

SETAREH

REBEL REVOLUTION RHINELAND

DUCHOW KOHLHÖFER POLKE SCHULZE

"I have to read what I have to think."
stated Achim Duchow with sarcasm
while taking a Bildzeitung into his hands,
prepared to read what society dictated.

The Rhineland rebels were the analogic predecessors of the information revolution. Wild, playful artists aiming to make fun of everything. They created artworks with a critical undertone, in which they stated, with their very characteristic creative expressions, their opinion about what was happening in the world. Duchow, Kohlhöfer, Polke and Schulze recorded with acrylic paint, sprays, collage and photographs, amongst other, the events that were taking place around them. The focus was set on what the official art history criticism omitted. It was better to take things too far, than to produce an indifferent or authoritarian position.



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The Rebel Revolution Rhineland group grew up in the era of Rock & Roll in the post war west Germany within a constant fluctuation of events. A nonstop succession of ideologies, movements, cultures and countercultures: the student revolution of 1968, the hippie era, the punk scene, etc. This effervescence bursted a permanent state of creativity that explored new techniques and reflected on society's habits and obsolete rules. As if it were a treasure hunt, the artists lived on a constant quest for information and new resources.

Research was executed on the field: travelling, speaking to people of different backgrounds, reading, in boulevards and exploring philosophical theories.

Transcending beyond the standard parameters of society, four very different people worked, constantly and with effort, towards creating art that reinterpreted existentialism and which message was impactful. Existence was a matter of coexistence. Every one of them brought something to their shared artistic practice. Duchow, political and sharp, presented the concepts and the raw ideas that hit directly. Kohlhöfer introduced the mixed media, the variety of materials that came from subculture. Magazines, spray paint and collage were his instruments. Polke kept the edgy and contemporary ambience, following closely the tendencies of the time. Schulze connected the aesthetics and the music culture, as well as the Rockstar attitude, with their art. Music, music hours, abundance of lyrics, of rhythm. A colossal collection of records that was the soundtrack of this original, inventive and astute atmosphere.



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A maverick group of artists whose work danced in unison with the philosophy currents of the time. Their creations were a visual revision of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. They demanded mentality changes, political improvements and questioned the assumptions on dominant ideologies. They actively place their artist identities and their own lives in constant dialogue with their work and the rest of the group, entangling their essences, their thoughts and their spirits.

Black humour was a common denominator in their attitudes. They possessed the ability to make fun of the events that they were living, commenting on the current affairs with critical frame of mind. The rebel revolutionaries of the Rhineland experimented with the world itself with a relieved, witty and contagious laughter. Ideas and ideologies were transformed into artworks with impeccable aesthetic results. Their practice influenced freedom. Freedom on how to read, how to dress, how to behave, how to paint and how to make art. Leaving the post war conventionalism behind, they flowed through decades and locations, yet their ideas remain contemporary to today's audience, still fresh, rebel and revolutionary. Their influence will continue its fluidum, as the Rhine will, for their traces broke the conventionalism for the future generations.