

Meredith Rosen Gallery

Meredith Rosen Gallery presents *Rudolf Maeglin 1957-1968*, the inaugural solo exhibition of works by Rudolf Maeglin in the United States. The show opens on March 1 and remains on view at 11 East 78th Street through April 15.

Swiss painter Rudolf Maeglin (1892-1971) faithfully depicted workers, factories and building sites in Basel from 1919 until his death in 1971. Trained as a medical doctor in Geneva, Maeglin shortly thereafter chose to leave the medical profession and his upper middle class upbringing and devote his life to his artwork. In the early 1920s, Maeglin traveled in Italy and France, where he honed his artistic skills at the art academies Grande Chaumière and Colarossi in Paris. Returning to Basel in 1927, Maeglin supported himself through work in construction and dye factories. His fellow workers as well as the city of Basel, undergoing urbanization, became his primary subjects. In 1933, he became a founding member of Group 33, a group of artists opposed to Nazi influence. While Maeglin's work was exhibited by the Kunsthalle Basel in 1970 in a two-person exhibition with Paul Camenisch and by the Kunsthaus Zug in 2012 with a major solo exhibition, the artist's work has been rarely shown outside of Switzerland. Maeglin's sensitive works trace the history of what has become one of the most significant cities for art in the world.

*Rudolf Maeglin 1957-1968* brings together Maeglin's oil on board works from the 1950-60s consisting of portraits of Basel workers and their families. Many of these subjects were Maeglin's friends, lovers and neighbors in Klybeck, the worker's quarter of Basel where he lived from 1947. Maeglin was openly gay during a conservative period in Switzerland. His portrayal of workers through this queer lens is an additional element of troubling the stereotype of laborers as a fixed masculine identity. Maeglin's works depicting those immediately around him, became a form of self inquiry. His unsentimental pursuit in understanding what it meant to be a worker through his artwork, made his position unique.

The works in *Rudolf Maeglin 1957-1968* made in the later part of the artist's career focus on the broader community of Basel, including the families of the workers Maeglin had come to befriend. He would often pay children and teenagers a small fee to pose for their portrait. This selection of works also depict musicians and two person compositions of couples. These works expand upon the delineated subject of worker and extend to the networks of care within the family unit and greater community that play an essential role in the function of society. The intimate scale, bright hues, and tenderness of these works oppose the tightly cropped frontal views of his subjects, creating a tension between the role of the worker as a subject and the human experience ever present.

Rudolf Maeglin (1892-1971) lived and worked in Basel, Switzerland. He studied art from 1922-1927 at Académie de la Grande Chaumière and Académie Colarossi in Paris. Public commissions include frescos in Sandgruben schoolhouse, Basel (1951-57) and stained glass windows for the Cantonal Employment Office commissioned by Kunstcredit Basel (1966-68). Exhibitions include the inaugural Group 33 exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel (1934); a two-person exhibition with Paul Camenisch at Kunsthalle Basel (1970); and a three gallery retrospective at galleries Knoell, Krupp, and Mueller in 2021. A monograph of Maeglin's work was published alongside the 2021 retrospective. This is the first exhibition of Maeglin's work at Meredith Rosen Gallery and the first solo presentation of the artist in the United States.