

WHITE CUBE

Mason's Yard

Press Release

Dóra Maurer

6 out of 5

Organised by Katharine Kostyál

24 May – 9 July 2016

Preview: Monday 23 May 2016, 6-8pm

White Cube presents an exhibition by Hungarian artist Dóra Maurer at Mason's Yard. Maurer's rigorous, conceptual work spans 50 years and incorporates painting, drawing, printmaking, photography and filmmaking. Widely acknowledged as one of the most important members of the Hungarian avant-garde and active as a curator and teacher, she is one of the most experimental artists to emerge from Eastern Europe during the past half century. This will be the first exhibition in the UK to encompass the breadth of her prolific career to date and includes several signature black and white photographic series from the 1970s, *frottage* drawings from the 1980s and a selection of paintings dating from the late 1990s to the present. Also on show are two major wall installations created especially for this exhibition.

Maurer's radical work embraces indeterminacy, allowing multiple possibilities and interpretations, but it also focuses on the grammar of geometry and mathematical systems and methodologies. Her approach can alternate between process-based experiments and formal investigations of rule-based compositional logic, but is always characterised by a sense of movement and change. Although Maurer was affected by the political and social situation of communist Hungary, she was able to move with relative ease between Budapest and Vienna, straddling both the east and west. This was because in 1967 she had gained a scholarship to study in Vienna, and there she had met her husband, Tibor Gáyor, a Hungarian artist with Austrian citizenship.

The 1970s were a key period in her development as an artist, when, after initially concentrating on printmaking, she started to produce conceptual photography, structural films and process-based drawing. Occasionally her works incorporated found or natural forms, as in *Schautafel 3* (1972), which is made from an organic mass of delicate twigs and dripped brown paint set against a simple geometric grid.

The result of playful investigation, chance and freedom, her visually arresting and resolved work allows process to become visible, harnessing its experimental energy and force and the natural change of materials. The photographic series 'Reversible and Changeable Phases of Movements' (1972), is described by Maurer as being 'minimal sequences of movement which I analysed and captured photographically'. Arranged in a grid formation, they record simple, repetitive actions such as throwing a ball or clenching and unclenching a fist, creating a story line of images that can be read both left to right and right to left. This emphasises the importance of photography and film as a mechanical means of recording human experience in a straightforward way, while also suggesting the possibility of continual renewal and a 'self-made system'. For Maurer, these works are not concerned with visual effect but create, instead, what she has described as 'easily comprehensible signs'. ('I Will Take a Stone Away – Reversible and Interchangeable Phases of Movement', *Etudes for a Change in Meaning 1-7, 1972-73*. p.35)

Towards the end of the 1970s Maurer focused on 'hidden structures', making minimal pencil *frottage* drawings with geometrical shapes, where further traces or impressions were created by folding the paper in various different ways. *Hidden Structures 1-6, (1977-80)*, is made in this

manner: a delicate, six-part work on paper that uses both horizontal and diagonal folds as well as pencil rubbings to create its monochromatic, intricate, geometric composition.

During the 1980s Maurer continued to explore geometric forms, looking at how they are affected by colour and colour perception. In these dynamic acrylic paintings on canvas laid on wood, she painted what appear to be overlaid or intersecting shapes in strong hues, creating a three-dimensional presence and sense of mobility. Elegant and seemingly lightweight, the paintings in fact exist on a single plane. They are not formed by any sculptural manipulation but by using colour to create the illusion of layering or the semblance of transparency, as if we were seeing one area of colour through another. These paintings are made from combinations ranging from two intersecting planes of colour, such as *Overlappings I* (1999), to complex compositions of three or more, as in the recent 'IXEK' series made in 2015.

Influenced by the colour theory of Josef Albers, Maurer has said that 'the IXEK pictures are concerned with the reciprocity of colour and form, with the way the two penetrate one another. The individual elements of an IXEK painting have not only a formal influence on each other but also a chromatic one. Since I apply the colours in transparent layers, they merge at the points where the shapes overlap and intersect.' (Dóra Maurer, *Snapshots*, ex.cat. Museum Ritter, 2014, p.59).

Dóra Maurer is curating an exhibition of the work of her husband, fellow artist Tibor Gáyor, at Carl Kostyál in London entitled 'Lares et Penates'. This exhibition is a re-creation of the 2003 installation by Gáyor held at the Fészek club (the Artists' club in Budapest), and is a dramatic conceptual exploration of both formal structures and sensory experience relating to a Saturnalian feast. The exhibition will run from 23 May–12 June 2016. Carl Kostyál is located at 12a Savile Row, London W1S 3 PQ and is open from 10am–6pm, Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays by appointment. A preview will take place on Sunday 22 May, 6–8pm.

Dóra Maurer studied at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts from 1955–61. Maurer has exhibited widely internationally, most recently at Tate Modern, London (2016); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1985, 2015); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); Carl Kostyál, London (2015); Museum Ritter, Germany (2014); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2014); the 12th International Biennial, Istanbul (2012), Ludwig Museum, Budapest (1997, 2008, 2012); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2010). Her work is held in collections across the world, including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

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Notes to Editors:

Admission to White Cube is free.

White Cube Mason's Yard is open Tuesday–Saturday 10am– 6pm.

White Cube's exhibition programme extends across its three gallery spaces: Bermondsey in South London, Mason's Yard in St. James's, London and Hong Kong Central district. Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of many of the world's most highly acclaimed contemporary artists.

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