

GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

Max Wechsler: IMI KNOEBEL Drachenlinien

March 17– April 29, 2017

We are pleased to present *Drachenlinien* (Kite Lines), Imi Knoebel's seventh solo exhibition at the Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder.

Imi Knoebel will be showing a selection of new works here for the first time, including "Datumbilder" (Date Paintings) from the "Asteroiden mit gespaltener Persönlichkeit" (Asteroids with Split Personalities) series, which he has been working on at irregular intervals since 2013. These are configurations of color panels set in relation to each other. Consisting of two panels at first, the most recent group of works created for the show in Vienna feature three panels. Disregarding numerical symbolism, the composition of three elements as a new entity simply increases the complexity of the composition and opens new fields of communication beyond the monologue or dialogue – perhaps even taking on astrophysical dimensions. Viewers expecting a specific message will be disappointed – as with Knoebel's entire oeuvre, these pictures are also created in the tradition of an abstract and non-representational art à la Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian. That is why Imi Knoebel's art has always had a conceptual foundation and a rational motivation. It also follows its own rules, which, while generally driven by intuition, are also verifiable beyond a binding system. The results are precisely constructed pictorial compositions with incomparably diverse colors and forms arrangements that primarily represent unique visual sensations, while also luring the imagination of the beholder toward open fields of association.

The most recent works in this exhibition are from his new series "Drachenlinien." "Drachen" are a key motif in Imi Knoebel's work. They appeared for the first time in the form of white irregular rhomboid panels that, when hung high on the walls in the Galerie Heiner Friedrich in Munich in 1971, created "a light, quiet space" (Franz Dahlem). They reappeared in 1981 in the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, and most recently in 2015 in the White Cube Bermondsey in London, this time high up and elevated to lightness. The kite was also present as an idea in his early series of "Projektionen" (Projections), and since then there have been several references made to it in the form of a diagonal and dynamic element. Three of the "Drachenlinien" in Vienna feature irregular quadrangles that have been painted in different hues of red and are divided approximately in the middle. These cuts were freehand and tend toward either the vertical, diagonal, or the horizontal. The aluminum panels were painted individually with several layers and then reassembled into a unit. These painterly events seem to float in front of the wall, radiating their intense colors into the room. Next to them hangs the more compact looking but equally irregular hexagon, with its five olive green elements. Its title "Ouroboros" adds a mythological dimension to the work. In a manner quite befitting the cheery grandeur with which Imi Knoebel presents his "Asteoriden" and "Drachen", his fundamentally strict, yet increasingly freehand approach to his work reveals, if nothing else, a poetry of exactitude.

IMI KNOEBEL, born in 1940 in Dessau, lives and works in Düsseldorf. In 2006, Imi Knoebel was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Jena. He received the Kythera Award in 2011, the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2016.

Selection of solo shows and projects: 2016 Musée National Fernand Léger, Biot, France; 2015: Kunstsammlung NRW K21 Ständehaus, Düsseldorf, Germany; Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany; 2014 Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany; 2013 Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Germany; 2011 Stained glass windows for the Notre-Dame in Reims, France; 2010 Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag, The Netherlands; 2009 Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany; 2008 Dia:Beacon, New York; 2007 Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen, Germany; 1996-1997 Retrospective 1968 – 1996: Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; IVAM Centre del Carme, Valencia, Spain; Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, Germany; Musée de Grenoble, France.

Imi Knoebel participated in the Documenta in Kassel in 1972, 1977, 1982, and 1987.

His works can be found in many renowned museum collections all over the world, including the Bayrische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, Germany; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, The Netherlands; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Dia:Beacon, New York; FNAC, Paris, France; Fundação de Serralves, Porto, Spain; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Netherlands; Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York; Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota, Japan.