

SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

Reinhard Mucha

Frankfurter Block

Arbeiten am Hohlkasten 1981-2014

02/05/2014 - 30/08/2014

Reinhard Mucha subjects his work again and again to critical revision, conversion and extension. In the course of the re-enactment of each work from exhibition to exhibition he enacts an accumulation of space and time, and this process takes place in his first exhibition at Sprüth Magers, Berlin. The core of the exhibition is a large work called **Frankfurter Block**, which was first presented as an ensemble of eleven works at Galerie Grässlin, Frankfurt in 2012. For the Berlin show, Mucha recreated the scale and proportions of the main room of Galerie Grässlin, building a gallery within the gallery in the main space of the Sprüth Magers. The artist added interior details, such as a carpeted floor and linen-clad walls, referring to the “Block Beuys”, a seven-room installation by Joseph Beuys that was for many years on display at the Hessisches Landesmuseum, but now dismantled. This new incarnation of **Frankfurter Block** incorporates the gallery in which it was most recently exhibited, further extending the scope and scale of the work.

The complete **Frankfurter Block** is composed of an ensemble of discrete works, but it originates 30 years ago with **Untitled** (Head in Sand – Kunsthalle Bielefeld – Created for the exhibition: „Ars Viva – Sculpture and Installations by prize- winners selected by the Cultural Committee of German Business within the Federation of German Industries BDI e.V. “ – 1981), [2012], 1982. This work began with a simple gesture: Mucha filled out and mailed several hundred coupons, cut from newspapers, requesting material from a range of companies. In 1981, 99 photocopies of the order forms were framed in silver, which referred to the architecture of the exhibition space at the Kunsthalle Bielefeld. At that time, these copies were hung on one of the canvas-covered walls of the museum, while the approximately 600 unopened envelopes were stacked in a display case. The proliferation and arbitrariness of the data gathered in this way undercuts the customer and marketing profiles sought by corporations. One year later, in 1982, Mucha stored the 99 framed coupons along with the unopened letters in four display cases for “Junge Kunst in Deutschland – Privat gefördert” a group show for sixteen artists on a privately funded stipend, which was presented at the Kölnischer Kunstverein, the Lenbachhaus, Munich, and the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin. An installation view from the exhibition in Bielefeld was added to the four showcases, and each was placed on sixteen footstools (one per leg of each showcase), with the footstools acting as stand-ins for the sixteen artists in this exhibition. In 2012, Mucha expanded the ensemble by installing four video monitors beneath the display cabinets, showing animated photographs of the three exhibitions. The footstools and the anarchic background noise of skateboarders combine to work against any institutionalisation of the work.

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Frankfurter Block is further extended by four more works within the space. Placed next to the core installation of showcases, **[Capriccio] - How a Dead Hare Operates with Pictures**, 2012 alludes not only to Beuys, but also to the mechanisms inherent to exhibitions: the glass cabinet contains two horizontal plinths, each on a dolly, while on the floor adjacent lies a rolled-up blanket of the transport company Hasenkamp. In **Knowing whereby, not knowing wherewith. Knowing whereto, not knowing whereat.**, [2007], 1983, the artist's hand presents an empty chocolate box against a mirror. The brightly shimmering box seems to promise choice and individuality, yet only offers a set number of shapes within a system. Nearby, **Seelze** [2014], 2012 brings to mind the minimalist sculptures of Donald Judd. The zinc tub, a found piece which is framed by a steel construction and whose bottom is lined with felt, has been closed off by a glass panel painted, on the side facing the sculpture, with lines.

Mucha's student years at the art academy is the key motif in **The Clever Servant** (Ohne Titel – Staatliche Kunstakademie – Düsseldorf – 1981), 2002. Writing in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Rose-Maria Groop describes the work: "Behind a glass panel four meters wide, in old-fashioned typography, is the eponymous fairy tale by the Grimm brothers about the servant who finds three blackbirds in the forest instead of searching for the cow of his master. On a screen next to the fairy tale, a young man rolls and leaps in an endless loop, fomenting rebellion in a video."

Beyond the walls of **Frankfurter Block, Untitled** (MILCH), 1:1 model of the eliminated competition entry to „Kunst am Bau – Eingeladener Wettbewerb“ for the Volkswagen University Library of the Berlin Institute of Technology (TU) and the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK)), 2004 - [2014], 1979, an almost eight-meter-long sculpture, exemplifies Mucha's use of the box girder or "Hohlkasten". A technical term from bridge building, the box section allows for the construction of complex integrated structures, and thus offers a metaphor for how Mucha conceives so much of his work. At the same time, this work is an example of the patience that informs Mucha's process. The artist had the initial idea in 1979, revived it for a proposal for a site-specific commission for the Volkswagenbibliothek Berlin in 2004, and produced it for the exhibition at Sprüth Magers.

In 2012 in Die Welt am Sonntag, Hans-Joachim Müller speaks of Mucha's "individual manner of sensuous thoughtfulness. [...] When Mucha makes art, he does not produce tangible proximity, but instead distance that is thought." In addition to the aspect of sensuousness, Müller emphasizes the temporal element: "If this work is unified by one thing, then it is the compression of time to which it constantly returns. Mucha impedes the flow of time, thickens it with his home-made preservatives [...] the artistic attitude accordingly becomes always a sort of active resistance to the centrifugal forces of history."

Sprüth Magers Berlin is concurrently presenting the solo exhibitions 'Eine Ansammlung von Gegenständen' by Peter Fischli & David Weiss and 'Hustlers' by Philip-Lorca diCorcia.

For more information and press enquiries, please contact Sina Deister (sd@spruethmagers.com).
Opening Times of the Gallery: Tue – Sat, 11 am – 6 pm