

Günther Förg

Constellations of Colour

First Floor, 41 Dover Street, London W1S 4NS

30 September – 6 November 2021

Preview: Thursday, 30 September, 10am – 8pm

“For Günther Förg, like so many other artists, colour is both totality and fragment, leaving time in suspension.” – David Barro, 2015

Galerie Max Hetzler, London is pleased to present *Constellations of Colour*, uniting paintings on canvas and works on paper from 1990 to 2008 by Günther Förg (1952-2013). Bringing together works from Förg's seminal Spot, Grid and Grey series, the exhibition foregrounds the artist's celebration of colour and his experimentation with pigment, material and form. Offering an endless field of exploration, colour stands at the core of Förg's practice, assuming the role of both medium and subject in the exhibited works. The show marks the gallery's 21st solo exhibition of the artist's work since 1984.

Exemplary of Förg's late “Tupfenbilder” (Spot Paintings) series, the vibrant dabs and dashes of *Untitled*, 2007, reveal the artist's conceptual approach to painting. The seemingly spontaneous gestural markings appear to float on a white ground, despite underlying a precise composition and calculated balance. The joyful effect of restless colour is also present in two works from Förg's *Aller Retour* series, dating from 2008. Reminiscent of an artist's palette and Impressionist landscapes, these polychromatic works contain a sensuality that Förg deemed necessary to a successful painting.

Alongside works from the Spot series, the exhibition presents two “Gitterbilder” (Grid Paintings), in which netted brushstrokes regroup to form larger, weightless grids. An icon of Modernist abstraction, the grid reappears freed from artistic dogmas in Förg's practice, whilst also probing the line between abstraction and figuration.

Referencing a range of luminary figures from artists Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman to the modernist architect Le Corbusier, *Untitled*, 1990, is another work firmly rooted in the history of painterly abstraction. Comprised of 26 identically sized sheets arranged to form a nearly complete grid, the work is an atmospheric experiment in colour field theory. Each sheet is dissected horizontally and displays an encounter between two areas of pigment, which are in turn characterised by varying degrees of opacity. Inducing one's gaze to jump from one chromatic area to the other, the different tonalities endow the work with a sheer musical quality.

This symphony of colours is balanced out by a selection of Förg's Grey Paintings. First executed in 1973, the series marked the beginning of a



Günther Förg, *Aller Retour*, 2008, pastel on hand-made paper, 71 x 92 cm.; 28 x 36 1/4 in.; 82 x 104 x 4 cm.; 32 1/4 x 41 x 1 5/8 in. (framed)

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three-year endeavour in which Förg painted one canvas in monochrome grey every week. This experimentation with the colour grey and its various properties remained a constant in Günther Förg's work. Distinguished by a high textural quality, the works foreground the tactile presence of the brushstroke and pictorial intimacy which is central to Förg's work.

Günther Förg was born 1952 in Füssen and died 2013 in Freiburg. A professor at the University of Arts and Design, Karlsruhe and later at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, his work has been exhibited in numerous solo shows at international institutions. These include the Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice (2019); Kunstverein Reutlingen, Reutlingen (2018); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (both 2018); MEWO Kunsthalle Memmingen, Memmingen (2016); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2015); Fundación Luis Seoane, A Coruña; Museum Brandhorst, Munich (both 2014); Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome (2013); Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg (2008); Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (both 1991) and Secession, Vienna (1990).

Works by Günther Förg are held in major public collections including Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Tate, London; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute Chicago, Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco and Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis.

Galerie Max Hetzler would like to thank the Estate Günther Förg and Michael Neff for their kind support.

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Rudolf Stingel

Schönheitssalon Omm

Kantstraße 139, 10623 Berlin

14 September – 6 November 2021

Matthew Barney

After Ruby Ridge

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17 September – 30 October 2021

Julian Schnabel

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Louise Bonnet

Bathers

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November 2021 – January 2022

Adam Pendleton

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