

Kunstmuseum Bochum

Ree Morton – Natalie Häusler. To Each Concrete Man

October 12, 2024 – March 9, 2025

With *To Each Concrete Man*, the Kunstmuseum Bochum is dedicating a major shared exhibition to two artists from different eras: To Ree Morton, who was born in Ossining, New York in 1936 and died in Chicago in 1977, and Natalie Häusler, born in Munich in 1983. The exhibition places Morton's work in a contemporary context with new and existing works by Häusler. Both artists are represented with monumental installations shown associatively side by side. The exhibition's open form creates an intensive dialogue between the work of these two extraordinary artists. Instead of a simple juxtaposition, the exhibition consists of environments that operate like independent ecosystems, that respond to each other and allow for the artworks to be experienced with multiple senses.

To Each Concrete Man

The exhibition title and eponymous title of a central work by Ree Morton, *To Each Concrete Man* (1974), goes back to Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno (1894 –1936). It serves as a fundamental concept for the exhibition, which addresses each individual person, 'each concrete man', and aims at the individual process of seeing and experiencing art. Ree Morton was not interested in following ideas blindly. Instead, she believed one should use them like a pair of shoes. This way, they can become part of every individual's lived reality, instead of remaining within the realm of theory. Bringing together both oeuvres, is a plea for the vitality and exchange between the artworks and the intellectual worlds of two congenial artists. It is the assertion that works of art have a life of their own, can find new meanings and change their significance - always also in relation to their viewers.

Friendship

Friendship as a source of inspiration and dialogue and as a foundation for mutual support and creation forms a common thread in the works of both artists. Ree Morton approached relationships with family and friends and her personal feelings with radical sincerity, making them an important source for her work. This included her children, students and friends, who helped with and inspired her work. One extraordinary example is *Something in the Wind*, a piece consisting of over one hundred colourful nylon flags dedicated to friends and family, which were originally hung on a sailing boat. Fifty of these flags are on display here in the exhibition. Friends are also important protagonists in Natalie Häusler's work. They emerge in her sound pieces, take part in performances, or even become sculptures themselves. The informal network around Häusler is consciously made visible in her art practice; mutual exchange and collaboration play an essential role. Ree Morton's and Natalie Häusler's artistic approaches are linked across time, and there are also parallels in the artworks themselves. *August 3rd. / 3. August*, a new work created by Natalie Häusler for this exhibition, focuses on a coincidence that intersects the lives of Morton, Häusler and her family.

Kunstmuseum Bochum
Kortumstr. 147
44787 Bochum
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Dienstag, Donnerstag, Freitag, Samstag
und Sonntag: 10:00 – 17:00 Uhr
Mittwoch: 12:00 – 20:00 Uhr

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Language

Language and poetry form another bridge between the two artists. Natalie Häusler is an artist and poet. With painting as her foundation, she creates works in which she embeds her own poems and makes them tangible through the use of different media and materials. To this end, she uses diverse ways of writing and forms of text. Her works do not merely operate visually, but also generate specific sensations on an auditory and sensory level. Instead of a world that is intact and balanced, they reveal discontinuities, ruptures and vulnerability. Her environments elude a definitive interpretation and, like language itself (as a synonym for life), are in continuous movement and in close relation with the world.

The use of language in her work also led Ree Morton to link the two-dimensional with the three-dimensional, shaping Celastic, a type of plastic, into sculptural words. In Morton's work, language is synonymous with personal memory, consciously anecdotal rather than distanced and descriptive. She often played with double meanings and humorous interjections and turned literary or philosophical references into biting social commentary.

Space

'What is sculpture? What is painting?' wrote Ree Morton in one of her many sketchbooks. She was one of the first installation artists of the 1970s to adapt her work to the respective exhibition context – that is, to specific spaces. For Morton, the importance of painting and sculpture in relation to space was central. Natalie Häusler operates in a similar field of tension. Departing from an expansion of painting into space, her work repeatedly penetrates the other senses – through the use of field and voice recordings or by consciously incorporating the possibility of physical contact. One example is the exhibited work *ECOLOGY - Sunrise of the Heart*, which uses reliefs saturated with pigments to create a painting that is sculptural and can be walked on. Both artists reject rigid categories of painting or sculpture. Their works are open-ended and deliberately ambiguous.

The exhibition is complemented by *Into Ree Morton*, a digital platform featuring historic photographs of Morton's works on display. *Into Ree Morton* can be accessed via [into ree morton](#).

Alongside the exhibition, a book will be published with texts by Quinn Latimer, Tausif Noor, Jules Pelta Feldman, Daniel Horn, Laura McLean-Ferris, Linda Morton, Natalie Häusler and Noor Mertens, which is expected to come out in the second half of 2025. If you are interested, you can pre-order the publication by sending an email to kunstmuseum@bochum.de.