

## Günther Förg

### *An Intimate Encounter: The Early Years*

41 Dover Street, 1st Floor, London W1S 4NS

19 February – 6 April 2019

Preview 19 February, 6 – 8pm

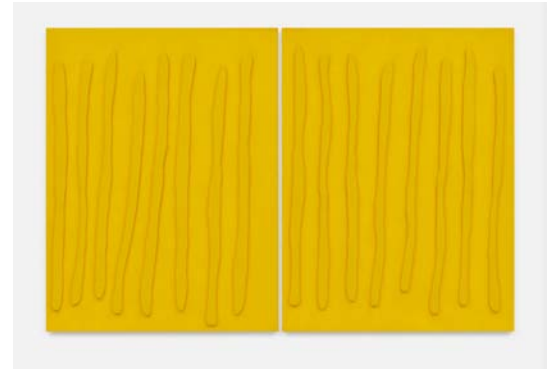
Galerie Max Hetzler London is delighted to present early formative works by Günther Förg in the new London space. This follows the recent major survey exhibition *Günther Förg: A Fragile Beauty* at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas.

Bringing together paintings, large-scale photographs and sculpture dating from 1977-1995, *An Intimate Encounter: The Early Years* highlights the tactile and ephemeral qualities of Förg's work across his multidisciplinary practice. Focusing on the materiality of Förg's early works, this exhibition creates an environment in which to consider the human touch within his oeuvre.

Förg's energy and spontaneity in the act of making are revealed through the gestures and heavy mark-making visible in the surface of the torso sculpture, as well as the imprecise edges of the paintings and snapshot-like quality of his photographs. Strong protruding wooden shapes emerging from the yellow canvas of *Untitled*, 1988, and embedded grooves in a work from his rare series of paintings on copper, highlight the physical nature of Förg's process.

Contained within Förg's photographs is the notion of time's passage and the ephemerality of the lived experience. The artist became interested in photography in the early 1980s, presenting his works in a way that countered contemporary convention: large-scale, and in artist-built frames, they became architectural objects. The tall reflective glass surfaces engage the viewer in the present moment and through their sheer scale the works embed themselves in the built environment around them.

The photographs shown in this exhibition are intimate portraits of transient moments and spaces of temporary inhabitation. *Pinakothek München*, 1983, *(Untitled) Treppenhaus*, 1984, and *Villa Malaparte, Capri*, 1984, each feature staircases, spaces of transition that physically capture the movement from one time and place to another. In *Pinakothek München*, Förg recorded an intimate moment of light spilling through the museum windows. Installed at the gallery this motif is mirrored by the room's own architecture. *Villa Malaparte, Capri* was taken whilst



Günther Förg, *Untitled*, 1988

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holidaying in the Italian modernist villa in Capri famed for its appearance in Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris* (1963).

The exhibition also features early paintings whose strong block colours emphasize the notion of seriality, repetition, gesture and tactility. For Förg, the monochromatic shapes both challenge and complement the spaces in which they are installed, reflecting back a sense of how space can be divided and rearranged in a playful and intelligent manner. Showing intimate traces of the artist's brushwork on their surfaces, these works reveal the contradictions Förg enjoyed bringing together. The neatly stacked painted aluminium panels of *Untitled*, 1977 call to mind Minimal Art. Yet they also deny the conventions of that movement in the highly visible, energetic brushstrokes. The coloured rows unite into what the artist referred to as a 'floating form', the work's painterly components radiating a strong sense of weightlessness. Together with the cast stone *Untitled (Torso 1)*, 1989 the artist's direct contact with the material is evident and experimental, particularly in the depressions and elevations in the stone.

Present in each of these works is the lived moment of their construction, the energy of their making still apparent in the brushstrokes and captured stills. *An Intimate Encounter: The Early Years* provides a space for reflection on Förg's distinctive use of materials and the seamlessness of his body of work across mediums.

## **Günther Förg**

Günther Förg was born 1952 in Füssen and died 2013 in Freiburg. A professor at the University of Arts and Design, Karlsruhe and later at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, his work has been exhibited in numerous solo shows at international institutions. These include the Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2014); Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1991); Secession, Vienna (1990); and most recently a major retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas (2018-2019). Förg's work belongs to major museum collections, including Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Tate, London.

We would like to thank the Estate Günther Förg in collaboration with Hauser & Wirth for their kind support.

Further exhibitions and fair participation:

21 February – 30 March 2019

Opening: 21 February, 6-8 pm

**Jérémy Demester**

57, rue du Temple 75004 Paris

1 March – 12 April 2019

Opening: 1 March, 6-8 pm

**Urs Fischer**

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623 Berlin

16 – 24 March 2019

**TEFAF Maastricht**

29 – 31 March 2019

**Art Basel Hong Kong**