

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER (/)

FEB 21, 2015 - APR 25, 2015

GROUP SHOW

WORKS ON PAPER

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER, LÖWENBRÄU AREAL, ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND

Doug Aitken, Kathryn Andrews, Walead Besthy, Martin Boyce, Joe Bradley, Verne Dawson, Jay DeFeo, Trisha Donnelly, Carroll Dunham, Latifa Echakhch, Maria Eichhorn, Matias Faldbakken, Sam Falls, Peter Fischli / David Weiss, Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon, Wyatt Kahn, Karen Kilimnik, Andrew Lord, Tobias Pils, Adam Putnam, Gerwald Rockenschaub, Ugo Rondinone, Dieter Roth, Eva Rothschild, Steven Shearer, Josh Smith, Oscar Tuazon, Franz West, Sue Williams, Michael Williams

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DOUGLAS GORDON, WYATT KAHN, KAREN KILIMNIK,
ANDREW LORD, TOBIAS PILS, ADAM PUTNAM,
GERWALD ROCKENSCHAUB, UGO RONDINONE, DIETER ROTH,
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The Galerie Eva Presenhuber begins its exhibition year with the group show *Works on Paper*, a comprehensive presentation of 31 artists of various generations and nationalities. *Works on paper* is a diverse collection of drawings, prints, and collages. The medium of paper is the one constant in the show, which deliberately avoids any emphasis on the heterogeneity of positions.

Doug Aitken (born 1968) is showing selected works from a group of watercolors from 2008 titled *to give it all away*. In this series Aitken constructs seemingly urban landscapes in an almost psychedelic manner. The work suggests a futuristic cityscape that threatens to collapse on itself owing to its various overlapping perspective views. As a sequential series the group borrows from the medium of film, with which the artist has worked since the early nineties and which is to this day his primary medium.

Kathryn Andrews (born 1973) juxtaposes the legacies of Pop Art and Minimalism in her art. Her works prompt the viewer to reflect on her experiences with material, and at the same time on how one's own subjectivity is anchored in contemporary culture. Her pieces frequently combine found forms with readymade objects. These generally come from, or refer to, film-industry prop shops, souvenir shops, party-supply shops, and other retail outlets. The collages combine the notion of concealment with the radicality of Suprematism. Seemingly familiar motifs are blocked out as though by a censor's stamp, and at the same time made more intense and expressive.

The work of **Walead Besthy** (born 1976) is based on the making of art and the utilization of all the required materials. Art production and the sustainability of the working process are the subject matter—nothing is wasted, and the creative process produces a surface that ends up resembling a topographic relief. Besthy leaves behind traces—whether of his own hand in the exhibited collages or use by others in his copper pieces. His works thus become performance relics.

In 2002, when **Martin Boyce** (born 1967) first saw a black-and-white photograph of the cast-concrete sculptures reminiscent of trees of Joël and Jan Martel (Paris, 1925), he could not predict what a major stimulus this would be for his future work. The structure of trees, graphically analyzed, became the basis for far-reaching design approaches. For example, this "module" formed the basis for an alphabet Boyce developed, the letters of which pop up again and again as typical features that determine the form in many of his works.

Joe Bradley (born 1975) created a group of 17 charcoal drawings from 2014. Bradley constructs various work groups based on archetypal shapes. The works exhibited resemble children's drawings, and in their reduced pictorial language follow the Modernists in the direction of primitive art, but with an ironic side glance at cartoons, which play a key role in Bradley's art.

In his painting **Verne Dawson** (born 1961), who became known to a broader public, mainly in New York, in the mid 1980s, deals with the evolution of the human race seemingly with the zeal of an anthropologist. One sees from his complex cycles that Dawson investigates and presents all aspects of his worldview. His pictorial narratives repeatedly draw on such subjects as astrology, number symbolism, religion, and mythology.

Jay DeFeo (1929-1989) conceived of her working process as simultaneous addition and subtraction, parallel creation and destruction. DeFeo frequently described the process of making art as a twofold activity. The etcher thus became decisive for the destructive part. In her paintings and drawings—which she called portraits or landscapes—she frequently combines abstraction and objectivity, and sees no need to opt for one or the other. At times her work is more obviously representational, at others more abstract and difficult to comprehend.

In the work of **Trisha Donnelly** (born 1964) the ephemeral and incidental frequently play a special role. Generally concentrated and strictly focused elements are what lend her works, whether installations, performance, video, or drawing, their inherent and unique power. They hover between reality and fiction, challenge our perception, and play with our imagination. Features that draw a unique strength from reduction and the actor's own enormous presence.

The cartoon is also basic to the work of **Carroll Dunham** (born 1949), though employed in a completely different way than in that of Joe Bradley. In Dunham comics-like figures are developed out of amorphous shapes, here and there resembling the drawing style of Philip Guston and mainly characterized by an ideosyncratic and incisive outline.

Latifa Echakhch (born 1974), was born in Morocco, but now lives and works in Martigny, in Switzerland. Accordingly, her associations tend to be rooted in socio-cultural memories, and hence her abiding interest in giving present things a new significance and a new face, causing them to become worthless as a cultural legacy. Echakhch is exhibiting *Les petit lettres*—papers folded into triangular shapes then dyed with black China ink. The objects resemble *breouatte*—a popular Moroccan pastry. The title contains a semantic reversal, for the Arabic term *breouatte* can be translated as “little letter” in French. With *Les petit lettres* Echakhch contextualizes a cultural artifact and shifts its meaning as well as its symbolic value.

Maria Eichhorn (born 1962) always works in a site-specific manner, taking up certain found features and attempting to alter them with simple, “nonartistic” interventions. In a Berlin gallery (1990) she painted the walls white in a room normally used for exhibitions in an unrenovated state. In Stuttgart's Künstlerhaus (1992) she relocated the children's workshop in the exhibition spaces. In Istanbul (1995 Biennale) she set up a large poster wall on Taksim Square that could be used by unrecognized opposition groups. In 1995 she advertized in a daily paper free tickets to all 21 travel destinations that could be reached direct from Leipzig's main train station. Before the Esters and Lange houses in Krefeld were restored (1997), she sold objects from the storerooms: wash basins, chairs, coat hooks, the crate for a Beuys sculpture, etc., donating the proceeds to the renovation of the entrance doors. In Münster (*Sculpture Projects*, 1997) she posed the question: “Who does the city belong to?”—and as a response purchased a public plot, i.e. one belonging to the city. In this exhibition Maria Eichhorn is showing the sculpture *Rollwagen* (1995)—a rolling wood frame layered with various posters the artist has collected.

Matias Faldbakken (born 1973) is internationally known for his direct, provocative, and radical stance. While such everyday materials and cultural products as newspapers, magazines, television, video, and the Internet feature among his working materials along with spray paint, adhesive tape, and markers, language again and again plays a central role in his work.

For a long time **Sam Falls** (born 1984) has been interested in the influences that weather phenomena like rain, wind, and sunlight have on his mainly abstract pictures and sculptures. The notion of slight disintegration or gradual natural change leads to a work that is not presented to the viewer in a final and perfected state, but rather emphasizes and represents the element of process. The artist employs a comprehensive palette of materials and craftsmanly techniques.

From the beginning, **Peter Fischli** (born 1952) and **David Weiss** (1946–2012) paid greatest attention to everyday things and their astonishing diversity. Their working materials and subject matter are therefore omnipresent, seemingly employed as a matter of course and given a new reality. The exhibition includes their edition *Ordnung und Reinlichkeit* (*Order and Cleanliness*; 1981/2009), seventeen photocopies of drawings originally accompanying the 1981 film *The Least Resistance*, which shows the artists on a circuit through Hollywood dressed as a rat and a bear.

Since the late 1980s **Liam Gillick** (born 1964) has worked with texts and objects fostering a constructive decoding of the structural world, in part with approval and in part in rejection. His work can be sited on the boundary between deliberate planning of architectural space and arbitrary processes of adaptation in the center of speculative change.

For years now Liam Gillick has extended his artistic activities to the construction of discussion spaces—raised platforms, circular seating, partitions, and structures that offer the body a limited set of options. Structures that are not easy, in which you have to choose to enter or not, but which also open up subversive, skeptical possibilities—of being there without taking part, or of getting distracted. (originally published in *Mousse Magazine* No. 33. <http://moussemagazine.it/>)

Douglas Gordon (born 1966) is one of the most influential video artists of our time. Performances, sculptural installations, and conceptual texts are also among his forms of expression. With his analyses and reconstructions of images from our collective memory and everyday culture he exposes fundamental perceptual patterns. His work is dominated by the polarities life and death, good and evil, guilt and innocence, temptation and fear.

Wyatt Kahn (born 1983) made a name for himself on the international art scene with a series of works produced in a technique he developed himself: he covers fiberboard shapes with unprimed canvas then fits them together. His paper works included in the exhibition follow this same principle, in that he varies the free form as an ornament in different configurations.

With her oeuvre, **Karen Kilimnik** (born 1955) has been evoking a world saturated by seemingly trivial desires since her early years. The glamour of fashion serves just as much as a means of projection as do TV series, the rainbow press, or the world of ballet: hovering students, swans, or dead squirrels are suitable protagonists for her art, which is filled with girls' dreams. In her drawings, Karen Kilimnik combines beauties as you might find them in common fashion magazines with lifted quotations, and her own, sometimes quite caustic comments.

Andrew Lord (born 1950) has produced an extensive and continuously evolving oeuvre. Living and working in New York since the early 1980s, he has helped to bring about a paradigm shift in American art together with such artist colleagues as Francesco Clemente, Julian Schnabel, Tony Cragg, and Sandro Chia. This generation of artists turned away from aestheticism and the rigorous features of Conceptualism and Minimalism toward more sensuous, narrative, and less austere expressiveness. Andrew Lord's drawings reflect the artist's emotional states, complex equations between atavistic form and momentary mood. His artworks are personal and autobiographical, reflecting his experiences, travels, and cultural encounters.

Painting as process is central to the work of **Tobias Pils** (born 1971). The motif can be almost anything, subordinated to gesture, ductus, painting method, and painting process. This way of working allows for large-format works combining expressive elements with geometric structures. With his painting Pils creates a basis for associations with recalled images, which are heightened in the viewer by the reduced color palette. The reduction of color indicates a conceptual approach similar to monochrome or purely gestural painting. The picture creates mental images—it conveys stimuli that call up to memories, experiences, and fantasies, and initiate a dialogue with the viewer on a cognitive and emotional level.

In the last ten years **Adam Putnam** (born 1973) has consistently investigated the way our physical selves interact with the architectural spaces we inhabit. In the process, the boundary between interior and exterior space is erased. The artist employs the mediums photography, drawing, sculpture, and video interchangeably. Putnam gradually dissolves his motifs and blends them with the physical elements of the space.

Starting with drawing and painting, since the early 1980s **Gerwald Rockenschaub** (born 1952) has developed a reduced formal language borrowed from the realm of pictograms and popular culture and materialized in works at the intersection of art, design, and media. He produces his designs on a computer, and his objects are then produced by specialist firms. This recalls the developmental processes of industrial design, which in turn suggests the artist's way of working in defiance of boundaries. For example, he is also interested in electronic music. As a sculptor, graphic artist, and disk jockey he exerted a decisive influence on the aesthetics of the 1990s with a mixture of Pop, Minimal Art, and Concept and Context Art.

The oeuvre of **Ugo Rondinone** (born 1964) is extremely complex. It encompasses photography, video, installation, painting, sculpture, and drawing. All these mediums allow him to continuously reformulate his own poetic, reflective world. Often described as a Romantic, the artist deals with questions of time, finitude, and reality and dreams.

The work of **Dieter Roth** (1930–1998) is an exuberant universe captured in the most varied mediums and difficult to comprehend in its sheer abundance. It includes everything from simple drawings to series of sketches, prints, portfolios of graphics, books and single objects, films and collages, paintings and room installations, musical contraptions, and performances to an extensive body of poetry. Roth was constantly challenged to experiment with and expand the uses of mediums and materials. His work with perishable substances beginning in the 1960s not only represented a deconstruction of hierarchies, it was at the same time a consistently existential stance, a way of creating a spirited art outside of established forms of expression. With increasing subjectivization of pictorial (and linguistic) expression, Dieter Roth commented on the processes of transformation and evanescence in of all existence, which can be apprehended not so much by way of concepts as through subjective experience.

For **Eva Rothschild** (born 1971) the act of creating and transforming materials is of fundamental importance. The artist is constantly eager to expand her sculptural vocabulary by introducing new ways of working. Rothschild's eyes, which register the entanglements resulting from the physical presence of each different work, play a key role—for example, she explores with unremitting fervor the divide between the physical appearance of her works and our visual perception of them. A central preoccupation is how her works change in the eye, body, and consciousness of the viewer. Her 2015 *Ferguson*, for example, is a wall piece woven of strips of paper that by no means conforms to the classical definition of a paper work.

The art of **Steven Shearer** (born 1968) encompasses various mediums, from found photography, drawing, and painting, to collage, and is generally concerned with a melancholy vision of youth characterized by distinct references to the iconography of the Extreme Metal music scene. Shearer's world is characterized by alienation from and an aversion to everyday life. Its heroes are Death-Metal rockers, boy groups, and teenie stars from the 1970s, also part-time glam rockers and guitar-swinging suburban youth with ambitious dreams in basement rec rooms. Shearer is less interested in the fame of his figures than in their demise. Within these parameters Shearer portrays in delicate drawings the faces of former stars or unknown figures in a manner reminiscent of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Josh Smith (born 1976) has become known for his so-called "name paintings." In these his name pops up in endless variations as the central motif: a reflection of the search for an unmistakable artistic identity. Thus this unremarkable name is not content, but rather the occasion for experimental painting that tries out the most varied styles and thereby, despite—or precisely because of—its explicit signature, takes any thought of uniqueness ad absurdum. Also in his "collages," where found materials like newspaper clippings or menus from take-out joints are combined with his own drawings, posters, and objects from his studio, he focuses on the myth of artistic authenticity.

Oscar Tuazon (born 1975) takes inspiration for his work, mainly constructions in wood, concrete, and steel, from structures of the do-it-yourself and survival movements, not so much in terms of form as in the sense of strategy. Ideas from Land Art blend in his work with those of Minimal Art into a combination of abstraction and pragmatic construction methods. The physical challenges in the production of his works occupy a key position along with references to the place in which they are exhibited; they are characterized by a dissolution and recombination of traditional genres in architecture, sculpture, and design. In this exhibition Tuazon presents works on paper that serve as the theoretical foundation for his sculptures and objects.

At an early stage **Franz West**(1947–2012) turned away from painting and chose collage as a fundamental technique in his further artistic work. In doing so, he placed himself in the succession of Viennese Actionism, especially the material and body actions of Hermann Nitsch, Otto Mühl, and Günther Brus. Without directly reprising their content, with his focus on the body and his interest in fathoming psychic experience, Franz West belongs to a specifically Austrian tradition. His fixation with the body led him beyond collages to early sculptural works, first made of papier mâché, then of polyester, and since the end of the 1980s of cast aluminum.

Since the mid 1980s **Sue Williams** (born 1954) has lived and worked in New York. There she has become known to a broader public for her painting, initially still distinctly narrative. In diary-like scenes of domestic violence and sexual obscenities reminiscent of simple illustrated stories like comics and caricatures, the artist conveys her rage at society's continuing sexism.

Drawing is a constant activity for **Michael Williams** (born 1978), and forms the basis for his painting. In his new works he has developed strange picture worlds that can disorient the viewer in part because of their complexity but also because of their often seemingly unfinished quality. Michael Williams basically expresses his passion for the medium of painting within the framework of classical, fundamental relationships between materials: "I've developed a real love for the stuff: the mediums, the physical lushness of the paint, the texture and glare."

For further information, please contact Christian Schmidt at the gallery.