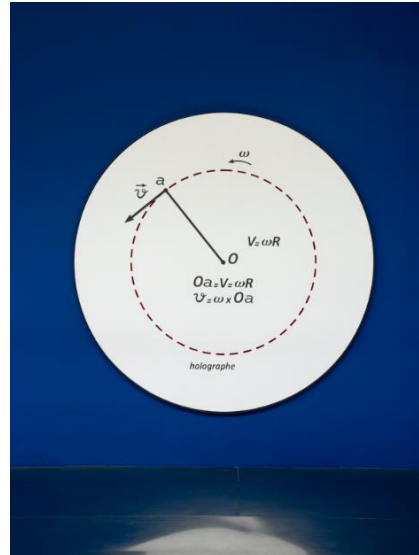


IMI KNOEBEL: *CENTRUM*

BERNAR VENET: *TRAJECTORY*

Von Bartha, Basel

21 November 2020 – 20 February 2021



(L-R) Imi Knoebel, *CENTRUM 4*, 2012/2020; Bernar Venet, *Hodographe*, 2019
Images courtesy the artists & von Bartha.

Von Bartha is pleased to present two solo exhibitions by Imi Knoebel and Bernar Venet in the gallery's Basel space, 21 November 2020 – 20 February 2021. Installed in the front space of the gallery, *CENTRUM* will feature new large-scale art works by German artist Imi Knoebel. Running concurrently with Knoebel's exhibition, *TRAJECTORY* will feature a series of paintings and new sculptures by French artist Bernar Venet in the gallery's main hall, exploring the artist's attraction to pure science as a subject for art.

One of the leading German artists of the post-war period, conceptual artist Imi Knoebel is known for his theoretical approach to colour and form. *CENTRUM* will feature a new series of five large-scale, monochrome paintings by the artist. For this series of work, Knoebel returns to working with wood, a material which has occupied him since the beginning of his career. The works in the series, which will be exhibited for the first time in this exhibition, allude to the contoured skyline of a city. As part of the series, Knoebel has created a distinctive cross-shaped work, symbolically suggestive of a church at the heart of this abstract landscape. With some of the works in the series reaching more than three metres wide, the artworks will dominate the gallery space. Knoebel made the decision to restrict the display of his artwork to the front space of the gallery in order to create a strikingly dense display.

Knoebel's puristic line drawings of the early 1970s saw the inclusion of colour for the first time in 1974. Throughout a career spanning over 50 years, the artist has continued his experimentation with colour, his powerful use of colour combinations working to reveal the physical potentialities behind often rudimentary materials. By reducing art to its most

formal elements, Knoebel highlights the possibilities inherent within these materials and structures.

French multidisciplinary artist Bernar Venet works across painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, and performance. *TRAJECTORY* will feature a series of eight paintings and two new sculptures by the artist in the main hall of the gallery. An exploration of the artist's concept of monosemy, the exhibition will feature a series of six recent paintings (2018-2020) which embody Venet's commitment to self-referentiality. The artist is drawn to the beauty of the immediate simplicity and purity of a formula, and assigns no further meaning to the canvases that present these diagrams. This series harks back to Venet's conceptual programme of work from the late 1960s when the artist began to incorporate mathematical and scientific texts and formulas into drawings, onto canvases, and in photographic blow-ups. *TRAJECTORY* will feature two paintings originating from this early era of the artist's practice, which will be exhibited alongside the new series. *TRAJECTORY* will also feature two sculptures by Venet, *Dispersion/Arcs*, exhibited on plinths in the centre of the space, which continue the artist's investigation into the mathematical and philosophical implications of the line as well as the dichotomy between order and chance.

Venet gained recognition in the 1960s for his *Goudron* (Tar) paintings and his iconic sculpture *Tas de Charbon* (Pile of Coal), widely recognised as the first sculpture without a specific shape. He soon developed formalist sculptures in the medium of steel, a material that would become central to his practice. Venet says that his sculptures are about "how the material resists. It is a test of strength—a battle between myself and the piece of metal".

Stefan von Bartha, Director, commented: "*It's an immense pleasure to host two solo shows by such established artists. But for me, the even greater highlight is that both exhibitions will feature very focused bodies of works which will be in an exciting dialogue with the gallery's architecture*".

Notes to Editors

Exhibition Facts:

Title: Imi Knoebel: *CENTRUM* and Bernar Venet: *TRAJECTORY*

Exhibition dates: 21 November 2020 – 20 February 2021

Address: Kannenfeldplatz 6, CH-4056 Basel

Telephone: + 41 61 322 1000

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Friday 2-6 pm, Saturday 11 am – 4 pm or by appointment

Admission: Free

Twitter: @vonbartha

Facebook: galleryvonbartha

Instagram: @vonbartha

Imi Knoebel: *CENTRUM* and Bernar Venet: *TRAJECTORY* will also be available to view through von Bartha's online viewing room via www.vonbartha.com

About von Bartha

Initially co-founded in 1970 by Margareta and Miklos von Bartha who remain a contributing force in its strategic direction, the family-run gallery has been under the direction of Stefan von Bartha since 2008. Together, the two generations maintain an unparalleled level of expertise. Von Bartha is a trusted destination for its audiences and a place to gain knowledge of the artists and the specialist areas that they represent.

Von Bartha presents a cutting-edge contemporary programme, representing an international roster of artists working across a diverse range of media including Superflex, Terry Haggerty, John Wood & Paul Harrison, Anna Dickinson, Sarah Oppenheimer, and Felipe Mujica amongst others. The gallery nurtures new generations of artists, whilst supporting the continually evolving practice of their established artists. As one of the longest-running international contemporary art galleries, von Bartha continues to support the careers of influential artists such as Camille Graeser, Fritz Glarner and Olle Baertling. It facilitates discovery across the generations, and has a track record of fostering the careers of some of the leading artists of the 20th Century with a focus on Constructivism; Concrete art; and Op art.

Located in Basel, one of the world's most important centres for the display of art, and S-chanf, in the heart of the Swiss Alps, von Bartha brings together international and local art audiences across these two locations. Von Bartha creates a unique platform of events and programming including salons, openings, and exhibitions beyond the walls of the gallery, inspiring and informing audiences by making new connections and offering a fresh perspective. Von Bartha publishes books, exhibition catalogues and its own online magazine "Stories" featuring interviews, essays and insights to the gallery's work and programme. Read more at www.vonbartha.com/stories

About Imi Knoebel

Imi Knoebel (b. 1940, Germany) studied from 1962 – 64 at the Werkkunstschule (School for Applied Arts) in Darmstadt, fascinated by the teaching style and personality of Joseph Beuys, he moved in 1964 to the Kunstakademie (Art Academy) in Düsseldorf. Knoebel, however, distanced himself from the other Beuys students and developed his own, minimalist style, influenced by its great forerunner Kazimir Malevich. Following puristic line drawings, light projections and white paintings (1972 – 75) Knoebel turned to colour for the first time in 1974. During the 1980s the artist experimented with found objects, incorporating them within his installation pieces. Continuing his investigation into the medium of painting, Knoebel has also expanded his practice to an architectural scale; his largest commission to date saw the artist design several stained glass windows for the Notre-Dame de Reims cathedral, installed in 2011 and 2015. In 2018 the solo exhibition at Haus Konstruktiv Zürich took place, including an exhibition catalogue published at Hatje Cantz.

About Bernar Venet

Bernar Venet (b. 1941, France) is a Conceptual artist, working across multiple disciplines. In 1966, Venet established himself in New York where over the course of the next four decades he explored painting, poetry, film, and performance though he was particularly attracted to pure science as a subject for art. The year 1979 marked a significant turning point in Venet's career: having recently begun a series of wood reliefs—*Arcs*, *Angles*, and *Straight Lines*—he created the first of his *Indeterminate Lines*, a shift in focus from pure geometry. Created randomly without the aid of instruments, these graphite-on-

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wood works were in sharp visual contrast to earlier works. In 2011, Venet unveiled seven monumental sculptures at the Château de Versailles for his solo exhibition. 2019 saw Venet inaugurate his *Arc Majeur* on the E411 highway in Belgium, which at 60 meters tall and 75 meters wide, is the largest sculpture in Europe.

To date, Venet has mounted in over thirty-five public sculpture exhibitions and his work can be found in the permanent collections of over sixty museums worldwide including such institutions as the Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim, Centre Pompidou, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles. Venet has been the recipient of several distinguishing honors, including entering France's *Légion d'honneur (chevalier)*. More recently, he received the 2013 International Julio González Sculpture Prize, the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center (ISC), the Prix 2017 Montblanc de la Culture, the Prix François Morellet 2019, and became a fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors in London in 2020. His largest retrospective to date opened at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon (MAC) in 2018. The artist currently lives and works in NY and Le Muy, in the south of France.

Press Contact: Sutton | Rachel Wiseman | rachel@suttoncomms.com | +44 (0) 207 183 35 77