



## Andreas Christen Works 1959-2005

Massimo De Carlo Gallery is proud to present the first solo show in London of Andreas Christen.

*Works 1959 - 2005* is an exhibition that covers the entire career of the artist: spanning from his first paintings made in the late 1950's to the last reliefs made in 2005. The exhibition is structured as a voyage into the depths of the artist's research for the perfect balance between the object, light and space. As if he would be working with light instead of colour to create a new space, Christen commented on his oeuvre: "My works are the equipment with which to discuss space." These modern bas-reliefs play with the significance of the notions of absence and presence of light.

Andreas Christen's signature white monochromes have served this purpose by opening up dialogues on the interpretation of light and spatiality through the three dimensional objects. Here the notion of object-hood is merged into the relief through the artist's usage of the colour white: the pictorial character combined with the shape of the work itself creates a series of optical games of lights and shadows that heighten their nature.

The works get more experimental as the decades pass, moving from formed polyester in *Monoform* (1959/60), to epoxy in *Komplementär-Struktur* (1974) and finally finding MDF plates the most adequate material to freely experiment with in his later works (*Untitled*, 2002). His diverse bodies of work reveal the perfectionist nature of Christen's activity by illustrating his constant and meticulous interpretation of spatiality: the subtle dynamism of the reliefs appearing to question the viewer on the relation between our human existence, space and time.

Although there is a minimalist resonance in his work, he met Donald Judd several times, he never considered himself to be part of a minimalist movement. Also the term optical would be a hard attribute to attach to his work. In fact it's probably more suitable to look for links to Christen's work in foreign early constructivist works such as Lygia Clark's *Contra Relevos* or Françoise Morellet's *Trames* from the 1950s. It is surprising to look back into art history and realise the first *Monoforms* done by Andreas Christen in 1959 were made in the same year of when Fontana did his first *Concetto Spaziale*: all this well before Ellsworth Kelly even thought of doing his first shaped canvas *Yellow Piece* in 1966.

Andreas Christen was both an artist and a successful designer, although he liked to keep the two practices separate, they seem to meet on a common ground of aesthetic and conceptual themes where the art merges with the craft. Perhaps because of this dualism of art and design, Christen has always steered clear of labels, and this may have contributed to the creation of an independent and coherent body of work that whilst investigating time and space also temporarily erases them: the shaped forms shift between yesterday and tomorrow, their abstract nature creates an uncertainty in the viewer that never ceases to be contemporary.

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## Andreas Christen

Andreas Christen was born in Bubendorf, near Basel, in 1936. He died in Zurich in 2006. Solo exhibitions include : *Andreas Christen*, Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich, CH (2008); *Andreas Christen*, Kunsthalle im Kulturhaus Palazzo, Liestal, CH, (2000); *Andreas Christen: Werke - Oeuvres 1958 - 1993*, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, CH, (1995); Espace Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Bourbogne, Dijon, FR, (1995); Bottrop-Josef Albers Museum, Bottrop, GR, (1994). Selected group shows: *Example: Switzerland. Unbounding and Crossing Over as Art*, Kunstmuseum, Vaduz, Liechtenstein (2012); *Neue Tendenzen: Eine europäische Künstler-Bewegung 1961-1973*, Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt, GR, (2007); Prague Biennale, Karlín Hall, Praha, CZ, (2005); *Dimension Schweiz 1915-1993: Von der frühen Moderne zur Kunst der Gegenwart*, Museion, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Bozen, IT, (1993).

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