

Press Release

Frankfurt / Main, 05.09.2018

Michael Riedel: Graphic Art as Event 9 June to 4 November 2018

Press preview: Thursday, 7 June 2018, 11am

Exhibition opening: Friday, 8 June 2018, 7pm

In the exhibition *Graphic Art as Event*, the Museum Angewandte Kunst is devoting itself to the oeuvre of Michael Riedel, which operates on the boundary between applied and free graphics. The show will highlight a work the artist executed at the age of twenty-two when he was just starting his successful international career: the *Signetic Drawing* of 1994/95. It consists of over a thousand sheets, among them non-drawn drawings. Purchased by the Städtischer Museums-Verein e.V. in 2016, the *Signetic Drawing* will now be on view in a museum in its entirety for the first time ever.

The exhibition will span the artist's oeuvre from its beginnings to the present. In large-scale installations encompassing drawings, wax books, publications and artists' books, post cards, posters, wallpaper, pictorial series and "poster paintings", it will stage graphic art as an open and ongoing process, as what might be called a self-perpetuating system in art.

Born in Rüsselsheim in 1972, Michael Riedel studied art from 1994 to 2000 at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main – where he was a master pupil of Hermann Nitsch –, and the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris. Since the summer of 2017 he has been a professor of painting and graphics at the Leipzig Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst.

Signetic Drawing is the master plan on which Riedel proceeded to build his international career in the art system. He systematically placed his name at the beginning of his artist's biography and developed his oeuvre from it. The point of departure is the first letter of his first name, "M", stylized as a decorative initial. By way of subsequent shifts of axis as well as rotations, ground plans and vertical projections, new drawings emerged, sheet by sheet, now in a technical/constructive language. They bear the potential of infinite extension. Offering ever-new possibilities, this extension triggers a continuous process of formation of new forms. The result is an irreversible system of a series of drawings with its own inherent dynamic.

Michael Riedel thus redefines the concept of the artwork as a self-perpetuating system. Process and system become one. The system ensures its continued existence by constantly changing. Riedel succeeds in realizing the conception of a self-producing artwork within the art system.

After the *Signetic Drawing*, Michael Riedel introduced the theme of reproduction to his oeuvre in publications, posters and wallpaper. He began employing the mediums, printing techniques and graphic forms of applied art and relating them to one another, combining

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them, forming links between them, charging them with artistic contexts, and taking one artwork as a basis for further works. For example, he transforms posters into artists' books that double as exhibition catalogues, while the print sheets become new artworks in their own right. Posters can also become unica or wallpaper motifs.

Another source of material for his art production is text – taken from recordings of more than 1,800 hours of his everyday life as an artist. What we have here is a utopia of text that bears little relation to how we generally conceive of communication or legibility. The use of the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) of various websites, the employment of language recognition programs by which the writing process develops a momentum of its own, the recycling of existing texts by putting its words in alphabetical order... These are all examples of the paths Riedel explores in the surface structures of his materials, and how he plays with various paradigms: on the one hand with a paradigm of the visual arts in which form is content, and on the other hand with a literary paradigm that has taught us to comprehend contents rather than see printed matter. Again and again, by transforming text and the forms of writing associated with it into a visual phenomenon beyond the boundaries of verbal communication, he breaks the mould of the expectable.

Taken as a whole, Michael Riedel's oeuvre reflects on graphics as a cultural achievement in text and image. He transforms the forms of applied art into issues of the free visual arts and its claim to autonomy. He occupies the art system and takes it further. The art system is thus continually deconstructed and at the same time reconstructed.

A catalogue project is accompanying the exhibition *Michael Riedel: Graphic Art as Event*. A text volume, to be included in the admission fee, will be available starting on the day of the opening. A further two-volume catalogue concentrating primarily on the *Signetic Drawing* and containing texts and a pictorial documentation of the show will follow, prospectively in August 2018.

The catalogue project accompanying the exhibition is being carried out with support from the Stiftung Kunstfonds and Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP.

The exhibition is being realized with support from the Hessische Kulturstiftung and other sponsors.

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9 June to 4 November 2018

Director

Prof. Matthias Wagner K

Curator

Dr. Eva Linhart

Location

Museum Angewandte Kunst
Schaumainkai 17
60594 Frankfurt am Main

Information

T +49 69 212 31286
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www.museumangewandtekunst.de

Opening hours

Tue, Thu–Sun 10am–6pm, Wed 10am–8pm

Admission

12 EUR, reduced 6 EUR
Free for children and teens under 18 and students of the Goethe University Frankfurt, the Städelschule and the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach

Sponsor

Hessische Kulturstiftung

Catalogue project sponsors

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