bronze. Traces of his search for the perfect expression of the human body can be seen in the additions and removals of material and in the imprints of his fingers on the finished works. The sculptures are characterised by an urgent physical materiality that combines the immediacy of technique with an aesthetic of timelessness in order to capture 'réalité vivante' (living reality). Working from the model, he created individual half-figures, such as the works shown in this exhibition, which were created between 1995 and 2002. Some of them are named, such as *Untitled (Lola)*, 1996, or *Untitled (Madeleine)*, 2000, yet it is only in viewing them that their portrait-like nature can be grasped from the blurring of their forms.

Förg's interest in Josephsohn's sculptures related to their materiality, as well as to their uncompromising nature. When he encountered the other artist's work, he had begun to work on the shimmering grids of the paintings known in literature as 'grid pictures.' The proximity between painting and three-dimensionality, which Förg repeatedly explored, becomes apparent in the open, diffused structures of the grids. He was influenced by the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863–1944) and his use of non-figurative elements and colour fields. These works are characterised by the painterly treatment of the canvas, the layered lines of the same colours, and the unorthodox way in which the

distinction between negative and positive space threatens to dissolve. The green-black-blue cross-hatched *Untitled*, 1995 weaves vertical and horizontal brushstrokes into a dense pattern, forming an airy whole that appears almost like fabric when viewed from a distance. The large portrait *Untitled*, 1996, on the other hand, is dominated by impasto ochre grids that seem to block the view of a hidden green background close to the surface of the painting. Förg's multifaceted approach to art is manifested in the two-dimensional works shown here through subtle allusions to structures and spaces beyond the pictorial plane, thus questioning the boundaries between the artistic disciplines of architecture, painting and sculpture.

While Josephsohn's monumental sculptures on the lower floor of the exhibition form 'the counterweight to our bodies,' which Förg describes in conversation with Christoph Schenker¹ as a necessary corporeal counterpart to his painting, relief works by both artists are juxtaposed on the upper floor of the exhibition alongside a large half-figure *Untitled (Ruth)*, 1968, and two grid paintings hanging parenthetically on each end of the room. Concrete reliefs such as *Untitled*, 1990 by Förg hang alongside bronze reliefs of similar format such as Josephsohn's *Untitled*, 1974. Similarities become apparent in the dialogue between the works, in their emphasis on weight and presence. In the interplay of surface and light, the concept of the dialogical exhibition becomes tangible for the viewer.

Hans Josephsohn (1920–2012) lived and worked in Zurich. Solo exhibitions of his works have been held at international institutions, including the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2024–2025); MASI – Museo d'arte della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano (2020–2021); Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (2020); ICA Milano (2019); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2018); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2013); Lismore Castle Arts (2012); MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2008); Kolumba – Kunstmuseum des Erzbistums Köln (2005); and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2002), among other major museums. Works by Josephsohn were prominently featured at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013).

Works by Hans Josephsohn can be found in the collections of the Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau; Kolumba – Art Museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne; Kunsthhaus Zurich; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Kunstmuseum Appenzell; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen; MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Günther Förg (1952–2013) was born in Füssen and died in Freiburg after living and working in Areuse, Switzerland. His work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions at international institutions, including Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris; CAC Málaga (both 2024); Long Museum, Shanghai (2023); Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice (2019); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Dallas Museum of Art (both 2018); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2015); Fundación Luis Seoane, A Coruña; Museum Brandhorst, Munich (both 2014); Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome (2013); Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg (2008); Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (both 1991); and Secession, Vienna (1990), among others.

Works by Günther Förg are included in major public collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; The Broad, Los Angeles; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Kunsthhaus Zürich; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museum Brandhorst, Munich; The Museum of Modern Art, New

¹ G. Förg in conversation with C. Schenker, 1989, quoted in *Günther Förg: Trunk Road and Branch Roads*, exh. cat., Shanghai: Long Museum, 2023, p. 14.

York; mumok, Vienna; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Saint Louis Art Museum; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate, London; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, to name but a few.

Further Exhibitions and Events

BERLIN

Katharina Grosse
HIGH NOON LUMEN
11 September – 1 November 2025
Bleibtreustraße 45
10623 Berlin

Grace Weaver
Mothers
11 September – 29 November 2025
Goethestraße 2/3
10623 Berlin

PARIS

Tursic & Mille
Lavis en Rose
6 September – 11 October 2025
46 & 57, rue du Temple
75004 Paris

LONDON

Danielle McKinney
Second Wind
18 September – 1 November 2025
41 Dover Street
London W1S 4NS

MARFA

Richard Prince
Posters
17 May – 7 December 2025
Marfa, 1976 Antelope Hills Road

ATHENS | TEMPORARY SPACE

Galerie Max Hetzler | Salon
Günther Förg and Grace Weaver
16 September – 8 November 2025
Tositsa 3, 10682 Athens

Press Contact

Galerie Max Hetzler

Honor Westmacott
honor@maxhetzler.com
+49 30 346 497 85-0

www.facebook.com/galeriemaxhetzler
www.instagram.com/galeriemaxhetzler

Sign up to our Newsletter

