

Galerie Max Mayer

17 Mar 2022

**Galerie Max Mayer
Schmela Haus
Mutter-Ey-Strasse 3
40213 Düsseldorf**

Jef Geys / Dan Graham Preview

Galerie Max Mayer is honoured to present „Jef Geys / Dan Graham“, an exhibition including two major works by Jef Geys and selected photographic work by Dan Graham. Linked by their common interest in consumer culture, pop and their pedagogical practice, the works presented span almost two decades from the 1960s to 1980s.

Dan Graham (1942-2022) lived and worked most of his life in New York. In this exhibition, Galerie Max Mayer shows a selection of Graham's early photographic work, which he created in the urban context of post-war American East Coast and the Netherlands. The works presented, are an example of Graham's interest to document the urban landscape with an eye educated by minimalism and performance.

Jef Geys (1934-2018) created his work in the small town of Balen, where he spent most of his life working as a teacher. His pedagogic practice as a radical commitment to the locality of his hometown was central to his artistic production.

The exhibition commences with an introductory juxtaposition of Geys' C-series Opel474 and Graham's Chem-Core Atrium. New York, N.Y.. Mounted high above the gallery's stairway, visible from outside, Opel474 bulges out of the grey brick wall. With the body of work C-series, Geys collaborated with collectors which were able to choose the work's color according to the standard car manufacturer palette, to create a unique multiple. With the C-series, which he began working on in the 1960s and kept producing till 2017, Geys playfully weaved in questions of authorship, exchange and collaboration that are inscribed in the resulting art work.

Right below, Graham's Chem-Core Atrium. New York, N.Y. shows an entrance situation to a company's headquarters, its modernist appeal and a colourful flower bouquet. This image, standing out from the rest of Graham's work presented in this exhibition, focuses on corporate and commercial self-representation: modernist ideas of inclusivity as well as designed nature, which both fulfill post-war idealistic aspirations.

Entrances to Two Homes Home. Staten Island, New York City shows two paths, each leading from the bottom corners of the picture to the entrances of a shared house built out of brick. The suburban idyll of Staten Island in 1980 captures not only the petit-bourgeois desire of safety and homeliness of the Reagan era, but also Graham's formalist interest in the repetitiveness of the built social structure that is in line with his body of work Homes for America. Proceeding down the stairs, on the right of Entrances to 'Two Home Home. Staten Island, New York City, the diptych Left: 'Picture Window' typical home, Eindhoven, Holland and Right: Showcase Window in Shoe Shop, Eindhoven, Holland, dating back to 1977, is presented. It shows Graham's inherent interest in the reflecting surface, able to indicate a separating quality while upholding a false illusion of accessibility.

Jef Geys' seven panels work Colouring Book for Adults, created in 1964, is shown side by side in a panoramic installation. On painted monochromatic backgrounds, different schematic motives are brought to the matrix of the fiberboard. The standardized outline drawings indicate the spaces that should be coloured, referencing the scheme of a colouring book. Coloring Book for Adults on view, is the larger foundation of a body of work including publications, which Geys made available for people to fill out themselves. Seven sheets with seven subject - soldier, map, women, car, everyday objects and male body - were supposed to be coloured in by the buyer and then traded with Geys' coloured in version. The work on view, painted and drawn on fiberboard panels, is an example which Geys filled out himself,



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showing crayon fillings, interpretations so to say, of motifs he thought to be common to adults in 1964:

"By drawing it down, filling it out, breaking it up, I forced myself to think about e.g.: lawn, melon; doorknob, living space, day and night sections, crawl space, overorganized kitchens, mailboxes, urbanization, and other architectural nonsense - (in the magazine "house")."

