

## Hans Josephsohn

Bleibtreustraße 45 & 15/16, 10623 Berlin

17 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

Opening: Friday, 17 November, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present a solo exhibition of works by **Hans Josephsohn** in the gallery spaces at Bleibtreustraße 45 and Bleibtreustraße 15/16, in Berlin.

Hans Josephsohn's work is characterised by his fascination with mass and form in space. Over the course of a six decade-long career, he continuously recalibrated dimensions and the relationship with their surroundings, by means of specific and repeatedly recurring forms. Josephsohn worked in distinct genres, among them the standing figure, the reclining figure, the half-figure and reliefs, as presented in the current exhibition. His sculptures are characterised by an urgent sense of physical materiality. For the artist, the human being manifested itself in the body, and human existence was characterised by its corporeality.

Josephsohn almost always worked directly from models, most of whom were wives or partners. Their names are sometimes included in the titles of the works, with two exhibited examples referencing 'Ruth' – Josephsohn's most important model during the 1960s and early 1970s. These works seldom took on the physicality of portraits, and instead relied on impressions of the personality of his counterpart. He gradually moved from the almost abstract to the more figurative and back again. While Josephsohn's early works still retain the slender appearance of stelae, the artist later became interested in enhancing the volume and form of his figures by working with quick-drying plaster, which he had then cast in brass or bronze. Traces of his search for the perfect expression through form can be seen on the finished works in the additions and subtractions of material and in the imprints of his fingers.

The selection of works in the exhibition at Bleibtreustraße 45 is based on the architecture of the gallery, which was originally designed as a residential space. The sculptures and reliefs blend harmoniously into each room, calling attention to the proportions of the works within their surroundings. Josephsohn's large half-figure *Untitled (Ruth)* from 1974–75 does not transgress this framework but instead emphasises the difference in scale between smaller works, including an intimately-sized standing figure from 1957, at just over 70 cm height. In the second room, various human and possibly sculptural figures are grouped together in a relief, with two sculptures in a similar style – a standing woman and a small half-figure – from the same artistic period placed opposite. The third room presents a small, figurative bust *Untitled*, 1969 beside a larger-than-life, strongly abstracted bust, revealing the fluid complexity of Josephsohn's approach to the genre of the half-figure. The last room is dominated by the sculptor's reclining



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figure *Untitled*, 1965 and the distinctly vertical orientation of the early stele, demonstrating the contrast between the horizontal and vertical orientation at play within his oeuvre. The exhibition is not structured chronologically, but is rather oriented towards the dialogues that develop between Josephsohn's sculptures and the surrounding architectural space.

The four large works exhibited in the gallery space across the road, on the ground floor of Bleibtreustraße 15/16, make reference to the urban setting of the gallery. Playing with the divide between the public and private domaine, the sculptures can be viewed outside opening hours from the street.

**Hans Josephsohn** (1920–2012) lived and worked in Zurich. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held in international institutions including MASI – Museo d'arte della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano (2020–2021); Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (2020); ICA Milano (2019); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2018); Kunstparterre, Munich (2015); Modern Art Oxford (2013); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2013); Lismore Castle Arts (2012); MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2008); Kolumba – Art Museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne (2005); and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2002), among other major museums. Works by Josephsohn were prominently featured in the 55th Venice Biennale (2013). Two permanent installations of Josephsohn's work are open to the public, including: Kesselhaus Josephsohn, an exhibition and gallery space in St.Gallen, Switzerland and home of the estate of the artist; and La Congiunta, a small museum in Giornico, Switzerland, designed by the artist's long-time friend and architect, Peter Märkli.

Works by Hans Josephsohn are in the collections of Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau; Kolumba – Art Museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne; Kunsthhaus Zurich; Kunstmuseum St.Gallen; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Kunstmuseum Appenzell; Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen; MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, among others.

Hans Josephsohn's work will be the subject of a solo exhibition curated by Albert Oehlen at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, in 2024.

Further exhibitions and events

**Berlin:**

3 November 2023 – 10 February 2024

**Richard Prince**

*Body*

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

11 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

**Rebecca Warren**

*She She*

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

**London:**

7 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

**Friedrich Kunath**

*The Art Of Surviving November*

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

**Marfa:**

4 May – 10 December 2023

**Grace Weaver**

*Indoor Paintings*

1976 Antelope Hills Road

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