

Esther Schipper

GENERAL IDEA
P IS FOR POODLE
OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 16, 2013
ESTHER SCHIPPER, BERLIN

GENERAL IDEA
P IS FOR POODLE
OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 16, 2013
ESTHER SCHIPPER, BERLIN

Esther Schipper is pleased to present the 4th solo exhibition of General Idea.
Mai 36 Gallery in Zurich is simultaneously showing works from the same series (September 13th - October 27th).

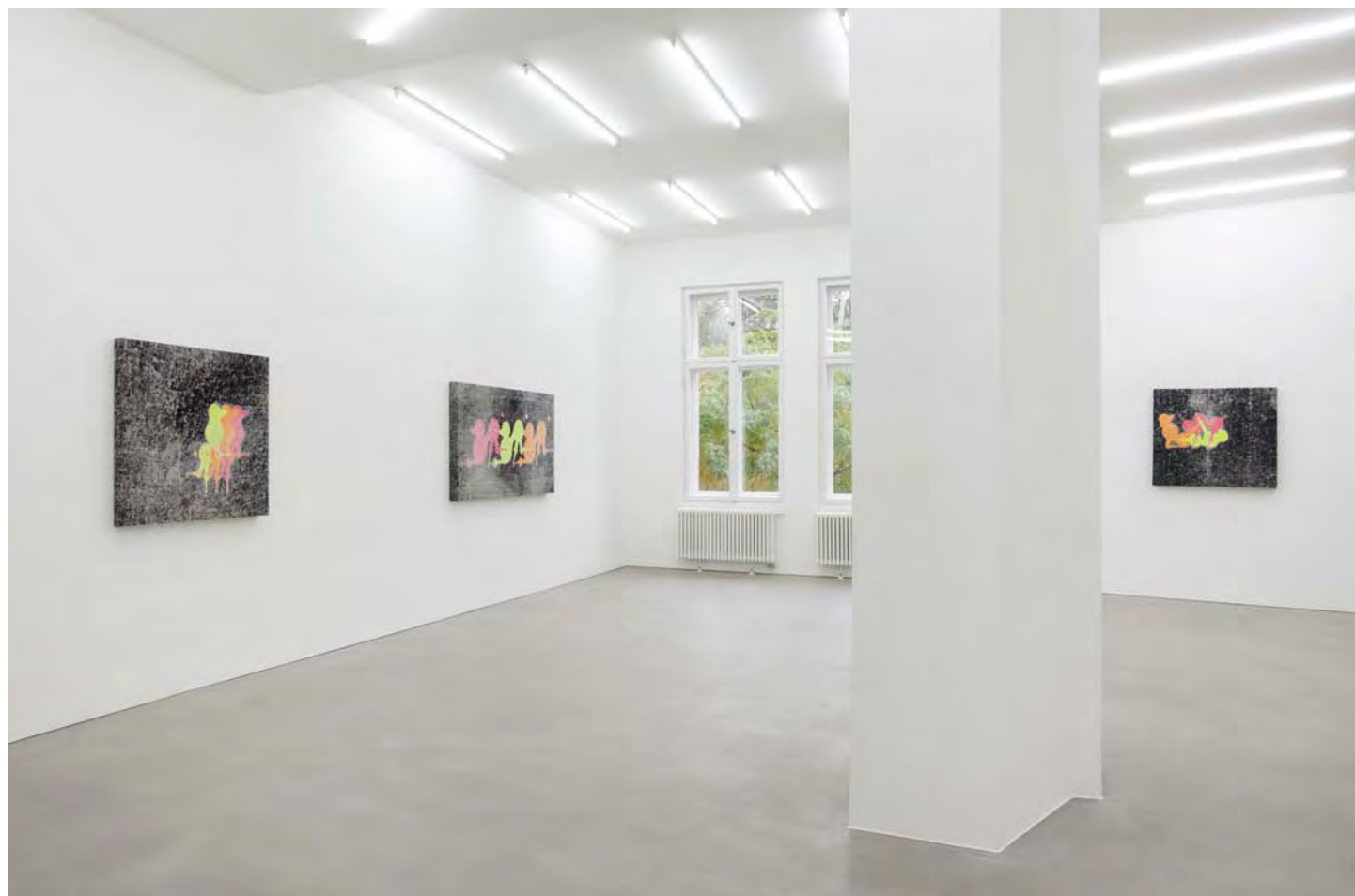
General Idea was formed in 1969 by AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal.

AA Bronson, born Michael Tims in 1946, Vancouver; Felix Partz, born Ronald Gabe, Winnipeg, 1945-1994; Jorge Zontal, born Slobodan Saia-Levy, Parma, 1944-1994. The group existed until 1994.

Retrospective exhibitions of General Idea include: Haute Culture: General Idea. Une rétrospective, 1969-1994, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2011); The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion, The Art Gallery of York University, Toronto (2009); General Idea: Found Formats, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich (2006); General Idea Editions: 1967-1995, Kunstverein München, Munich and Kunst-Werke, Berlin (2006).

Recently works of the group were included in the exhibitions: This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and ICA, Boston (2012); Stage Presence: Theatricality in Art and Media, SFMOMA, San Francisco (2012); Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980, Halifax INK, Halifax; Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Art Gallery of Alberta; Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal, (2011).

Exhibitions of General Idea at Esther Schipper: „P is for Poodle“ (2013); „Works 1968-75“ (2009); „Magic Bullet and early works“ (2006); „General Idea's Yen Boutique“ (1989).



P is for Poodle, Installation view Esther Schipper, Berlin, 2013

Do you have “Poodle attitude”? The question lingers when considering the oeuvre of General Idea, for the poodle is everywhere.

Poodle attitude was essential to the Canadian trio, who were never stingy with their ascerbic commentary. Their poodle perfectly symbolizes the quest as much for good taste, as for the ideal companion. Both delicate and pampered, the poodle displays its eagerness for affection and affectation. One can't help but think of the poodle as an indispensable accessory; it plays a role that becomes indispensable within the very course of one's life, even the most ordinary life.

From the early 70s on, General Idea revealed a prescient awareness of what would become of a contemporary world given over to the dictatorship of the image and the theatricality of the everyday. Disguised in their famous self-portrait *P is for Poodle* (1983) as campy canines, the artists take the stage, assume a pose, flout the boundary between fact and fiction. They obliterate the distinction—which finally is no longer so clear to anyone—between being seen and exhibitionism, meanwhile insisting on that essential characteristic of their work, parody cloaked in arch irony.

In the limp and limpid social commentary of the *Mondo Cane Kama Sutra* paintings (1984), the acrobatics of the trio of geometric dayglo poodles question sexuality with an inventory of three-way erotic positions, raised to the level of parodic discourse, implying ridicule of the traditional nuclear family with its imposed heteronormative behavior. But the works here have been complicated by a further step: the paintings of *Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed)* (1983/1988) were in fact thrown into a washing machine after being painted. They emerged looking washed-out, a little ragged, relieved of a measure of their perfection. The image is no longer perfect; it's even a bit “dog-eared”!

This distressing treatment brings us to a further series of works that also show the effects of destruction, the 1984 *Miss General Idea Pavillion*: legend tells us that the artists who designed the Pavillion set out to search the burnt remains after the mythical fire that destroyed it. Our architects-turned-archeologists discovered many pieces, beginning with multiple fragments of plaster decor painted to depict... stylized poodles. Repeated almost to infinity and layered with various colors, they imposed through the fiction of their provenance a brilliant past, a chronological shift, a temporal fracture in which this ever-so-pampered motif is engulfed, so as to insist upon its permanence and thus its importance.

These archeological quests also revealed the existence of wall drawings, as the video *Cornucopia* (1982) testifies, and an ample series of drawings was excavated. The recurrent motif in this body of work, is the cornucopia... also often bedecked with poodles, it symbolizes the creative inspiration of the artist, which is thus activated, even sublimated, by the reassuring presence of our four-footed companion.

From the beginning, the film commentary assures us that “the poodle, because of its effete, banal image, its desire to be preened and groomed for public appearances, was an easy image to occupy. Emptied of meaning by its passage through the cornucopia, it acted as General Idea's mannequin for their parading ideas.”

An image to occupy, that is the driving role of these poodles become transmission vectors for the subversive thoughts of their masters and fellow creatures – the artists – who are allowed to construct their own mythology, in part through destruction. In 1967, Roland Barthes wrote in *Système de la mode* that in order to “impair the buyer's calculating conscience, it is necessary to suspend before the object a veil of images, of reasons, of meanings, [...] indeed to create a pretense of the real object.” An attractive pretense that shows the difficulty of being between the real and the attitude, and that helps us slalom between the traps set as much by the fiction as by those aspects which are the most tangible parts of everyday life. Voilà, this is what the poodle has become for General Idea.

And you? Do you have “poodle attitude”?



General Idea

Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #10, 1983/88

100 x 100 x 8 cm

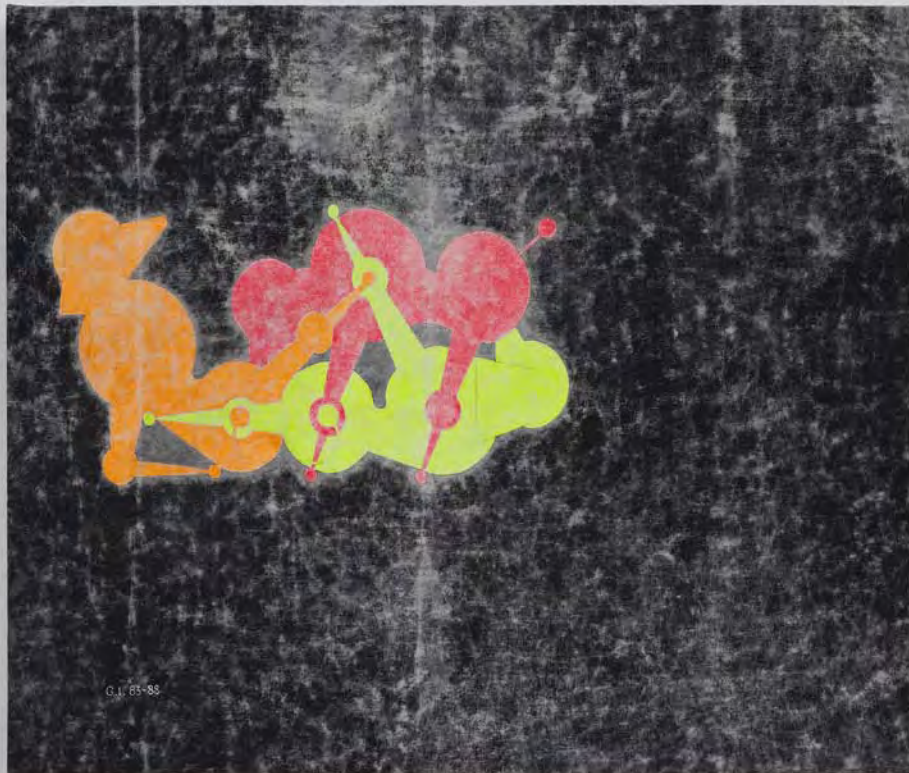
Acrylic on canvas

Unique

(GI 136)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #15, 1983/88
100 x 171 x 8 cm
Acrylic on canvas
Unique
(GI 272)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #13, 1988
Acrylic on canvas
88 x 104 x 8 cm
Unique
(GI 139)



P is for Poodle, Installation view Esther Schipper, Berlin, 2013



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #8, 1983/88
100 x 114 x 8 cm
Acrylic on canvas
Unique
(GI 134)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #11, 1983/88
117 x 104 x 8 cm
Acrylic on canvas
Unique
(GI 137)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #14, 1983/88
Acrylic on canvas
110 x 94 x 8 cm
Unique
(GI 130)

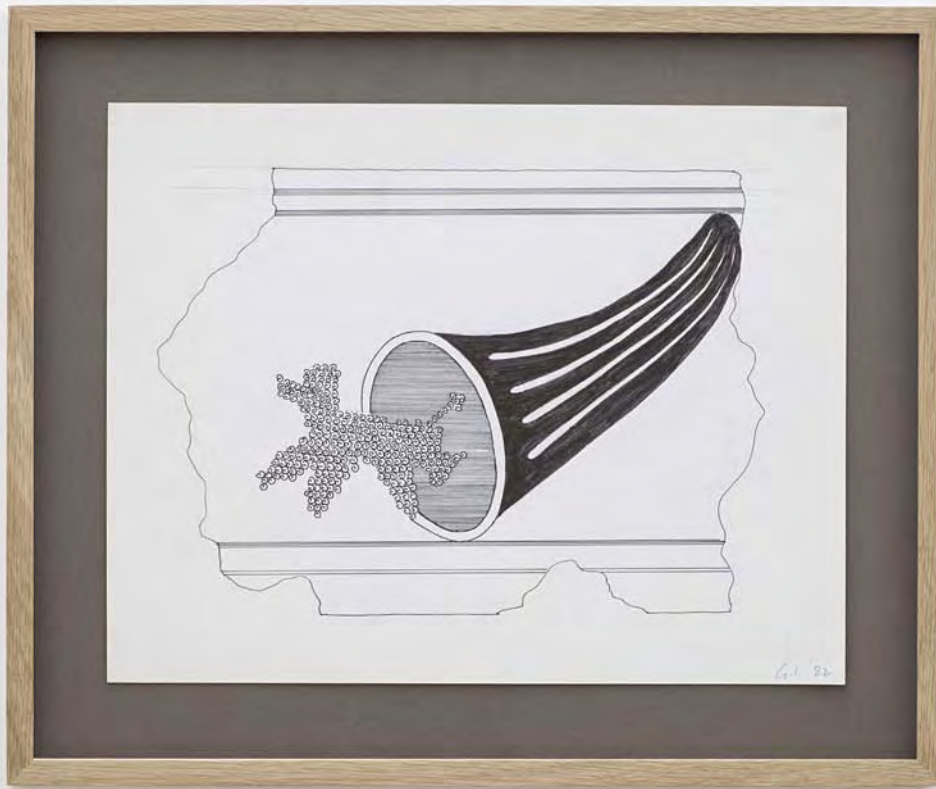


Installation view Esther Schipper, Berlin, 2013

Wall: *Untitled (drawing for Cornucopia)*, 1982; Vitrine: *Pavillon Poodle Fragments*, 1984



General Idea
Untitled (drawing for Cornucopia), 1982 (Detail)
Ink on paper
34 Drawings (various dimensions)
Unique
(GI 273)



General Idea
Untitled (drawing for Cornucopia), 1982 (Detail)
Ink on paper
34 Drawings (various dimensions)
Unique
(GI 273)



General Idea
Untitled (drawing for Cornucopia), 1982 (Detail)
Ink on paper
34 Drawings (various dimensions)
Unique
(GI 273)



Pavillon Poodle Fragments, 1984, Installation view Esther Schipper, Berlin, 2013



General Idea
Pavillon Poodle Fragments, 1984 (Detail)
 63 fragments of different sizes, overall variable
 Unique
 (GI 274)



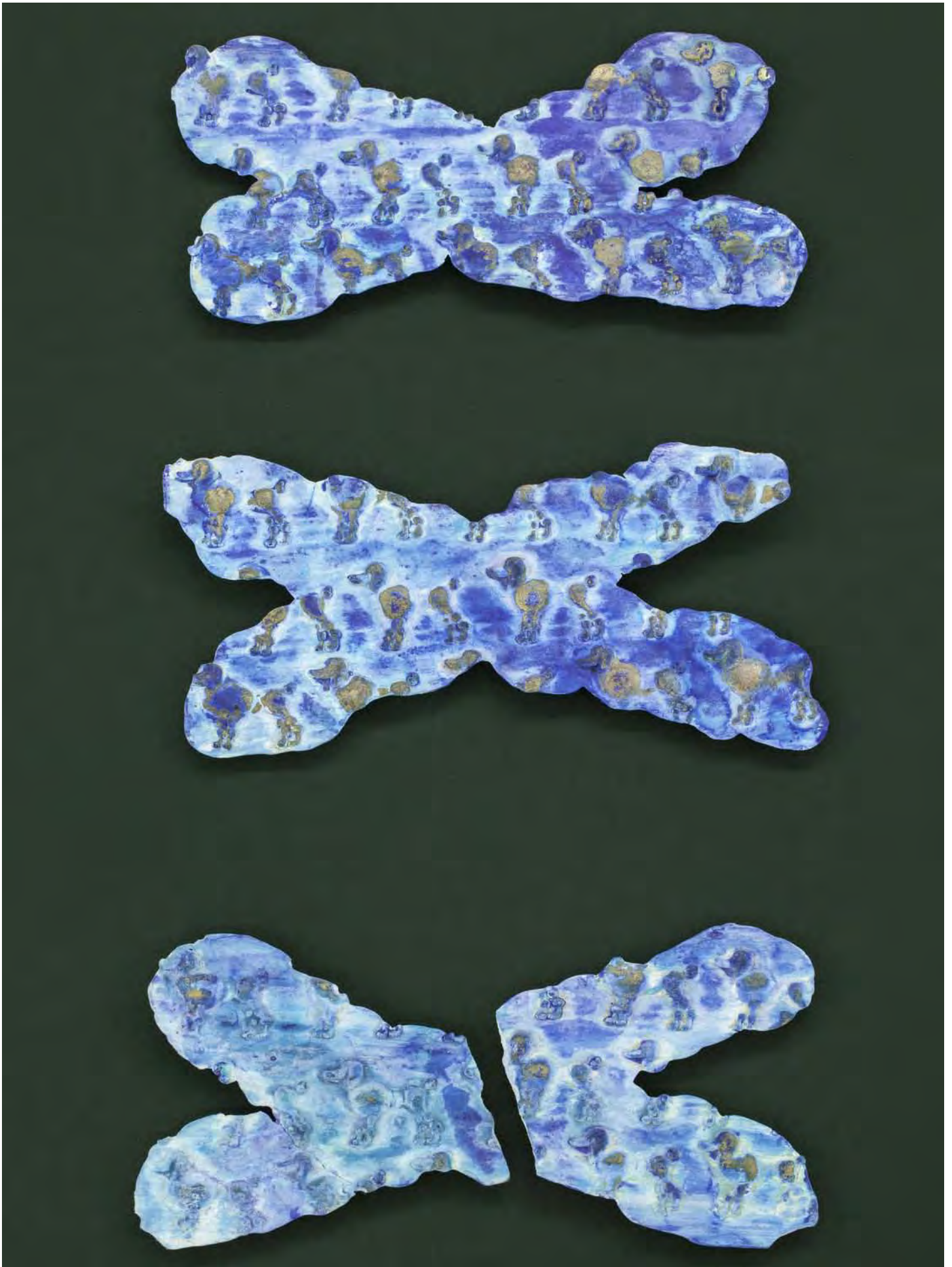
General Idea

Pavillon Poodle Fragments, 1984 (Detail)

63 fragments of different sizes, overall variable

Unique

(GI 274)



General Idea

Pavillion Poodle Fragments, 1984 (Detail)

63 fragments of different sizes, overall variable

Unique

(GI 274)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra 9 figures #1, 1983
Acrylic on canvas, stretched
215 x 462 cm
Unique
(GI 243)

LIST OF WORKS



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #10, 1983/88
 100 x 100 x 8 cm
 Acrylic on canvas
 Unique
 (GI 136)
 85.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (90.950,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #14, 1983/88
 Acrylic on canvas
 110 x 94 x 8 cm
 Unique
 (GI 130)
 85.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (95.950,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #15, 1983/88
 100 x 171 x 8 cm
 Acrylic on canvas
 Unique
 (GI 272)
 120.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (128.400,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



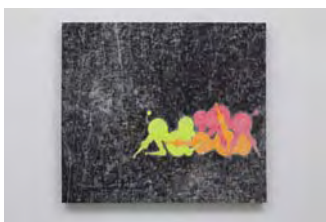
General Idea
Untitled (drawing for Cornucopia), 1982 (Detail)
 Ink on paper
 34 Drawings (various dimensions)
 Unique
 (GI 273)
 115.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (123.050,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #13, 1988
 Acrylic on canvas
 88 x 104 x 8 cm
 Unique
 (GI 139)
 85.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (95.950,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



General Idea
Pavillion Poodle Fragments, 1984 (Detail)
 63 fragments of different sizes, overall variable
 Unique
 (GI 274)
 165.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (176.550,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)
 Vitrines not included in price



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #8, 1983/88
 100 x 114 x 8 cm
 Acrylic on canvas
 Unique
 (GI 134)
 85.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (95.950,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra 9 figures #1, 1983
 Acrylic on canvas, stretched
 215 x 462 cm
 Unique
 (GI 243)
 185.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (197.950,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)



General Idea
Mondo Cane Kama Sutra (Distressed) #11, 1983/88
 117 x 104 x 8 cm
 Acrylic on canvas
 Unique
 (GI 137)
 85.000,00 (ex MwST)
 (95.950,00 in c. MwST @ 7,00%)

IMPRINT

GENERAL IDEA
P IS FOR POODLE
OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 16, 2013
ESTHER SCHIPPER, BERLIN

PHOTOS BY : © ANDREA ROSSETTI

ESTHER SCHIPPER
SCHÖNEBERGER UFER 65
D-10785 BERLIN
TEL: +49 (0)30 374433 133
FAX: +49 (0)30 374433 134
WWW.ESTHERSCHIPPER.COM
OFFICE@ESTHERSCHIPPER.COM