

Greene Naftali is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Konrad Lueg (1939-1996), his first solo gallery exhibition in the United States.

Konrad Lueg was a seminal figure of the German postwar art scene, first as a painter and later as legendary gallerist Konrad Fischer. In the early 1960s, Lueg developed the concept of “Capitalist Realism” with Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, and Manfred Kuttner as a response to a rapidly developing consumer society following Germany’s economic miracle. His critique of painting and consumerism included staging impromptu exhibitions in untraditional spaces -- in a building slated for demolition, for example, or a furniture store among saleable household items.

After graduating from the Düsseldorf Akademie in 1962, Lueg experimented with casein color to create distinctly flat and polished surfaces, setting him apart from the artistic trends at the time. He tested this technique on various subjects including people, landscapes, everyday objects, and recognizable icons. *Betende Hande* (1963), for example, zooms in on a dizzying array of bright yellow fingers closely entwined and rendered in extreme close-up. Lueg’s use of primary colors reference the coolly flat advertisements of the day and points to his radical distancing of painting from the illusory.

Drawing from the American Pop Art aesthetic by which he was deeply influenced, Lueg began to replicate traditional German motifs in 1964, including everyday items such as wallpaper, towels, and napkins. These intricate works, with their rhythmic display of repeated patterns, commented on the look of German domestic life and visualized a shift to consumerism taking place in the mid-‘60s. Lueg continued to advance his painting techniques over a ten-year period, experimenting with a variety of materials and tools—luminous paint, embossed rollers, shower curtains, and commercial fabrics.

From 1967 onwards, Lueg laid his art practice to rest and transitioned into the gallery world as Konrad Fischer with his own exhibition space in Düsseldorf. As Lueg the painter questioned the social implications of visual material, so Fischer the gallerist applied the same spirit to exhibition-making, presenting artists such as Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, and Bruce Nauman for the first time in Europe, and in so doing ushering in a new generation of artists abroad.

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