

We are very delighted to present Raum 19 IV, Imi Knoebel's first solo exhibition at our gallery. Imi Knoebel belongs to the group of artists that have developed a radical, minimal form vocabulary in the 1960s. Since the beginning of his artistic career, Kazimir Malevich has always been a very important reference point. Avoiding any figuration, his early work is characterized by a reduced use of color and a geometric form language: having started with black and white line paintings and hardboard installations, he later turned to colorful painting on wood or aluminum. His mostly serial work procedure on standardized materials always reveals the hand-made gesture of the artist, such as visible brush strokes.

The room-installation Raum 19, which Imi Knoebel realised in the Düsseldorfer Kunstakademie in 1968, plays a major role in his non-figurative work that already back then ranges between painting and object. Constructive, basic forms made of hardboard, such as circular segments, stretcher frames, cubes and boards are stacked or arranged side by side. "Despite its sculptural-installative presence, Raum 19 alludes to fundamental questions of painting. This is made clear by an arsenal of stretchers and its parts, that have acquit themselves of their function as picture carriers but still refer to painting at the same time." (Bernhard Bürgi, 1989). Also the leaning or stacked hardboards remind of monochrome panel paintings Imi Knoebel later works on in his group of Hartfaserbilder.

Raum 19 IV from 2008 presented at Galerie Christian Lethert is a unique 200x200 cm model consisting of hardboard solids that are installed on a table. Further Raum 19 works have been shown at DIA Art Foundation in Beacon New York, Darmstadt and in the Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin.

Raum 19 IV is accompanied by recent hardboard works that are formally connected to the installation. Also part of the exhibition is the small and considerable work Keilrahmen from 1968/1989. Having originally been part of the Raum 19 installation in 1968 this simple, little square stretcher frame was edited by Galerie Klein 21 later, in 1989. Johannes Stüttgen describes in his publication about the role of the Keilrahmen that this was integrated in the installation, being one of many parts within the whole site, but since being the only one of its kind had an individual character that stood for the whole idea of the Raum 19. (Johannes Stüttgen, Der Keilrahmen des Imi Knoebel 1968/89, 1991)

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