

Werner von
Mutzenbecher
guest gallery:
Galerie Mueller
Basel, Switzerland
Apr 12 – May 17,
2025

The exhibition is part of Constellations, a gallery-sharing initiative through which we have the pleasure of hosting Galerie Mueller (Basel, Switzerland) and Catinca Tabacaru Gallery (Bucharest, Romania) at Gunia Nowik Gallery.

**GALERIE
MUELLER**

Constellations 2025
gallery-share initiative
April 12 – 13
12 – 6 pm

At the invitation of Gunia Nowik Gallery, Galerie Mueller presents a selection of works by Werner von Mutzenbecher in Warsaw, introducing them to a broader audience in Poland for the first time. The exhibition includes *Untitled (Novalis painting)*, an iconic piece from 1981—the same year von Mutzenbecher had his first solo show at Kunsthalle Basel. In the exhibition catalogue, he posed for a portrait in front of the painting, placing his own body in relation to its monumental scale. This work exemplifies his deep engagement with poetry and his meticulous process of translating real-life models—whether letters, geometric forms, or imagery from Old Master paintings—into his own painterly language. Alongside this work, the exhibition presents five geometric paintings from the early 1980s. These paintings, characterized by stark contrasts, precise yet enigmatic spatial constructions, and a restrained palette, exemplify von Mutzenbecher's exploration of form and perception. Through his geomet-

ric abstractions, he creates ambiguous spaces that blur the boundary between representation and structure, inviting viewers into a realm of poetic contemplation. This interest in spatial relationships extends to von Mutzenbecher's work in film, particularly *Dinge (Things)*, 1968. This early black-and-white film follows a journey from a city's outskirts into the interior of an apartment, where the artist himself briefly appears before the film's conclusion. The work serves as a kind of self-portrait of an avant-garde filmmaker, reflecting his enduring fascination with movement through space.

Throughout his career, Werner von Mutzenbecher has remained attuned to the artistic and cultural shifts of his time, continuously evolving and refining his practice. His active engagement with Kunsthalle Basel and both the local and national art scenes has kept him closely connected to contemporary Swiss and international artistic tendencies.

Werner von Mutzenbecher

Born in 1937 in Frankfurt, von Mutzenbecher had his first solo exhibition in 1966 at Kunstmuseum Lucerne, curated by Peter F. Althaus, who later became a curator at Kunsthalle Basel. Over the years, he developed a strong connection to his hometown of Basel, the local

art school, and especially Kunsthalle Basel, where he collaborated with and was exhibited by curators such as Althaus, Jean-Christophe Ammann, Peter Pakesch, and Adam Szymczyk. Since then, von Mutzenbecher has remained active across various artistic media, including drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, film, and writing.

1. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Untitled, 1981

synthetic polymer on canvas

67 × 45 cm

2. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Untitled, 1981

acrylic on canvas

46 × 33 cm

3. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Untitled, 1981

acrylic on canvas

46 × 33 cm

4. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Untitled, 1981

acrylic on canvas

30 × 50 cm

5. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Untitled, 1981

acrylic on canvas

46 × 33 cm

6. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Dinge (Things), 1968

digital copy of 16 mm film

duration: 7'46

7. Werner von Mutzenbecher

Untitled (Novalis painting), 1981

synthetic polymer on cotton

200 × 110 cm

(text reconstruction: *The world feels distant now, as if buried in a deep tomb — desolate, abandoned. A profound sadness stirs quietly within me. Memories seem far away, as do the desires of youth, the dreams of childhood, the fleeting joys scattered across a long life, and all those hopes that ultimately proved futile.*

These lost things return, not brightly, but in subdued tones — dressed in gray, like the mist that rises after sunset. The world, with all its vibrant pleasures, lies elsewhere now. In some other space, light once fell warmly upon the joy of those gathered under colorful tents.

And yet — perhaps it is only because the night no longer turns toward you — that you cast your messengers into the vastness of space: the shining stars, like emissaries, to declare your omnipotence and your promised return in the era of your absence.

These stars — these heavenly messengers — appear to us as infinite eyes, opened by the night within our souls. They seem to look further than even the faintest of those countless celestial hosts. They need no light to see. They peer into the deepest parts of a loving soul — one that fills a higher, inner space with an inexpressible ecstasy.

Daylight has its allotted time. So does wakefulness. But the rule of night is not bound by time — it is infinite. Sleep lasts eternally.

Holy sleep — may you not too rarely bestow your blessing on those who are consecrated to the night.)

