

# CASSINA PROJECTS

For Immediate Release

## X\_minimal

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curated and essay by Friederike Nymphius

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*x\_minimal (across minimal)* is a cross over survey of minimalistic tendencies from the late 70ies until today. Each of the selected artists has developed a signature style, which distinguishes his work as an independent artistic position. Despite all differences between the single artists in terms of media, form of expression and background they connect or react with/to each other and share in minimalism a common ground. The selection of artists relates to the concept of *x\_minimal*, and makes no claim to completeness.

Essays on minimalism often begin with a discourse on its problematic definition. The difficulty in finding a widely accepted name points to a core problem of this art: it involves the most diverse theories and media and has never existed as a uniform body. The American art historian James Meyer therefore proposes to understand this movement as a "practical field" and "critical debate" whose main goal is to create an art that is up to the demands of its time.

In the early 1960s minimalism emerged as a new artistic movement. Formally reduced it was freed from content employing modern materials and often industrial production methods, a special focus was on the spatial qualities of the artwork. In the late 1960s the increasing politicization of society set into motion a substantial change in the way art was understood and created. Minimalism got charged with meaning and its tools got extended with participatory elements. Philosophy, politics, science, and the critical examination of social issues became important themes that were dissected, analyzed, and presented with its specific means.

Confrontation and attitude turned into a core concern of minimalism; rarely have these qualities been as important as they are today, in an epoch of permanent irritation, improvisation and upheaval in society, politics and science. Belongings, traditional identities and values are no longer reliable references, as they have to be constantly rethought. Words, definitions and certainties fail, nothing is for granted. In this time marked by the loss of orientation and deep insecurity, art offers an important rehearsal space for reflections on the current situation.

*x\_minimal* shows that the process of questioning and expanding the premises of minimalism is still going on, giving way to a great diversity of interpretations, examinations, and appearances. As an instrument for "critical debate" artists are again using its parameters in order to question cultural standards and to work on the gap between what is now and will be next. The formulaic definition typically employed for the minimalism of *being limited to minimal means* is obsolete and no longer meets today's requirements and should be replaced by terms such as concentration or investigation. Today this discussion includes mostly contemporary issues such as LGBT, diversity, identity, migration, power relations, language, environment, and the examination of failed utopias, bringing back into focus the human dimension. In a world where there is too much of everything, focusing on a little becomes a prominent differentiator and challenge for the artists.

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Each era thinks and feels differently, responding to the particular demands of its time. Hence the settings of historical minimalism cannot simply be transferred to the present. Rather, its standards must be decomposed, revised and reinterpreted so that new contents and meanings can be released. Contemporary art in particular thrives on this essential interaction with the present. Our familiar reality is dissolving. To produce an art that is freed from the present can therefore no longer be the answer. The pressing question must no longer be what *could* be, but what *is*. In uncertain times like these it is all the more important that art shows stance, awareness and commitment. The selected artists of *x\_minimal* stand for this. The exhibited art works reflect these premises, they are radically contemporary in terms of material or media and content.

Opening Hours  
Tuesday – Saturday | 11 am – 7 pm

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