

Works on Paper *From the Collection*

Oct 28, 2021 –
Jan 16, 2022

MEDIA ORIENTATION
Oct 26, 2021, 11 am

OPENING DAY
Oct 28, 2021, 11 am to 8 pm

curated by Sabine Schaschl, Evelyne Bucher and Eliza Lips

For the first time, Museum Haus Konstruktiv is opening an exhibition that exclusively presents works on paper from its own collection. With selected printed graphics, drawings, gouaches, collages and photographs, we demonstrate this medium's key role in the work of constructivist-concrete and conceptual artists.

Alongside painted works on canvas and sculptural works in granite, brass, acrylic glass and other materials, many representatives of constructivist-concrete art also worked with paper. Max Bill, Richard Paul Lohse, Karl Gerstner and Gottfried Honegger, for example, with their innovatively designed advertising posters, advertisements, books and company brochures, influenced modern Swiss graphic design and helped it to become internationally renowned. Also for their independent artwork, some constructivist-concrete artists intensively addressed the challenges and possibilities of graphics, and the use of various printing techniques.

Up to now, printed graphic artwork has rarely been focused on at Museum Haus Konstruktiv. The exhibition *Works on Paper – From the Collection* closes this gap. An assortment of printed works are presented, such as lithographs, copper engravings and serigraphs, including selected contemporary artists' works on paper from the collection. Graphics, drawings, sketches, designs, gouaches, collages and photographs enter into an associative interplay of powerful placements, subtle nuances and unexpected accents. Thus, the entire fourth floor of the museum provides multifaceted cross-generational insight into the work of constructivist-concrete and conceptual artists on, and with, paper.

In Max Bill's *quinze variations sur un même theme* from 1938, we show a masterpiece of modern printmaking. The sheet in the top left corner of the square hanging reveals the underlying theme of this sixteen-sheet variation piece: a spiraling movement with lines of equal length leading from a triangle to a square, to a pentagon, through to an octagon and back. All the while, one line always belongs to both the preceding form and the one that follows it. The linear framework is varied fifteen times on the other sheets, for instance by using colors, superimposing circular elements, or connecting the centroids and corners. Bill's *quinze variations* is considered a key work in the graphic oeuvre of the Zurich Concretists, whose core also included Richard Paul Lohse, Verena Loewensberg and Camille Graeser.

Richard Paul Lohse took the principles of his work with serial forms, which he developed as a painter, and implemented them in artistic printmaking. In *Works on Paper*, he is represented by works such as his screen-print *4 verbundene Gruppen*. Part of the extensive body of works *Modulare Ordnungen*, this serigraph consists of interlocking F-

shapes in blue, red, yellow and green, with a square form in the center of the image, which in turn comprises four smaller squares in the same four colors. This piece was produced in 1966, a few years before the early 1970s' major international boom in graphics. For Lohse, and also for other representatives of constructivist and concrete art, the next two decades would be the most productive with regard to printed graphics – and especially with regard to serigraphs. The boom was a result of the technical perfection of this printing process and its acceptance as an art medium, because screen-printing was the first method to meet artists' prerequisites for reproduction of precisely measured fields and hues, making their creative ideas accessible to a wide audience. Lohse's early serigraph, whose theme of *Gruppenordnungen mit vier Farben* he continued to pursue on paper (and canvas) in the following years, is one successful example.

Verena Loewensberg also appreciated screen-printing, as it presented an opportunity to experiment with rich colors and precisely coordinated forms. In *Works on Paper* though, this artist is represented by a markedly restrained work that is unique for her in terms of the printing process: *16 gravures*. These sheets from the year 1975 are the only known copper engravings in Loewensberg's oeuvre. Each of the sixteen small-format sheets features eight lines of varying lengths, the shortest measuring one centimeter, the second-shortest two centimeters and so on, through to the last line, which measures eight centimeters. They all radiate from a common point in the center of the sheet and are varied with regard to orientation or sequential order and spread.

We also present delicately worked pieces from the collection by Camille Graeser, drawings carefully executed by hand in ink and tempera. *Grün-lila Konstruktion* and *Rot-weiss-grün* from the early 1960s demonstrate how Graeser used paper as a carrier medium to establish drawing as a genre within concrete art. Here, he defined the relationship between the composition and the untreated ground differently to that in his paintings, using only a minimum of opaquely painted colors and finely drawn lines. Based on an invisible grid, the abstract composition appears to have been brought into a floating equilibrium and detached from the conventional opposition between figure and ground.

The figure-ground theme also preoccupies Sam Porritt, but in a contemporary drawing context. In *Figure Ground Problem Study* (2021), wave-like patterns in red, blue and yellow nestle close together, alternately pushing forward and backward, and once again visualizing the phenomenon well known in art history: the irritating equivalence of background and motif. Porritt handles it nimbly, turning it into a loose sketchy study in ink and wax crayon. Other drawings in the exhibition, such as those by Basel artist Maya Stange, are characterized by precise linear structures in colored and lead pencil. There are also pencil drawings that constitute practice or sketch drawings created for non-paper works. These include, for example, the numerous *esercizi* from the 1960s by Swiss artist Hans Jörg Glattfelder, and the two drawings for *Wall Drawing Haus Konstruktiv (A)* produced by Sol LeWitt, one of the most famous representatives of American minimal art, for a wall drawing that was specially conceived for our museum.

The progressing lines in the fourteen-part paper work *Climate Control* (2015/2016) by Swiss artist Thomas Moor are also closely connected to our institution. They were drawn by a thermo-hygrograph, a device that measures temperature and relative humidity in museums. For fourteen weeks, it marked gradients on paper, reminiscent of those plotted by devices monitoring vital signs in hospitals – as if the sheets were documenting how well the body of the museum was functioning. Ryan Gander's photographic series is also directly linked to the museum. For his 2010 solo exhibition, this British conceptual artist photographed visual material depicting works from our collection, including Lohse's *4 verbundene Gruppen*. By selecting a section of a reproduced image in which the obligatory color reference strip remains visible and also adding a second strip to his photograph, Gander drew attention to the different applications of color that meet in such reproductions: the color used by the artist in accordance with strict systems in concrete printmaking or painting, and a functional color chart that is standardized according to industrial norms. The two-part photographic work *Investigation #15 – Although you've given me everything* (Lohse) and other works from the

same series raise questions about different color concepts, artistic authorship, and documentation methods, while also bridging the gap between past and present.

Unlike drawings and prints, in which the paper usually remains visible, in gouaches, the view of the carrier medium is often obscured by pastose application of paint. *Komposition S 67* (1967) by Gido Wiederkehr or the untitled piece by Frank Badur (2002) for example, achieve a painterly quality via emphasis of the surface and use of rich colors. Once again, the possible diversity of artwork using paper becomes evident. The same applies to the collages by Victor Vasarely and Marguerite Hersberger, which are works not only on, but also with, paper. The ready-made *Poubelle* by French artist Arman consists almost entirely of paper: the contents of a waste basket, collected in an acrylic-glass box.

Works on Paper from the Collection presents works by: Getulio Alviani (1939–2018), Arman (1928–2005), Frank Badur (b. 1944), Horst Bartnig (b. 1936), Etienne Béothy (1897–1961), Max Bill (1908–1994), Walter Dexel (1890–1973), Norman Dilworth (b. 1931), Florian Dombois (b. 1966), Burhan Doğançay (1929–2013), Rita Ernst (b. 1956), Corsin Fontana (b. 1944), Ryan Gander (b. 1976), Ludwig Gebhard (1933–2007), Karl Gerstner (1930–2017), Hans Jörg Glattfelder (b. 1939), Jean Gorin (1899–1981), Camille Graeser (1892–1980), Wade Guyton (b. 1972), Marguerite Hersberger (b. 1943), Anthony Hill (1930–2020), Gottfried Honegger (1917–2016), Malcolm Hughes (1920–1997), Karin Ilse Käppeli-von Bülow (b. 1943), Sol LeWitt (1928–2007), Richard Paul Lohse (1902–1988), Verena Loewensberg (1912–1986), Peter Lowe (b. 1938), Elena Lux-Marx (b. 1944), Kenneth Martin (1905–1984), Thomas Moor (b. 1988), Jean Pfaff (b. 1945), Ruth Pfalzberger (b. 1949), Sam Porritt (b. 1979), Dieter Roth (1930–1998), Manfred Schoch (1932–2015), Maya Stange (b. 1926), Jeffrey Steele (1931–2021), Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943), Georges Vantongerloo (1886–1965), Victor Vasarely (1906–1997), Markus Weggenmann (b. 1953), Gido Wiederkehr (b. 1941), Gillian Wise (1936–2020), Susan York (b. 1951), Shizuko Yoshikawa (1934–2019) and Beat Zoderer (b. 1955).

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS

Wednesdays at 6.15 pm and Sundays at 11.45 am

SUNDAY STUDIO – WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN AGED 5 AND ABOVE

November 1 / 15 / 22 / 29, December 6 / 13, January 10 / 17, 11.15 am to 1.15 pm

INDIVIDUALLY ESCORTED EXHIBITION VIEWINGS

November 14, 11.30 am / 1.30 pm / 3 pm; December 12, 11.30 am / 1.30 pm / 3 pm

For more information and events, see: hauskonstruktiv.ch

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