

CHRISTIAN MEGERT. Selected works. 1950s until today 8.12.16 - 11.02.17

"I want to build a new space, a space without beginning and end, where everything is alive and is encouraged to live, a space both quiet and loud, immovable and moving. [...] This space, joyful and full of vitality, of colour and movement, requesting quiet contemplation without any demands, colourless and cold, must be able to change with the speed of thought in line with my wishes, that is how I want it. [...] If you hold up a mirror to a mirror, you will find a space without end, without limits – a space of endless possibilities, a new metaphysical space."

Christian Megert, A New Space, Manifesto, 1961

In the solo exhibition "Selected works. 1950s until today", Setareh Gallery presents Christian Megert's early artistic works up to and including his most recent mirror objects. With his structural, material and frottage works of the 1950s – both informal and monochrome – as well as his light box and mirror works, Christian Megert, who was born in Berne in 1936, is an important representative not only of the Zero movement but also of light and concrete art.

The exhibition focuses on the mirror works comprising the fundamental pictorial element in Christian Megert's oeuvre since the late 1950s. Megert uses mirrors as reflectors of light and movement in the manner of Zero art; they dissect space and give way to monochrome worlds of colour. The fragmentation of surfaces into a mostly geometric vocabulary of colour and form allows Megert's constructive central theme to pave the way to a new space that extends back in origin at least to the Realistic Manifesto penned by the brothers Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner in 1920 ("We affirm depth as the only pictorial and plastic form of space").

The mirror is at once surface, composer of light and projector of the self. In his latest works, however, Megert even goes a step further: he mirrors the mirrors in his compositions, thus disclosing the viewer in the reflecting mirrors and releasing him into a seemingly infinite space. Monochrome colour surfaces later give way to colourful formal shapes, which are in turn shown reflected as well. In this way, Megert creates countless multiplying possibilities of new pictorial spaces and realities, without beginning and end, as proclaimed by the artist in his manifesto of 1961. The monumental settings of new pictorial spaces culminate in Megert's Spiegelraum Environments exhibited, for instance, at the documenta IV in Kassel in 1968.

Christian Megert attended the Kunstgewerbeschule in Berne from 1952 to 1955. Extended study trips to Berlin, Stockholm and Paris followed, during the course of which he met colleagues such as Antoni Tàpies, Piero Manzoni, Agostino Bonalumi, Otto Piene and Lucio Fontana. From the 1960s onwards, Christian Megert took part in Zero exhibitions and also organised them in Switzerland. Megert moved to Düsseldorf in 1973, where he held a professorship in the Integration of Fine Art and Architecture at the Kunstakademie. He created numerous large stone sculptures for the Musikzentrum in Amsterdam, the city of Maastricht, the WestLB in Wesel, the Bundesgartenschau in Düsseldorf, the Terrassenbad Baden, the Bankverein Thun and the city of Vaduz in Liechtenstein. Museum für Konkrete Kunst in Ingolstadt and Museum Ritter in Waldenbuch have already honoured Megert's oeuvre with a retrospective.

Christian Megert was an important representative at the major Zero retrospective "Zero: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s–1960s" held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2014 and at subsequent Zero exhibitions at Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2015.

CHRISTIAN MEGERT

*1936 Bern, CH, lives and works in Dusseldorf, DE

EDUCATION

- 1952 – 1956 Studied at School of Applied Arts in Bern, CH
1960 Co-founder of the international group „Nouvelle École Européenne“ (N.E.E.)
1964 Co-founder of the Galerie Aktuell, Bern, CH
1976 – 2002 Professorship, “Integration Bildende Kunst und Architektur” (“Integration Fine Arts and Architecture”),
Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, DE

SOLO SHOWS (selection)

- 2017 Akademie-Galerie, Dusseldorf, DE
2015 – 2016 Christian Megert - Ohne Anfang und Ende, Museum Ritter, Waldenbuch, DE
2014 Christian Megert - Zero-Raum und Container, Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, DE
2012 A NEW SPACE, The Mayor Gallery, London, UK
2009 Museum für Konkrete Kunst Ingolstadt (retrospective), Ingolstadt, DE
1997 Städtisches Museum Gelsenkirchen (retrospective and book launch), DE
Kunstmuseum Bern (retrospective and book launch), CH
1979 Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Dusseldorf, DE

GROUP SELECTION (selection)

- 2017 Art in Europe 1945–1968, Facing the Future - The Pushkin Museum, Moscow, RUS
2016 The Herman and Margrit Rupf Collection, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, ES
2015 Zero in the Mirror, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Lissone/Lombardia, IT
ZERO: LET US EXPLORE THE STARS, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL
Zero International, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE
ZERO. Die internationale Kunstbewegung der 50er und 60er Jahre, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, DE
2014 Zero: Countdown of Tomorrow, Guggenheim New York, USA
2013 BILDHAUEREI AN DER KUNSTAKADEMIE DÜSSELDORF, Museum K20, Dusseldorf, DE
Genius Loci - Contemporary Masters, Die Düsseldorfer Akademie nach 1945, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE
De Modernen Avant-Garde, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen-KMSKA, BE
2012 HOLZWEGE - SENTIERI ERRANTI - ARTE SVIZZERA DELLA COLLEZIONE DELLA MOBILIARE, il Museo
Canotnale d'Arte Lugano, CH
2009 ABSTRAKTIONEN-UNGEGENSTÄNDLICHE TENDENZEN AUS DER SAMMLUNG, Kunstmuseum Aarau, CH
ZERO, Sperone Westwater, New York, US
2007 OP ART, Schirn-Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt, DE
2006 ZERO, Museum Kunstpalast Dusseldorf, DE
1982 Spiegel, Kunstverein Hannover; Haus am Waldsee, Berlin; Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg, DE
1971 Konstruktivismus und konkrete Kunst in Bern, 1945-72, Kunstmuseum Bern, CH
1969 Optical Art, Von der Heydt Museum Wuppertal, DE
1968 Documenta IV, Kassel, DE
1965 Weiss auf Weiss, Galerie Schmela, Dusseldorf, DE
1962 Nul, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL
1960 Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen, DK (with Dieter Roth)

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA | Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL | Museum Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba, BRA | Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, DE | Kunstmuseum Bern, CH | Schweizerische Nationalbank, Bern, CH | Sammlung Lenz, Selb, AT