

Arndt & Partner is pleased to present two solo shows by the German artists Günter Fruhtrunk, who died in 1982, and Eva Berendes:

The significance of Günter Fruhtrunk's work in the realm of abstract art has hitherto been apparent to only a small circle of admirers and thus still needs to be made known to a wider audience.

Fruhtrunk's uncompromising approach and his independent stance proffer an alternative to eyes that in this day and age are constantly overwhelmed with images. The pictures, which were composed with rigour, objectivity, and precision, and deliberately designed to irritate the visual faculties, confront the beholder with fundamental questions concerning perception and contemplation. Early in his career Fruhtrunk was inspired by Malevich and the Constructivist school. He was subsequently influenced by Jean Arp and Fernand Léger and attained to a very personal and intimate style which, within a closed system of pictorial techniques, also strove for expressive freedom. The work of Fruhtrunk can be described as both classical and contemporary, inasmuch as it focuses on art as art, just as on many other things.

Günter Fruhtrunk was born in Munich in 1923. After finishing secondary school he studied architecture at the "Technische Hochschule" in Munich, which he gave up after two semesters to join the army as a volunteer in the fall of 1941. During the war the artist began to draw and paint landscapes in watercolour, probably to balance his war experience. In 1945 Fruhtrunk began to study privately under the painter and printmaker William Straube in Neufrach, who was a student of Hölzel and Matisse. In 1948 Fruhtrunk met Willi Baumeister and in 1949 he became acquainted with Julius Bisier. According to the artist himself, these encounters led him towards abstract painting. In 1954 he received a scholarship from the Land Baden-Württemberg and the government Français and moved to Paris, to work with the studios of Léger and Arp. In 1955 Günter Fruhtrunk first showed the results of his work to the public at an exhibition of the René Drouin's Cercle Volnay in Paris. During the 1960s the painter mainly lived and worked in Paris and in France. In 1961 he received the Prix Jean Arp in Cologne and in 1966 he was awarded the silver medal of the Prix d'Europe in Ostende. In 1963 Fruhtrunk's works were shown in a retrospective at the "Museum am Ostwall" in Dortmund. In the winter semester of 1967/68 Fruhtrunk began teaching at the Munich art academy. His participation in documenta 4 indicates how important the artist was for German art history after World War II. It was Fruhtrunk who transformed the idea of constructivism to a colourful rhythmical pictorial world, by creating a dynamic language of form with the vector-like diagonal lines arranged strictly rhythmically according to their alternating colors. Günter Fruhtrunk committed suicide in his studio at the Munich art academy on December 12, 1982.

The specific effect of Eva Berende's work can be explained by saying that the viewer perceives

them stereoscopically, as it were, taking them in as home accessories with one eye and as works of art with the other. An absurd notion, given that Eva Berende's art does not, like op art, aim to confuse the optical senses, demanding instead a culturally determined gaze. The simply designed, geometrically refined wooden frames that are a defining feature for many of Eva Berende's sculptures, create an austere, almost sublime elegance and bestow even the most colorful of her screens with a degree of distanced severity. In their gesture of reticence they have an air of in-between steadiness. In the exhibition space, Eva Berende's new screens are presented on pedestals and thus appear to be sculptures, yet their possible functionality cannot be deduced. This dialogue of fine art versus design has fundamentally characterized the perception of art for the last hundred years. Central aesthetic and substantive tensions have arisen through a constant crossing of such boundaries. A game? Yes, but not played by the light muse.

Eva Berendes, born in 1974 in Bonn, lives and works in Berlin. Most recently, she received the Art Scope Daimler Japan grant for a residency in Tokyo in 2009. She has held solo exhibitions at galleries in Frankfurt/Main (Jacky Strenz, 2006), London (Ancient & Modern; The Reliance, both 2007) and Berlin (Sommer & Kohl, 2008). Furthermore, she participated in group shows such as Communism, The Project Arts Center, Dublin (2005), Minimalism and Applied I, Daimler Contemporary, Berlin, Strange Weight, Martos Gallery, New York (both 2007), and Foreground 08: Intervention/Decoration, Frome, Great Britain (2008). Her work was recently on show in The Eternal Flame at the Kunsthau Baselland in Basel (until Oct 5, 2008).

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