

Peter Freeman, Inc, New York, is pleased to present an exhibition of works on paper by Charlotte Posenenske (1930-1985). This is the gallery's third exhibition of her work, and the first devoted entirely to a selection of her drawings and paintings, made between 1956 and 1965, many of which have never been shown before in New York.

One of the most influential artists of her generation, Posenenske is best known for her minimalist and conceptual sculptural works, based on industrial manufacturing and mass-production. However, before turning to sculpture in the mid 1960s, she was working primarily on paper, using it as a space for experimentation as she worked towards simplification, repetition, and mechanization. Her later sculpture ultimately questioned the importance of authorship, and in her early works on paper it is clear that it is an idea with which she was occupied from the beginning, playing with ways to eliminate the subjectivity of her hand.

One group of works on view are her "Landschaft" [Landscapes] for which she often worked out-of-doors, distilling natural elements into gesture and essential marks, paring them down to near abstraction while retaining a pictorial organization. She also was making lively, highly gestural works on paper and cardboard, the apparent speed in which they were made belied by the elegant, precise lines of which they are composed. However, she was elsewhere eliminating gesture, moving towards mechanization. That is evident in her "Spachtelarbeit" [Palette-knife Works] in which she used that tool to avoid the hand-drawn, subjective traces of a brush stroke, and in her "Rasterbilde" [Grids], in which various types of marks were rapidly repeated, laid out in skewed lines. In these works she was exploring how automated her hand could be made to act.

Posenenske's work culminated in sculptural prototypes (1967-68) consisting of intentionally reductive elements based on industrial principles of geometry, modularity, and standardization. They were unsigned and manufactured in unlimited numbers, their production and distribution left up to the will of the recipient or consumer. The conflicts of authorship became a constant occupation in Posenenske's oeuvre and can be traced from the early works to the publication of her Manifesto in 1968, by which she ended her career as an artist, claiming that art could not have a sufficient political impact.

Posenenske began studying painting in 1951, after a childhood spent in hiding during Nazi rule. Later, she studied painting with Willi Baumeister in Stuttgart before working as a set and costume designer until 1955. Her first exhibition was in 1959 at Galerie Weiss, Kassel. Her first solo show, in 1961, was at Galerie Dorothea Loehr. Throughout the sixties her work gained wide recognition in Germany and abroad until, in 1968, she turned instead to sociology, the study of which she pursued

until the end of her life in 1985. In 2007, when she was featured in documenta 12, her work was rediscovered on a broader scale. Since then, her work has been the subject of many solo exhibitions including ones at Artists Space, New York (2010), K21, Düsseldorf (2012), and Kunsthalle Wiesbaden (2012). Recent group exhibitions include the 2011 Istanbul Biennial, 2012 Bienal de São Paulo, “Minimalism in Germany” at Daimler Contemporary, Berlin (2012), and most recently: “Spielobjekte”, Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland (closing May 11, 2014). Her work is in the permanent collections of many prestigious institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London), Museum Ludwig (Cologne), and MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst (Frankfurt am Main).

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