

PRESS RELEASE 31 May 2016

Thinking Outside the Box **The Museum Haus Konstruktiv Collection (1986 – 2016) and Guest Interventions**

curated by Sabine Schaschl and Evelyne Bucher

2 June to 4 September 2016

Media orientation: 31 May, 11 am / Opening: 1 June, 6 pm

The year 2016 is an important one for Museum Haus Konstruktiv: we are celebrating our 30th anniversary. To mark this occasion, our constantly growing collection shall be acknowledged in the extensive group exhibition “Thinking Outside the Box”. In this exhibition, we deliberately avoid using external loaned items and concentrate exclusively on works from the collection. The selection was made from over 900 works, more than 100 of which have been added since the last major anniversary year, 2011. We intend to focus, in particular, on these new additions and on the historical legacy of several key figures in constructivist-concrete art. In the “guest interventions”, we position the selected exhibits of the collection within the echo chamber of contemporary art. This includes various artistic strategies and media (video, performance, painting, sculpture and conceptual text/image works) that produce contextual shifts and breaking points, and which can be seen as humorous and subversive commentary.

It will be possible to see interventions by Olaf Breuning, Claudia Comte, Martin Creed, Sylvie Fleury, Christian Jankowski, Yves Netzhammer, Nedko Solakov, Martin Walde, WBG AG – 30 years of graphic design for Museum Haus Konstruktiv.

This collection presentation encompasses all floors and is divided according to a number of themes that are of central importance to the orientation of Museum Haus Konstruktiv’s content. These include:

- The Zurich Concretists (Max Bill, Richard Paul Lohse, Camille Graeser, Verena Loewensberg)
- Constructivist trends (Georges Vantongerloo, Erich Buchholz, Walter Dexel)
- Heritage-oriented (Christoph Büchel, Hans Hinterreiter, Hans Jörg Glattfelder, Willy Müller-Britttau, Franz Fedier, Karl Gerstner, Jakob Bill)
- Concrete poetry (Eugen Gomringer)
- Breaking open the space – kinetics and play sculpture (François Morellet, Gottfried Honegger, Aurélie Nemours, Rita Ernst, Victor Vasarely, Paul Talman, Pierre Keller)
- Monochromy (Olivier Mosset, Heidi Künzler, Frank Badur, Charlotte Posenenske, Andreas Christen, Klaus Staudt)
- Science and research (Vera Molnar, Thomas Moor, Andrei Prolettski, Beat Zoderer, Jürg Stäubli)
- The softening of ordering systems (Joanne Greenbaum, Andrew Bick)
- The conceptual present (Gerwald Rockenschaub, Carissa Rodriguez, Raphael Hefti, Ian Anüll, Marguerite Hersberger, Tobias Putrih, Attila Csörgő, Carlos Bunga, Rodrigo Hernández)

On the 5th floor, works by the “Zurich Concretists”, from the museum’s collection, constitute the conceptual starting point of the exhibition. The term “Zurich Concretists”, which came from exhibition practice and, to no small extent, via journalistic reports, gradually took hold from the late 1930s onward. The artists who are referred to as the Zurich Concretists never officially formed a group together.

In 1930, the Dutch artist and theorist Theo van Doesburg, together with a number of colleagues, had published the so-called manifesto of concrete art (“The Basis of Concrete Painting”). One of its key phrases is as follows: “nothing is more concrete, more real than a line, a color, a surface”. Thus, van Doesburg made it clear that concrete art does not encompass the depiction or abstraction of the model of nature, but instead creates from the concrete means of art themselves. With this text, he provided the stimulus for further theoretical and artistic engagement, and this is precisely where the Zurich Concretists played a decisive role. They formed a kind of nucleus for constructivist-concrete art in Europe and were very well networked internationally. Their legacy continues to have an impact to this day, as demonstrated by the contemporary art in our collection.

Curated interventions by invited artists who look at the present from history, and at history from the present, thus causing us to think “outside the box”, so to speak, **are integrated** into this collection presentation. For example, Christian Jankowski’s neon works from the 2011 series “Visitors” are on display. For these works, the artist has taken remarks from museums’ guestbooks, along with the corresponding scribbles, and converted them into neon writing. Positioned at specific locations within the collection presentation as anticipated comments, they refer to the dialog between work, curator and visitor in a self-referential manner. In Martin Walde’s guest intervention “Timeline 201.6” (2008/2016), questions are asked about the temporality of works and collections. Calendar pages fly from the ceiling at programmed time intervals, bearing drawings specially produced for the exhibition and dates that lie in the future. Here, the pages provoke contemplation about not only the temporal relativity of collections, but also about the ephemeral nature of one’s own existence. On the occasion of the 2015 Kiev Biennial, artist Yves Netzhammer, who works with computer animations, addressed Russian constructivism for the first time, producing the installational work “The Saw’s Child is the Board”, in which the hybrid language of digital media encounters the formal aesthetic vocabulary of the 1910s and 1920s. Netzhammer has adapted this piece for his room-filling intervention in the museum and supplemented it with selected works from the collection. Sylvie Fleury shows the site-specific wall piece “The Eternal Wow” (2005/2016), gets women to walk around at the opening in cocktail dresses with a design reminiscent of the Mondrian dresses from Yves Saint Laurent’s 1965 autumn collection, and exhibits a painting based on Mondrian’s neoplasticism with a strict visual composition interrupted by a small red plush surface. Martin Creed’s interventions are made from mass-produced materials, such as commercially available adhesives, nails, Lego pieces and balls which, on the basis of provided instructions, are either piled up on site to form so-called “stacks”, or else used in other ways. Nedko Solakov’s drawings “stahldoodles” (2016), on the steel girders in the exhibition spaces on the 5th floor were produced shortly before the opening. These are comments on art, on the location that the artist discovers, and on the world we live in. Claudia Comte presents a wooden sculpture from the series “Giant Bone” (2015), with which she reinterprets Sol LeWitt’s lattice structures.

A wall installation on the 6th floor shows posters, invitation cards and flyers that the graphic design agency WBG AG has produced during the 30 years in which it has worked together with the museum.

At the opening, Olaf Breuning will conduct one of his famous “smoke bomb” performances (at 6.15 and 8 pm) – with a special color combination for the museum. During the exhibition, along with the admission ticket, visitors receive a free adhesive tattoo based on his drawings and thus take a part of the exhibition with them on their skin.

We are particularly pleased about the launch of our “**collection online**”, which is now available to all interested parties as a permanent feature of the museum’s website.

Following on from our first collection catalog “Ganz Konkret” (2011), a **second collection catalog** with articles by Bob Nickas, Burkhard Meltzer, Sabine Schaschl and Brandon Taylor, plus an interview with the museum’s first director, Margit Weinberg Staber, is being released to coincide with the exhibition. The book launch will be held in August.

Part 2 of our **comprehensive program of events** with the motto “**30 Years – 30 Events**” is also available. Please refer to the flyer (in German) or our website for more detailed information:
www.hauskonstruktiv.ch/events

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