

Günther Förg

Stations of the Cross

January 31 – March 7, 2015

Opening: January 31, 5-8pm



Stations of the Cross,
1989-1990, bronze

Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, is pleased to present the exhibition *Stations of the Cross* by **Günther Förg** (1952-2013).

Consisting of 14 bronze reliefs and 54 monotypes dating from 1989 and 1990, they were first exhibited at Galerie Max Hetzler in Cologne in 1990, later that year at the Renaissance Society, Chicago and in 1996 at Galerie Samia Saouma, Paris. The monotypes were published by Edition Julie Sylvester, New York. An important painting from the same period will be presented in parallel, *Untitled*, 1990, made in a studio in Brooklyn for a show at Mario Diacono's gallery in Boston.

When asked about the proposal to create bronze reliefs for a church in Chicago and to work with religious subject matter, Günther Förg responded:

"It is a terrific challenge. I have tried to read up on the meaning of the Stations of the Cross and on Barnett Newman's series, as well as Chagall's and Rothko's work. The various solutions fascinate me, and above all the intermingling of the expressive and the rational. The monotypes I just finished in New York really developed into studies for the reliefs, although they were conceived as a separate project. I like to work in different media at the same time. I am seeing more and more that we were wrong in art school when we thought that one's life had to reflect one's artistic practice that you could only make minimalist works if you also adopted a minimalist lifestyle, lived like a monk - otherwise the art would not be true. But that is an error. One has to give oneself the chance to develop and not allow anything to wither."

The monotypes were produced by Maurice Sanchez at Derriere L'Etoile Studios, New York, who remembers:

"It's hard to believe that it has been twenty six years since those days working with Gunther. When we started to work Gunther would paint the image and I would print three copies and clean the block for the next image. This went on for six or seven images then Gunther asked me if he could clean the block and then draw the next image. What Gunther was doing was drawing with the cleaning process and painting on top, this surprised me because he had totally submerged himself in all aspects of the process. To this day with all the artists with whom I have made monotypes, only one other artist has worked in this way. I truly miss working with Gunther and his extreme gentleness and kindness."

The painting exhibited in parallel is described by Mario Diacono in the exhibition catalogue published at that time:

"The four Untitled paintings were executed by Förg in New York in the Spring of 1990, and it may be for this reason that their "post-historical" dialogue with Abstract Expressionism appears closer, tender and tenser. The use of

canvas instead of lead also underlines a possible concern with expansive, reverberating light, adding a Rothko's introjection to Newman's. The minimalist configuration of the image is inch by inch counteracted by the gestural speed of the brush strokes, which however are not at all "expressionistic:" one might call them "objectualist" in the sense that they do not act as "expression" of a state of consciousness or as the establishing of a field of existential action, but are instead fracture, happening and duration, colour projected as the measure of time which is self-declared by its impression as painting - as if the moment of the execution and its contextual social events had become part of the picture's formal organization."

Günther Förg was born 1952 in Füssen (Germany) and died 2013 in Freiburg. His work has been exhibited in numerous solo shows in international institutions, such as Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2014); Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2009); Langen Foundation, Neuss (2007); Kunstmuseum Basel (2006); Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (2003, 2006); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2002); Kunsthaus Bregenz (2001); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía / Palacio de Velázquez, Madrid (1998); Touko Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1991); Museum Fridericianum, Kassel; Secession, Vienna (1990); Newport Harbour Art Museum, Newport Beach (1989) and The Renaissance Society, Chicago (1988). Förg's work is part of major collections, such as Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam ; Tate Britain, London and Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou, Paris, among others.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Reiner Speck had been published at the time of the first exhibition. A set of the Stations of the Cross monotypes is in the collection of the Ludwig Museum in Cologne.

This exhibition has been realized in collaboration with Julie Sylvester.

Upcoming exhibitions:

BERLIN, February 2015

Goethestrasse 2/3: Darren Almond, *works on paper*

Bleibtreustraße 45: Darren Almond, Carl Blechen (1798-1840), *Landscapes*

PARIS AND BERLIN, March 2015

Open Source, Art at the Eclipse of Capitalism. An exhibition curated by Lisa Schiff, Leslie Fritz and Eugenio Re Rebaudengo, with Cory Arcangel, Allora & Calzadilla, Ian Cheng, Bernadette Corporation, Simon Denny, Jeff Elrod, Jana Euler, John Gerrard, Calla Henkel and Max Pitegoff, Pierre Huyghe, Alex Israel, Daniel Keller, John Kelsey, Josh Kline, Agnieszka Kurant, Ajay Kurian, Louise Lawler, Mark Leckey, Megan Marrin/Tyler Dobson, Michel Majerus, Katja Novitskova, Albert Oehlen, Laura Owens, Seth Price, Richard Prince, Sebastian Lloyd Rees, Tabor Robak, Pamela Rosenkranz, Hugh Scott-Douglas, Steven Shearer, Reena Spaulings, Frank Stella, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Kelley Walker, Christopher Wool.