

HAUS AM WALDSEE

PRESS RELEASE

Exhibition

Berta Fischer, Björn Dahlem, Naum Gabo Into Space

Haus am Waldsee
International Art in Berlin

18 October 2020 to 10 January 2021

Press preview: Fri, 16 October 2020, 11 am. Berta Fischer and Björn Dahlem will be present.

„Into Space“ deals with the human longing for space, weightlessness, distant galaxies and the belief in hitherto incomprehensible energies beyond our perception. Three sculptors reflect upon the interfaces between art and science over a century and from Berlin. Following the exhibition „Lynn Chadwick, Hans Uhlmann, Katja Strunz“, which explored the subject of „Fold“ at Haus am Waldsee in 2019, Björn Dahlem (*1974), Berta Fischer (*1973) and Naum Gabo (1890 - 1977) are now taking up an artistic conversation about space and time between 1920 and 2020 with installations and sculptures.

For Naum Gabo, art in the 1920s was a means of gaining knowledge about the physics of our planet. The Jewish-Russian artist, who had emigrated to Berlin, had shortly before written the „Realistic Manifesto“ with his brother Antoine Pevsner, which was ground-breaking for sculpture. He was constantly searching for new materials and means of expression, „not for the sake of the new, but to find expression for the new view of the world around me and for new insights into the forces of life and nature within me“. Even before the First World War, the latest discoveries in natural science, Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and the idea of the fourth dimension as hyperspaces had already profoundly shaken the previous understanding of the laws of nature, which Gabo experienced directly during his studies of medicine and natural sciences in Munich from 1910 onwards.

The modern imagination that he had acquired during his studies was to have a lasting effect on his thinking after the First World War, leading him in new directions. On this basis, Gabo created dynamic, multidimensional, transparent sculptures of geometric precision and mathematical clarity in the early 1920s, which were uniquely perceived as science fiction in the sculpture of the time.

Like Naum Gabo, Berta Fischer works with acrylic glass. While the transparent plastic was new at the beginning of the 1920s and only introduced to sculpture by Naum Gabo, it can now be acquired and processed in various colours and sizes as well as with shimmering foils. Through the effect of heat, Fischer can easily bend the flat, inherently brittle material and work it into a sculptural shape. However, the forming process needs to happen abruptly, as the material



stores heat poorly and cools down quickly. This material-determined procedure leads to a wide scope of controlled chance within in Berta Fischer's work. As a result, her works are reminiscent of transparent high-tech materials that float in the room in whirling motion. Beyond gravity, they provide the disordered, chaotic and unpredictable in space and time a duration of momentary character.

The refraction of light causes the edges of Fischer's often very large compositions to glow in bright colours. This creates immaterial, coloured drawings in a space. Colour is literally dematerialised. A change of light or a small movement of air causes the hanging spatial bodies to sparkle, like the flickering light of distant universes. Using a material without matter, Fischer produces sculptures reduced to a minimum that describe a maximum of space and form. Depending on the situation and lighting, the installations can be read as universes, milky ways or vegetal gardens.

Björn Dahlem uses everyday materials such as wooden slats, found objects, fluorescent tubes, light bulbs and wire for his spacious sculptures. His examination of space and time is based on the theories of philosophy, astro- and particle physics up to the latest findings in quantum mechanics. His work deals with the connection between science and philosophy as well as the boundaries and transitions from natural science to philosophy and theology.

According to the Viennese quantum physicist Anton Zeilinger, quantum mechanics today recognizes that matter is to be understood as information and not as absolute objectivity. According to Dahlem, this realization completely challenges the current concept of materialism. If it turns out that matter is information, i.e. represents consciously registered data, the supposed objectivity must be completely re-imagined. As a sculptor, Björn Dahlem acts consciously against the background of insights, doubts and the failure of science.

Björn Dahlem became known in the 1990s through artistic representations of interstellar space, galaxies, superclusters or black holes, which were realized in large-scale installations using the simplest of means. One work, „Oortsche Wolke“ (2012), for example, consists solely of roof battens and fluorescent tubes. It refers to an accumulation of astronomical objects in the outermost region of our solar system that has not yet been proven with certainty. The existence of these objects is controversial and also a question of faith among astrophysicists. Other works by Dahlem take the form of sacred monstrosities. Here too, the artist consciously reflects questions of faith and uncertainties.

Already during Gabo's medical studies in Munich from 1910, which he abandoned in 1912 in favour of a scientific and finally an architectural study, the topics that Einstein had initiated were generally hotly discussed. A trip to his brother in Paris in 1912 and art history lectures by Heinrich Wölfflin in Munich in the same year finally led to the decision to become an artist.

The contemporary ideas of space-time curvature and multidimensional objects are reflected in his spherical sculptures, some of which are reminiscent of laboratory instruments. Circular segments, spirals and interlocking bodies raise the notion of movement, dynamics and a new concept of space in European sculpture to a level that has been interpreted as pure science fiction.

At first, Naum Gabo emigrated to Paris in 1932, then to England and in 1946 to the USA, where he exhibited at the MIT in Boston and lectured at Harvard in the 1950s. He died in 1977 in Connecticut, where he became world-famous. His last solo exhibition in Germany took place in Berlin in 1986. With the exhibition „Into Space“, Haus am Waldsee takes up the thread to this great innovator of sculpture in the 20th century and reflects influence and continuation in the work of two young contemporaries who set new standards today.

Curated by: Katja Blomberg

Exhibition Catalogue: Katja Blomberg (Ed.), Hardcover, 64 pages, Verlag Walther König.

High-res images are available in the press section on our website.
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Press contact

Erik Günther

e.guenther@hausamwaldsee.de

Tel +49 (0) 30 801 89 35

www.hausamwaldsee.de

The exhibition is rendered possible through:



HAUS AM
WALDSEE
FREUNDE UND FÖRDERER

Haus am Waldsee is supported by the Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf – Amt für Weiterbildung und Kultur, Fachbereich Kultur and the Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa.

HAUS AM WALDSEE – INTERNATIONALE KUNST IN BERLIN | Argentinische Allee 30 | 14163 Berlin
Tel.: +49 (0) 30 801 89 35 | www.hausamwaldsee.de