



11a

19 September – 6 October 2024

11a

Hans Hartung

1904 Leipzig, Germany – 1989 Antibes, France

Ohne Titel, 1952

Untitled

Charcoal, red chalk on paper mounted on canvas

47.5 × 63 cm

Veronika and Peter Monauni collection

Central to Hans Hartung's conception of his artistic practice was a strict eschewal of objective representation; rather, his main means of expression consisted of clusters of black strokes, loosely and usually quickly rendered on monochrome or variegated backgrounds. In his art, the line above all embodies energy and arises from the action of his body. In the charcoal and red chalk drawing *Ohne Titel*, 1952, crescent-shaped strokes appear alongside dynamic verticals, balanced by horizontals, creating a push and pull of energetic motion and rhythmic construction. The following quotation from 1976 illustrates how emotionally charged these lines were for the artist: "Everything that germinates and grows—life force, resistance, pain, and joy—can find its expression in a soft or flexible, curved or proud, strict or powerful line, or in a patch of screaming, friendly or sombre color." The despair caused by the horrors of war could only be rendered appropriately by an abstract, gestural mode of representation, even if lyrical qualities, the principles of harmony and the golden ratio were guiding factors.

Hartung was born in Leipzig, Germany, in 1904. After initially studying philosophy and art history, in the mid-1920s he began studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig and later at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden, Germany, before switching to Munich to study under the painter Max Doerner. As early as 1932, he and his Norwegian wife Anna-Eva Bergman fled to Menorca to escape the emerging political conditions. However, lacking money and suspected of espionage, the couple were forced to return to Germany in 1934. Back in Berlin, Hartung was about to be arrested for selling his paintings, which were regarded as “degenerate.” Pursued by the Gestapo, Hartung fled to Paris with the aid of a friend in 1935. In his absence, his marriage was annulled at the insistence of Bergman’s mother. Thus Hartung was stateless, living illegally in Paris and unable to leave France. In 1939, he married the painter Roberta González, joining the Foreign Legion the same year. In 1943, Hartung fled the German occupation to relatives in Spain, where he spent seven months in French captivity. Following release, he was conscripted into the Foreign Legion. In 1944, he was severely wounded and lost a leg while serving as a medic in Belfort, France. Invalided back to Paris in 1945, he received French citizenship in 1946 and was admitted to the Legion of Honour. After a hiatus of more than six years, he resumed painting. Bergman and Hartung met again in 1952, he obtained a divorce from González and remarried Bergman. He died in Antibes, France, in 1989. Hartung was a member of the Zen 49 artist group founded in Munich in 1949 and is regarded as a pioneer of *art informel*.

CMS



11b

7 October – 27 October 2024

11b

Herbert Zangs

1924 Krefeld, Germany – 2003 Krefeld

Objekt / Faltung (Nr. 904), 1953

Object / Folding (no. 904)

Acrylic on board

43.8 × 65 cm

Veronika and Peter Monauni collection

In 1953, Herbert Zangs devised a new visual form, his *Faltungen* [Foldings], one of which is *Objekt / Faltung (Nr. 904)*, 1953. Beginning in 1952, Zangs collected waste materials and arranged them serially on scrap material such as paper bags, torn paper plates or pieces of cardboard. He then painted over these object/material compositions with white paint—which he also usually sourced from leftovers—full of dirt and streaks of color. On the one hand, these *Verweissungen* [Whitenings] testify to the shortages of the post-war period and, on the other, to the search for a new identity, layers of history lying concealed beneath their texture. At the same time, they form an antithesis to all of the ideological “purity” that produced such devastating consequences, particularly in World War II. The white-coated surface of *Objekt / Faltung (Nr. 904)* is covered with an irregular grid of horizontal and vertical folds that give the surface the semblance of being broken, almost unstable, at the same time injured, but also in motion.

Zangs was born in Krefeld, Germany, in 1924. In 1941, at the age of seventeen, he was conscripted into the Luftwaffe and deployed to Scandinavia, surviving a plane crash and being taken captive as a prisoner of war. From 1945 to 1950, Zangs studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. He worked on the door of the inn Zum Csikós in the historic centre of Düsseldorf together with Günter Grass, who incorporated Zangs's wartime experiences into the character of painter Herbert Lankes in his novel *The Tin Drum* (1959). From 1950 onwards, Zangs began travelling—often hitchhiking—around Europe, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, later Russia, Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Zangs moved to Paris in 1965, returning to Germany in 1973, where he lived in various cities including Krefeld and Düsseldorf. Having lost both legs to severe diabetes in 1991, in the final years of his life he worked from a wheelchair, mounting squeeze bottles of paint on the frame and rolling the paint across large sheets of paper laid on the ground (“wheelchair paintings”). Zangs died in Krefeld in 2003.

CMS



11c

28 October – 17 November 2024

11c

Peter Brüning

1929 Düsseldorf, Germany – 1970 Ratingen, Germany

Ohne Titel, 1957

Untitled

Mixed media on paper

61 × 86 cm

Veronika and Peter Monauni collection

Creating an autonomous image space organised not on the basis of perspective but rather in motion is the foremost concern in Peter Brüning's work. "I do not formulate two-dimensional, but three-dimensional space. . . . It is an elastic space, a spatial tension," he observed in 1958. He accomplished this by means of rhythmically applied brushstrokes and a reduced palette that serves to render visible the processes of painting and their movements. "I transpose small-scale motion in time and space on to the overall image, whose main determinant is motion." The calligraphic gestures generally give rise to a rhythmic, interrelated oscillation, as in *Ohne Titel* (1957). In addition, areas of empty space draw attention to the significance of negative space, as embodied by the traditional Japanese concept of *ma*, which refers to the space between things, such as the beginning, or end or edges.

Brüning was born in Düsseldorf in 1929 and is regarded as the youngest exponent of German *art informel*. Little is known about his childhood, but his parents are thought to have been appreciative of art. In 1950, he began studying under Willi Baumeister at the Academy of Fine Arts, Stuttgart. He first travelled to Paris in 1951, followed by longer, regular sojourns in France. In 1953, he co-founded the Künstlergruppe Niederrhein/Gruppe 53 [Lower Rhine Artists' Group/Group 53], whose members included Winfred Gaul, Konrad Klapheck, Heinz Mack, and Otto Piene which, alongside the Zero movement, inspired the art scene in the Rhineland. From 1954, he lived and worked in Ratingen, Germany, where he died in 1970.

CMS



11d

25 November – 22 December 2024

11d

Gerhard Hoehme

1920 Greppin near Bitterfeld, Germany – 1989 Neuss, Germany

Schräger Faust, 1958

Oblique Faust

Oil, collage on board

88 x 70 cm

Veronika and Peter Monauni collection

Schräger Faust is from a group of collages in which Gerhard Hoehme layered fragments of newspaper clippings and other printed matter, applied impasto paint, allowed it to dry and form thick clumps and then scratched, furrowed or removed the surface. He began creating these very thick structures in 1957. In the literature they are often referred to as *Borkenbilder* [Bark Pictures], as they resemble tree bark. With this method, he explored various ways of transforming the traditional surface of a painting into an object with sculptural texture. The focus of his *informel* work is probing color and its “laws”: to him, colors were energies, signals, moments in time, but also deletions. Simultaneously, he drew on the texts’ images, with the collaged newspaper articles becoming bearers of meaning: “My works should be read, not viewed.” In *Schräger Faust* we find various

references, for example the fragments “Le bleu de Chine” or “Le vert R...,” that seem to accord with the gentle coloring. Or “Leroy”: is this a hidden nod to the French painter Eugène Leroy, known for his expressive impasto paintings, and thus a reflection on painting broadly? Another text fragment reads “free discussion.” And almost in the middle, presumably from a theatre programme: “Faust” and “Martyre de Saint.” Here we see the martyrdom of a saint juxtaposed with “entanglement in guilt, despite the best of intentions.”

Hoehme was born in Greppin, near Bitterfeld, Germany, in 1920. He trained as a bank clerk from 1936 to 1938. In 1939, he trained to be airman and served in World War II as a fighter pilot, flying numerous missions in North Africa, Russia, Greece, and elsewhere. He was shot down several times and severely wounded twice. Hoehme was held as a prisoner of war by American forces during 1945–46. From 1946 to 1951 he studied book design and typography at Burg Giebichenstein, Halle, Germany. In 1951, he married Margarete Schulze, and the couple fled to West Germany, where he began studying at the Düsseldorf Art Academy in 1952. Hoehme took his inspiration from French *tachisme*. From 1954 to 1956, he chaired the Düsseldorf-based artist association Gruppe 53. As an initiator of *art informel*, he co-founded Galerie 22, Düsseldorf, in 1957. In 1960, he was appointed to the Academy, where he played a key role in teaching reforms. In 1968, he released his manifesto *Relationen* [Relations]. In 1974, he moved from Düsseldorf to Neuss-Selikum, Germany, where he died in 1989.

CMS



11e

23 December 2024 – 12 January 2025

11e

Julius Heinrich Bissier

1893 Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany – 1965 Ascona, Switzerland

Ohne Titel, 18.06.1961

Untitled, 18 June 1961

Ink on paper

65 × 48 cm

Veronika and Peter Monauni collection

Ohne Titel, 18.06.1961 reflects Julius Heinrich Bissier's interest in East Asian calligraphy and the teachings of Zen art, which he did not regard as contradictory or alternative to the European tradition. Instead, what interested him were the unifying elements of Zen philosophy and European mysticism; his early work is replete with symbolic, mystical primal landscapes manifesting world creation and visions. In this ink drawing, the constraint to black and white is as evident as the reduction to the minimal gestures that appear to arise from the artist's immediate, "breathing" brushwork. While this is an overt reference to East Asian tradition, the circular shape drawn with a wide brush features a pair of dancing figures, rendered with thin strokes. Or is this perhaps an abstract symbol after all? Gradually, we begin to discern a mystical countenance in the wide stroke—with eyes, nose, and mouth—with another, indistinct face appearing in the left curve, both embodying the theme of transcendence. Bissier's embrace of the East Asian painting tradition would become an important source of inspiration for the brushwork of several *informel* artists.

Bissier was born in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, in 1893. He began studying art history at the local university in 1913. Soon after switching to the Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1914, however, he was conscripted into the armed forces, serving at the Freiburg postal censorship office during World War I with the philosopher Martin Heidegger. He continued to self-train as a painter in 1918. After studying early German painting and German mysticism, his meeting with sinologist Ernst Grosse in 1919 introduced him to East Asian art and culture, an experience that would have a lasting influence. He married Lisbeth Hofschneider, a hand weaver, in 1922. In 1929, he abandoned his New Objectivity representational painting for an abstract form, encouraged by meetings with Willi Baumeister and, in 1930, Constantin Brâncuși. A fire at his studio in 1934 destroyed almost all of his work from recent years. His seven-year-old son Uli died the same year; various strokes of fate and the increasing public pressure exerted by the Nazi regime caused him to withdraw into himself, so he mostly drew covertly in ink at a little table during the night. He had no exhibitions from 1933 to 1945. In 1939, the family moved to Hagnau, Germany, by Lake Constance, where Lisbeth Bissier set up a hand weaving workshop that provided a livelihood; he took care of the accounts, correspondence, and created designs. Reclusive as he had become, Bissier was all but forgotten in the post-war period. It was only his first retrospective at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hanover, Germany, in 1958 that garnered him sudden international recognition. The reception of his work has taken place above all in the context of *art informel*. In 1961, he moved from Hagnau to Ascona, Switzerland, where he died in 1965.

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11f

13 January – 9 February 2025

11f

Judit Reigl

1923 Kapuvár, Hungary – 2018 Marcoussis, France

Ohne Titel, 1958

Untitled

Screenprint on paper

59 × 43 cm

Galerie van de Loo, Munich, 1959, ed.: 33/40

Veronika and Peter Monauni collection

When Judit Reigl created *Ohne Titel* the artist was making works with descriptive titles such as *Éclatement* [Outburst], *Présence* or *Centre de dominance* [Centre of Dominance], usually completing these works in a painting-action. In these works she explored in different ways the dynamic and physical activity involved in the painting process: she would throw paint, using long, flexible palette knives to apply blobs of paint, spreading and smoothing them in diagonal lines, for example with the aid of a curved curtain rod, scratching or applying, layer by layer, onto the canvas with her fingers. This mode of working created gestural smears, exploding masses of color or, as here, calligraphic-looking loops that not only suggest a dimension of space and time, but above all

reflect the movement of the body. Distinct from André Breton's purely internal surrealist concept of automatism, which she embraced for a short time, Reigl drew on the immediacy of the gesture to bring the painting process and the body into a reciprocal relationship. For this reason, she is often associated with French *art informel*, known as *tachisme*. "I work with my whole body, as far as my arms will reach," she retrospectively explained in 2008.

Reigl was born in Kapuvár, Hungary, in 1923. From 1941 to 1945, she studied Painting at the Budapest Art Academy. Receiving a grant in 1946, she stayed in Rome until 1948, returning to Hungary in October of that year. Faced with the rise of Stalinism, however, she fled the country. Following several abortive attempts, she succeeded in getting past the Iron Curtain in March 1950 and travelled to France, where she lived in Paris until 1963 and later in Marcoussis, near Paris, where she died in 2020.

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