

## Press Release

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### **Paths of abstraction**

## **ROLF BEHM - JÜRGEN HOLTZ - MATHIAS WILD - LI ZHI**

Four abstract artists off the gallery

9 February to 23 March 2019 | Preview: 8 February 2019, 6 - 9 pm

Goethestraße 2-3, 10623 Berlin, Entrance B via the courtyard

GALERIE BERNET BERTRAM is pleased to present you the exhibition with works by four abstract artists of the gallery: Rolf Behm, Jürgen Holtz, Mathias Wild and Li Zhi.

#### **The suitcase as work of fine art - Rolf Behm**

We are showing eight works by Rolf Behm in mixed media and collage from his series *Malergepäck (Painter's Luggage)*, which he started in 2014. The suitcase as the epitome of travelling determine canvas or paper. Behm was inspired to do this by the photographs of the detectors at airports that illuminate the on-board luggage. "Cold" and "hot" zones and everyday utensils become visible on the monitors: a flask, a bottle, a mousetrap and other travel companions that Behm transforms into a multi-layered abstract pictorial space. Master of mixed media, Behm paints with colours that transport the light and sets colour signals. He intensifies the oscillation of the pictorial elements by inserting pieces of coloured paper in the tradition of collage. Each suitcase of the artist is a portrait with its own statement and appeals to us. Sometimes tender and with a soft voice (*Suitcase bleu*), then erotic (*Flacon rouge*) it invites us on a journey of discovery.

#### **Scripture figures and Watercolours by Jürgen Holtz**

The hieroglyphic or Arabic-Asian-looking Characters by Jürgen Holtz from 2002, executed with watercolours or ink, resemble pictorial carpets. An invented language in ideograms that have always fascinated the artist. In their variety, they resemble mysterious poetic letters in a new unknown script (*Alphabet*), addressed to unknowns. The forms are either strictly ordered or, as in the portrait of the cock *Herzog Ohnefurcht*, merge into arabesques. They are signs, messages in the calligraphic tradition, "letters from nobody to nobody", as Jürgen Holtz says, also the original echo of theatre and artistic creation (*Alphabet, Ritual*), of play and dance. This is also the case in the watercolours of 2014 *Tanz 2* and *Tanz 3*. The works are available in the original as well as Fine Art Prints in a limited edition.

#### **Close to autonomous painting - Mathias Wild**

Mathias Wild, who died in 2017, saw himself as a picture researcher and explorer. For him, pictures were created not only from what he saw, but also from thoughts. Almost nomadically, Wild followed tracks, laid them down, took picturesque detours, played with lucidities, free zones, which he called "celestial bodies". Wild turned the whole picture into a cartography and a field of action. Spaces were created which the artist related relationally. Wild distanced the colours from each other, sent them into a chromatic discourse. His gouaches, the artist understood as coloured drawings in which he placed motifs on informal grounds in two to three quasi-filmic cuts. In his relief-like works with oil on corrugated cardboard, which he pursued since 2013, Wild dealt with everyday phenomena and situations, as in the object *Picnic*. He used packaging material and boxes, which he opened, trimmed and painted. Wild also acted spontaneously and autonomously in a technique in which printing, painting and drawing overlap

in rapid temporal succession, the monotype, represented in the exhibition by a sheet with a shaded wanderer.

### **Intuition, Inspiration, Concentration - Li Zhi**

The abstract-expressive compositions of the Chinese artist Li Zhi express philosophical attitudes. The pictures are like invitations to meditation (Suche nach Frieden), landscapes in which man emerges or disappears. These motifs run unobtrusively through the viewer's life and at the same time announce a relaxed and tense expectation of the right, present moment in order to set off for new, unknown shores. In his acrylic paintings Li Zhi prefers the colours blue, brown, red, a warm grey and sometimes, in the Chinese tradition, gold and yellow. Feeling, thinking and spiritual sensations find their way into a harmoniously floating whole, a continuum of space and time.

Text: Christian Bertram

**Rolf Behm**, born 1952 in Karlsruhe, lives and works in Berlin and Rio de Janeiro. He studied at the Art Academy in Karlsruhe with Prof. Markus Lüperts, among others. In 1977/78 he received the DAAD scholarship in London and in 1984/85 the Villa Romana scholarship in Florence. Rolf Behm's works have been shown in solo and group exhibitions at home and abroad since the 1970s.

**Jürgen Holtz**, born 1932 in Berlin, paints and draws since his youth beside his career as an actor. He is currently performing in Bertolt Brecht's "Galileo Galileo" at the Berliner Ensemble. Over the years, Holtz has played outstanding roles in many legendary performances and productions. He is a laureate of the Adolf Grimme Prize, the Gertrud Eysold Ring, the Berlin Theatre Prize and the Konrad Wolf Prize of the Academy of Arts.

**Mathias Wild**, born 1946 in Glarus/CH, studied painting at the Schule für Gestaltung in Basel and lived and worked in Berlin since the 1970s, where he died in 2017. His works have been shown in solo and group exhibitions since the 1970s and are represented in various public collections, such as the Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, the Berlinische Galerie, the Artothek of the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, the Bundesamt für Kultur in Bern, Switzerland.

Li Zhi, born 1964 in Baotou in Inner Mongolia, studied at the Minzu University of Fine Arts in Beijing. In 2008 Li Zhi was artistic director of the "Hundred Meter Long Art" exhibition at the Olympic Games. In 2011 he founded the "China Abstract Art Gallery". Since the 90s his paintings, sculptures and installations have been shown in numerous international art exhibitions in China, France (Paris/Louvre), Singapore and Germany. Li Zhi is represented in various large art collections. He lives in China and Berlin.

Text: Christian Bertram

**upcoming**  
**Zhao Mengjun - Ducks & Dreams**  
**29 March - 11 May 2019**

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**Opening times**  
**Tuesday - Friday 12 - 6 pm**  
**Saturday 12 - 4 pm or by appointment**

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