



1985 Klaus Merkel, Forum Kunst, Rottweil



1989 *Import Export*, Massimo Audiello Gallery, New York

Klaus Merkel / early 1980s / late 1980s

September 3, 2011 through March 24, 2012

Show 4

Kienzle Art Foundation

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Opening hours: Thu+Fri 2–7PM, Sat 11AM–4PM

Opening: Friday September 2, 2011, 7-9PM

From September 3, 2011 through March 24, 2012, the Kienzle Art Foundation will present its Show 4: **Klaus Merkel / early 1980s / late 1980s.**

This exhibition will once again focus on the programmatic orientation and specific content that are Jochen Kienzle's primary interests. They center on discursive queries concerning the creation of pictures.

In retrospect, looking at the 1980s facilitates a clarification and a more concise insight into how the protagonists of the day conceived their oeuvre. At the time, **Klaus Merkel** suggested a definition of painting that soon turned out to be a "special path" with a valid statement. The latter formed the basis for the increasingly differentiated strategies of his work.

In the early 1980s, Merkel's paintings were primarily dominated by a grey "Southern German Palette" whose motives were based entirely on a sparse painting process with linear excerpts. Cluster-like arrangements formed ensembles filling entire walls. Picture and object were dealt with on one plane. In his 1984 essay Markus Brüderlin referred to Merkel's current painting as a tool kit wherein the picture surface is comparable to a topographically thick ocean underscoring the preliminary character of the works. He pointed out that the formats took as their point of reference their handiness vis-à-vis a physical counterpart, especially in such instances where his head-high stele pictures insinuated directly anthropomorphic proportions and scales.¹

In the mid-80s the artist, by now in his mid-thirties, changed the mode of conceiving his oeuvre into a system-building, discursive type of painting. Its main characteristics were serial motif-types, standardized, 'loud' colors, and an unusual selection of formats. A type of painting that—while insisting on its sensuality—was also intent on demonstrating the dismantling of painting's canon of

values. Klaus Merkel confirmed the end of his early work phase by exhibiting his ensembles in extreme ways. He then went on to emphasize the complex interdependencies between the individual panel and the conditions of its presentation. Perpetuating the latter as painting motifs, they define his oeuvre to this day.²

Both phases of these heterogeneous painting concepts will be assembled in the upcoming exhibition **Klaus Merkel / early 1980s / late 1980s**.

This is the first time that the **Kienzle Art Foundation** will present, in tandem with the artist, a selection of works as conglomerate and condensate drawn from the foundation's holdings as well as other public and private loans.

Klaus Merkel (born in 1953 in Heidelberg) studied painting with Peter Dreher in Freiburg in the 1970s. Completely unimpressed by the revival of narrative tendencies in the 1980s, he unswervingly stuck to his nonrepresentational painting. Numerous public and private collections in Germany and abroad own works by Klaus Merkel.

Solo shows (selection): Master Slave System, Galerie Thomas Flor, Düsseldorf (2011); 07.06.01 stage, LWL Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster; Klaus Merkel: Installationsansicht, swap Schürmann Berlin / Haubrokshows Berlin (2010)

Group shows (selection): Das Gespinst, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach; False Friends, Brandenburgischer Kunstverein, Potsdam and Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin (2009); The Most Contemporary Picture Show, Actually, Kunsthalle Nuremberg; Guess who is coming to lunch? David Reed Studio, New York (2006); deutschemalereizweitausenddrei, Frankfurter Kunstverein (2003)

Since 2009, Klaus Merkel is professor for painting at the Kunstakademie Münster. He lives and works in Freiburg and in Münster.

Project related press work:

artpress – Ute Weingarten | Elisabethkirchstraße 15 – 10115 Berlin | Tel.: +49 30 21961843 | E-Mail: artpress@uteweingarten.de

¹ see: Markus Brüderlin in: Klaus Merkel, Kunstlandschaft Bundesrepublik, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine und Wulf Herzogenrath (eds.), Region Baden im Kunstverein Hannover, 1984, p. 88

² "A picture no longer generates itself. It is crucial to paint the context in which it appears as well. These types of pursuit did subsequently simply lead me to find different solutions for my pictures and also different solutions for exhibiting them (...)." Klaus Merkel in: Gestelle geschoben, Gespräch mit Stephan Berg und Klaus Merkel, Hannover 2002, Heinrich Schmidt GmbH (eds.), Ludwigsburg, 2003, p. 43