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Mudam Luxembourg
 Musée d'Art Moderne
 Grand-Duc Jean

PRESS KIT

HEIMO ZOBERNIG
 26/04/2014 - 07/09/2014

Press release

HEIMO ZOBERNIG

Exhibition from April 26 to September 7, 2014

Curator Clément Minighetti

The work of Heimo Zobernig (Austrian, born 1958) uses a wide range of media including painting, sculpture and video. For more than thirty years the artist has been creating work whose formal reduction conveys an impression of succinctness, if not randomness, often underlined by the use of "poor" everyday materials. These objects frequently imply or suggest some kind of functionality that assigns them to the realms of presentation, exhibiting or domestic living.

In his exhibition at Mudam, Zobernig uses the idiosyncrasies of the building's architecture, more specifically the mirroring effect induced by the two identical yet inverted exhibition spaces on the first floor. Taking his cue from their stage-like character, he decided to exhibit his paintings and sculptures separately so as to highlight their intrinsic qualities and differences, whereby sculpture is an object that can be observed from all sides, while painting, even when understood as an object, remains a space of illusion or projection.

The East gallery presents a series of 15 monochrome paintings made between 1986 and 2013, which can be seen as genre variations referring to the adventure of modernist abstraction (such as Kazimir Malevich's *White on White* from 1918 or Barnett Newman's paintings), while the western gallery accommodates a series of 21 sculptures from 1983 to 2014 echoing Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades and 1960s American Minimal and Conceptual Art, among others. Freed from painting, sculpture is here no longer 'something you bump into when you back up to look at a painting', as the American abstract painter Ad Reinhardt put it.

Zobernig's exhibition unfolds in two chapters. After Luxembourg, it will be continued at the Kestnergesellschaft in Hanover in November, where it will also occupy two distinct spaces. The first gallery will host the same group of sculptures, while the second will present a different series of paintings based on the most recent work shown in the exhibition at Mudam, *Untitled* (2013).

Address and information

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ART AS A SPATIAL AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

*"It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist."*¹

Theodor W. Adorno

The Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig works today in such diverse media as painting, sculpture and video. In 1980, while completing his studies in stage design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, he organised a series of actions and performances together with Alfons Egger in which they analysed the conditions and constitutive elements of theatrical representation. Taking their cue from experimental theatre, these pieces, with their radically reduced formal vocabulary, questioned the significance and function of all aspects of performing, from stage, props and actors to space, text and performance.

Zobernig subsequently approached the visual arts with a similarly analytical and questioning, albeit often ironic, mind. For more than thirty years now he has been creating sculptural objects whose formal reduction conveys an impression of succinctness, if not randomness, which is underlined by the use of "poor" everyday materials. These objects often imply or suggest some sort of functionality that assigns them to the realms of presentation, exhibiting or even domestic living. Sometimes they represent a formal questioning of, not to say ironic comment on, sculpture as an artistic genre. They invariably straddle the boundaries of what is commonly acknowledged as art, and by doing so question the conditions of its production and perception.

Zobernig follows a similarly systematic approach to explore the possibilities and limits of painting, most notably with regard to abstraction, colour arrangements and expression. Whether in the style of the Neo-Geo movement of the 1980s, as a monochrome painting, or an inscription in Helvetica, a font he favours for its visual neutrality, Zobernig's pictorial practice is never restricted to the commonly accepted boundaries of the medium. It can therefore equally exist on canvas, sculptures or architectural interventions in the exhibition space. Painterly questions are even discussed in several of the artist's videos, a medium to which he has shifted his discussion of performance; in these self-ironical films, in which he often appears himself, he recurrently plays with the colours of the chroma key compositing technique.

Whether sculptural, pictorial or hybrid, Zobernig's objects never claim autonomy. Despite their apparent lack of content, they suggest numerous art-historical and other references (it is easy to draw a line, for instance, from the forms of Minimal Art to Marcel Duchamp's ideas and Yves Klein's work on colour), but like the works themselves, they confront viewers with questions for which there are no clear answers.

Zobernig has furthermore surrounded his work with a discursive fence by asking critics to contribute to the catalogues accompanying the majority of his exhibitions. This wealth of interpretation has prompted one of them to comment dryly that, 'The fiction of truth as such vanishes' (Helmut Draxler). Zobernig's method has been compared to Brechtian alienation, which aims to attract the viewer's attention to seemingly self-evident aspects of the performance. According to Peter Brook, 'Alienation is above all an appeal to the spectator to work for himself, so to become more responsible for accepting what he sees only if it is convincing to him in an adult way.'

The coherence of Zobernig's works often only emerges from the exhibitions themselves, which visitors are invited to discover as flâneurs, lending them a sense of theatrical staging or performance. By ensuring that his works remain profoundly ambiguous, Zobernig continually develops his subtle questioning of art as a simultaneously spatial and aesthetic experience.

¹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 1

² Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987), p. 137.

HEIMO ZOBERNIG

Exhibition

From April 26 to September 7, 2014

Curator

Clément Minighetti

Opening hours

Wednesday - Friday: 11 am - 8 pm

Saturday - Monday: 11 am - 6 pm

Closed on Tuesday

Entrance fee

Adults	5 €
60+, under 26 years old, groups	3 €
Under 21 years old	free
Students under 26 years old	free
Mudami card (valid 1 year for 2 persons)	50 €
Wednesday, 6 pm - 8 pm	free

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Press images

Available on request and on www.mudam.lu/en/presse/

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MUDAM THANKS

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LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de la Culture

WORKS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

PAINTINGS

untitled, 1986

Synthetic resin lacquer, linen, cardboard
21 × 30 × 4 cm

untitled, 1987

Oil, canvas
60 × 60 cm

untitled, 1988

Oil, canvas
60 × 60 cm

untitled, 1991

Dispersion paint, chipboard, wood
100 × 100 × 12 cm

untitled, 1993

Primed canvas, aluminium frame
190 × 640 cm

untitled, 1993

Dispersion paint, canvas
43 × 43 cm

untitled, 1995

Primed canvas, aluminium frame, hanging brackets
150 × 200 cm

untitled, 1997

Primed canvas, aluminium frame, hanging brackets
225 × 300 cm

untitled, 1999

Dispersion paint, acrylic, canvas
150 × 150 cm

untitled, 2000

Acrylic, acrylic enamel, video blue Trevira Television CS
200 × 200 cm

untitled, 2002

Projection screen, aluminium frame
180 × 180 cm

untitled, 2003

Dispersion paint, canvas
200 × 200 cm

untitled, 2006

Glass granules, dispersion paint, wood
20 × 20 cm

untitled, 2009

Acrylic, video blue, greenbox Trevira Television CS
100 × 100 cm

untitled, 2013

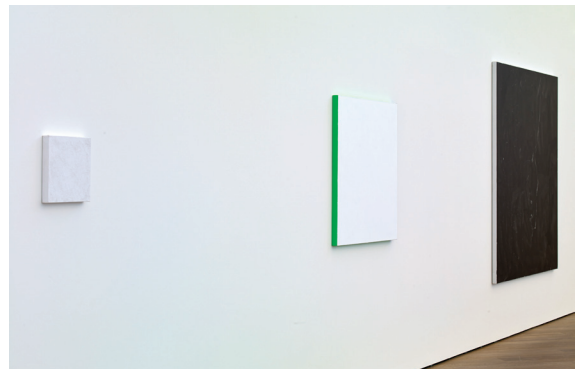
Acrylic, canvas
200 × 200 cm

All works

Courtesy the artist; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt; Simon Lee Gallery, London; Galerie Meyer Kainer, Wien; Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin, Köln; Galerie Micheline Sz wajcer, Antwerpen



View of the exhibition *Heimo Zobernig*, Mudam Luxembourg, © photo: Rémi Villaggi



View of the exhibition *Heimo Zobernig*, 26.04.2014 - 07.09.2014, Mudam Luxembourg, © photos: Rémi Villaggi

WORKS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

SCULPTURES

untitled, 1983

Dispersion paint, wood
78,5 × 90,3 × 73,4 cm

untitled, 1988

Dispersion paint, chipboard
100 × 50 × 50 cm

untitled, 1993

Cardboard, wood glue
360 × 5 × 5 cm

untitled, 1997

Acrylic paint, MDF
110 × 110 × 70 cm

untitled, 1997

Steel, wheels
90 × 66 × 55 cm

untitled, 1998

Chipboard
200 × 100 × 33,3 cm

untitled, 1999

Acrylic, wool
340 × 265 cm

untitled, 1999

Dispersion paint, chipboard
125 × 125 × 60 cm
Courtesy Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt

untitled, 2003

Tape, polystyrene, wire
40 × 40 × 40 cm

untitled, 2007

Shelf, Plexiglas® mirror
202 × 80 × 28 cm

untitled, 2007

Formwork panel, steel
100 × 150 × 50 cm

untitled, 2011

Mirror glass, steel, 5 chairs
74 × 122,5 × 102,3 cm

untitled, 2012

Square net, silver coated polyethylene, wood
200 × 280 × 4 cm
Courtesy Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin, Cologne

untitled, 2012

Dispersion paint, chipboard
45 × 45 × 360 cm

untitled, 2012

Chipboard
137,5 × 137,5 × 66 cm
Courtesy Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt

untitled, 2012

Chipboard
140 × 132 × 132 cm
Courtesy Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt

untitled, 2012

Chipboard
125 × 155 × 75 cm
Courtesy Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt

untitled, 2012

Polystyrene, wood, cement-bonded chipboard
192 × 124,5 × 127 cm
Courtesy Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt

untitled, 2012

Chipboard, MDF, OSB, wood
250 × 69,5 × 59,5 cm

untitled, 2012

Tape, dispersion paint, acrylic, kryptonite, polyester, steel
187 × 89 × 62 cm

untitled, 2014

Cardboard, wood glue, synthetic resin varnish, plywood
215 × 88 × 77 cm

All works, unless otherwise stated:

Courtesy the artist; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt; Simon Lee Gallery, London; Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna; Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin, Cologne; Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Antwerp



View of the exhibition Heimo Zobernig, Mudam Luxembourg, © photo: Rémi Villaggi



View of the exhibition *Heimo Zobernig*, 26.04.2014 - 07.09.2014, Mudam Luxembourg, © photos: Rémi Villaggi



Heimo Zobernig , *untitled*, 2014, © photo: Archiv HZ