

## “Painting“ in the 1960s and 1970s (Frankfurt/M, 14–15 Jun 13)

MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Germany, Jun 14–15, 2013

Deadline: Nov 15, 2012

Antje Krause-Wahl

Hidden Forces? - “Painting“ in the 1960s and 1970s

International Conference

Concept: Eva Ehninger (Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Bern), Henning Engelke (Kunstgeschichtliches Institut der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main), Antje Krause-Wahl (Kunsthochschule Mainz an der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)

Art history and art criticism have established a narration of sudden breaking points for the US-American artistic production since the 1960s: during the 1960s, so the story goes, artists turned away from painting to concentrate on conceptual approaches, performance, video, film, installation, etc. A decade later, at the beginning of the 1980s, they returned to traditional methods of painting at least in part for commercial reasons. This narration, which has been presented most prominently by critics associated with the journal *October*, has resulted in the fact that both scholarly and critical analyses of the role of painting for the art of the 1960s and 1970s are all but non-existent.

Our research project takes its cue from Helmut Draxler, who considers the medium of painting as a “Dispositiv” – an arrangement of premises – which becomes most prominent in those areas of art whose main aim is to distinguish themselves from painting. Thus, artists who often openly reject oil paint and canvas and with their choices of media seem to move beyond the realm of painting actually still grapple with questions that have originated in a modernist self-reflexion of the picture-panel: the breaking down of central perspective and a singular point of view; the framing of processes of production as well as processes of perception; the subsequent reintegration of fiction, illusion and narration.

As of now it has also generally been disregarded that a number of these artists, who are considered representatives of avant-gardist movements like Land Art, Installation or Performance, have actually never stopped painting. The fact that they have worked simultaneously in both media, which informed and influenced each other, might be symptomatic of the strength of the underlying “Dispositiv”. Similarly, artists such as Michael Snow, Tony Conrad or Robert Breer reflect the medium of film from the perspective of painting.

In studying the “Dispositiv” of painting within American art of the 1960s and 1970s, we would like to initiate a rethinking of art historical accounts of these decades. We aim to discuss the immense variety of artistic media and forms from the perspective of painting – not by reapplying

a restrictive Greenbergian definition of painting but by discussing the terms and terminology of painting instead.

Questions to be discussed:

How do contemporary discourses of the 1960s discuss painting?

What are the interests behind the rhetorical rejection of the medium of painting?

How are painterly discourses integrated into minimalist, conceptual, performative, installation or film practices?

How does painting communicate with the moving image, with media of image transfer or the technological production of images?

Based on these considerations, how may the return to painting propagated at the beginning of the 1980s be reappraised?

The two-day conference will take place at the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. The MMK Collection of art from the 1960s and 1970s gives a rich background to the topic of the conference and includes a number of artists that might be at the center of the papers and discussions (Walter De Maria, Bill Bollinger, Lee Lozano, Jo Baer).

Please send an abstract of your proposal (300-500 words) together with a short CV to

Antje Krause-Wahl: [krausewa@uni-mainz.de](mailto:krausewa@uni-mainz.de)

Travel expenses and accommodation will be covered. A publication related to the conference proceedings is scheduled.

The deadline for submission is November 15th, 2012.

The conference is supported by the Terra Foundation of American Art.

Reference:

CFP: "Painting" in the 1960s and 1970s (Frankfurt/M, 14-15 Jun 13). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 8, 2012 (accessed Mar 25, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/3964>>.