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The Dorothee  
and Konrad Fischer  
Collection

Exhibition Booklet

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# Introduction

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Konrad Lueg in his studio,  
1967 (photo: Konrad  
Fischer Galerie)

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The Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection was born out of the close relationships between the Fischers and the artists they have exhibited in their gallery. The collection thus reflects not only the gallery's development, but also the friendships the gallerist couple shared with many of their artists. The selection includes all of the big names in Conceptual Art, Italian Arte Povera artists, and major German sculptors—from the generation of artists born after 1950, to younger artists pursuing a conceptual approach.

When the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen recently acquired the Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection, a large number of works and the gallery's comprehensive archive were also donated to the museum. This selection of Conceptual artworks has considerably expanded the museum's collection, because the majority of the artists were not represented at the museum before now.

Between 1962 and 1990, the first director of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Werner Schmalenbach, followed a guideline for collecting works: Only art whose quality has been established belongs in the museum. He alone had the power to make acquisition decisions, and he chose to buy only painting. He bought masterworks of classical modernism as well as 25 works by American artists, including Jackson Pollock's famous *Number 32, 1950*. Schmalenbach purchased this

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work after having seen it at the second Documenta in Kassel in 1959. Through Pollock and his fellow Abstract Expressionists in the US, New York had become a new center of visual art. This fulfilled Schmalenbach's guideline of not acquiring works from current artistic movements until they had become established.

Schmalenbach's successor, Armin Zweite, also collected paintings, but he expanded the collection of the Kunstsammlung to include sculptures as well. He thus acquired important works by Joseph Beuys, as well as such Minimal and Conceptual artworks as *48 Roaring Forties, 1988*, by Carl Andre and *Serial Project No. 1: B2, 5, 8, 1967*, by Sol LeWitt.

Konrad Fischer initially began his career as a painter under his mother's maiden name Lueg after graduating from the Kunstakademie (Academy of Art) Düsseldorf. His fellow graduates included Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke. He was comparatively successful and had several shows, including one at the Galerie Schmela, the most important gallery for contemporary art in Düsseldorf. Konrad Lueg also helped Alfred Schmela hang exhibitions, and he accompanied him on his travels. In 1967, Schmela proposed that the artist could manage a branch of the gallery devoted to young art. When Schmela withdrew his offer shortly after, Konrad Lueg decided to open his own gallery under his real name with the support of his wife Dorothee Fischer. He thus rented a passage-

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way located at Neubrückstrasse 12, which he enclosed with two glass walls on either end to create a room of about 3 × 11 × 3.90 meters. It was located right next to the Creamcheese club, which opened the same year and became a legendary gathering place for the art and music scene. With the support of his friend Kasper König—a curator who later became the director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, and who was living in New York at the time—Fischer came into contact with young representatives of Minimal Art and Conceptual Art. Taking a stand against Abstract Expressionism, these artists placed more emphasis on the concept behind a work than on its realization by the artists themselves. They also often used industrial materials to avoid personal expression. Their works deliberately referred to the surrounding space and were meant to be experienced actively by beholders. Fischer/Lueg had encountered several of these works already in 1967 at the two group exhibitions in Frankfurt in which he had participated as a painter, and he was very excited about them. Konrad Fischer's revolutionary idea was for artists not to send finished works, but for them to develop a concept for the exhibition space. The gallerist paid their plane ticket and let them live at his home, while he procured the necessary materials for the exhibition works that were then created on site. In place of exhibition catalogues, Fischer placed much value in tailor-made invitation cards. Fischer's gallery became international well-known virtually overnight.

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Konrad and Dorothee Fischer regarded themselves more as hosts for their artists, and not as art dealers. It was no coincidence that the gallery was called *Ausstellungen bei Konrad Fischer* (Exhibitions at Konrad Fischer) to avoid all traces of commercialism. The artists they invited to exhibit also emphasized that the gallery always had a positive atmosphere that reminded them more of an artist's studio than a commercial gallery space. This was certainly also due to Fischer's having been an artist himself and a student of the *Kunstakademie Düsseldorf*, like his wife Dorothee.

The gallerist believed it was more important to get his artists a number of exhibitions than to achieve a financial gain. For this purpose, he established a network of artists, gallerists, collectors, curators, and critics from all over the globe, while also maintaining close contact with local figures, such as the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in Krefeld, Paul Wember, the director of the *Städtische Museum Mönchengladbach*, Johannes Cladders, as well as the director of the *Kunsthalle Düsseldorf*, Karl Ruhrberg, and Ruhrberg's curator and successor Jürgen Harten. Thanks to Konrad Fischer, Minimal Art and Conceptual Art became known in Germany and Europe, which also contributed to their recognition in the US.

Fischer was an exhibition curator as well. Together with his childhood friend, Hans Strelow—who worked as an art critic before

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opening his own gallery—he established the project called *Prospect* in 1968. This exhibition series brought many international avant-garde galleries to the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and was an answer to the Cologne Art Fair, which was only open for German galleries. Fischer was also involved in the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunstrichtung* (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's Art Tendency), which was shown at the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich and was the first museum exhibition of Conceptual Art in Germany. Harald Szeemann, the artistic director of the Documenta in Kassel in 1972, also asked Fischer and the art historian and photography expert Klaus Honnef to select 25 American and European artists for the section “Idee + Idee / Licht” (Idea + Idea / Light), which was devoted to Conceptual Art.

Dorothee Fischer also played a major role in the gallery's success. In the early years, she guaranteed the gallery's financial survival with her income as an art teacher, and she took care of the artists staying in their apartment. She also documented all of their exhibition work in photographs. After Konrad Fischer's death, she continued to run the gallery on her own, while expanding its program by adding new exhibition formats and young artists.

*“Wolke & Kristall”. Die Sammlung Dorothee und Konrad Fischer* (Cloud & Crystal: The

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Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection) is the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen's first public presentation of these newly acquired works. The particular significance of the radical change from Abstract Expressionism to Conceptual Art is brought to the fore through the opportunity to view these new works in comparison with those that were already in the collection of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen. The gallery's archive of letters, drafts, invitation cards, and so forth is also being shown in the exhibition in the form of representative archival records for Carl Andre and Bruce Nauman.

This booklet provides information about the artists in the Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection. The texts are arranged alphabetically according to the artists' last names. The titles marked in red refer to works that can be found in the exhibition.



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Dorothee and Konrad  
Fischer, 1969,  
photo: Gerhard Richter

Günther Uecker, Konrad  
Lueg, Ferdinand Kriwet,  
and Gerd Hübinger during  
an action at the opening  
of the bar Creamcheese  
in Düsseldorf, 1967,  
photo: Manfred Leve  
© Nachlass Manfred Leve,  
Courtesy Museum  
Kunstpallast, AFORK,  
Düsseldorf

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(b. 1935, Quincy, Massachusetts)

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It all began with Carl Andre. He was the first artist to be exhibited at Konrad Fischer's gallery, and he is the artist who has been shown in the gallery the most often, with currently more than 30 exhibitions. When Fischer sent the American artist a plane ticket in 1967, he did not know him personally and had never seen any of his original works. Reproductions in international art magazines were enough for him, accompanied by enthusiastic accounts about Andre from his friend, the curator Kasper König, who was living in New York.

Although the sculptor was to exhibit a work that would be created on site, he arrived in Düsseldorf with an idea already in mind. However, he immediately threw it overboard. From then on, Andre said that he would never again plan a sculpture for an exhibition without first getting to know the room it would be shown in.

Andre lay one hundred industrial steel plates, measuring  $0.5 \times 50 \times 50$  centimeters each, on the floor of the gallery at Neubrückestrasse 12. Their overall size of  $250 \times 1000$  centimeters corresponded with the room's dimensions, which was about 3 meters wide and 11 meters long. The artist also exhibited a drawing that showed additional possible combinations of the same number of metal plates (*5 Sculptures*, 1967).

The exhibition titled *Ontologische Plastik* (Ontological Sculpture) was Andre's first in Europe. The floor sculpture, which was called *5 x 20 Altstadt Rectangle*, became legendary.

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Konrad Fischer at the construction of a work by Carl Andre, Kölner Kunstmarkt 1970, photo: © bpk / Angelika Platen

2  
Konrad Fischer and Carl Andre during the opening of the gallery on October 21, 1967, photo: Manfred Leve, © Nachlass Manfred Leve, Courtesy Museum Kunstpalast, AFORK, Düsseldorf

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Andre's art was so revolutionary that many visitors who came into the gallery looking for the artwork didn't realize they were actually walking on it. Virtually overnight, Konrad Fischer had earned a seat in the "first row of avant-garde art dealers," and critics began describing him as "way up front."

Carl Andre is one of the main representatives of Minimal Art. In accordance with his own guidelines (*Metal Requirements for Proposed Show in Düsseldorf*, 1967), he did not treat the metal plates after production and only arranged them in series. He thus regarded "sculpture as a road" that cannot be accessed from a fixed standpoint because it not only needs to be seen; more importantly, it needs to be experienced by walking on it. In referring to their environment, Andre's floor works become "sites" through which beholders can perceive their own bodies in ways that are also defined by the surrounding space.

Andre and the Fischers shared a friendship based on a common "passion for their profession." In 1968, Carl Andre had his first museum exhibition at the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, which acted on Konrad Fischer's suggestion. The sculptor in turn spread the word about the gallery's good work in the US, about which Konrad Fischer commented: "After the Andre exhibition I didn't need to say a thing; Andre said it for me. He said, 'Go right ahead, it's great.'"

Carl Andre became one of the most important artists in the gallery and in the collection that Dorothee and Konrad Fischer built up over many years. They not only bought several of his works through their own exhibitions, many were also gifts from the artist. After Konrad Fischer's death, Carl Andre made the work with the German title *Wolke & Kristall / Blei Leib Leid Lied* (Cloud & Crystal / Lead Body Grief Song), 1997, in honor of his friend.

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Konrad Fischer and visitors  
at Carl Andre's *5 x 20*  
*Altstadt Rectangle* during  
the gallery opening  
on October 21, 1967,  
photo: Fred Kliche  
(Archiv Dorothee und  
Konrad Fischer)

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(b. 1923, Washington, D.C.—  
d. 2013, Albany, N.Y.)

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In June 1968, Richard Artschwager invaded Konrad Fischer's gallery space on Neubrückstraße with his *blps*, which are black, sometimes white, three-dimensional signs made of wood, artificial turf, or horsehair. *blps* could be found anywhere, jumping out and surprising viewers in the city, on the street, or in fields and meadows. Artschwager also integrated them as motifs in his paintings.

Artschwager developed his *blps* in 1967/68. They began as sketches and parts of magazines painted over in black, which he then isolated, enlarged, and translated into a three-dimensional form. A *blp* does not signify anything; it is useless, and its only purpose is to be looked at. This purposelessness is meant to radiate into its immediate surroundings. It is therefore not a coincidence that a *blp* has the same shape as our field of vision and is a form that Artschwager compared to a blimp, or a wide screen with rounded corners. The name is derived from the military term "blip," which is a trace of an object displayed on a radar screen that is accompanied by a sound.

Fischer established contact with Artschwager through Kasper König, and the exhibition at Konrad Fischer's gallery was the artist's first solo show in Europe. This was his only exhibition at the gallery, although Artschwager participated in the legendary show *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* in the Kunsthalle Bern, which was curated by Harald Szeemann with Fischer's close involvement.

(b. Rheinsberg)

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After Lothar Baumgarten completed his studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 1970 as a master-class student under Joseph Beuys, he debuted his first solo exhibition *Amazonas-Kosmos* at Konrad Fischer. The exhibition was held in the art space located at Andreasstrasse 5, which Fischer had been using as an additional gallery since 1970, as well as in the gallery at Neubrückstrasse 12. The works presented set the tone for Baumgarten's future work, his artistic engagement with anthropological issues, his reflections on Western strategies of thought, and his rejection of the separation between culture and nature. They consisted of the conceptual image projections *Amazonas-Kosmos*, 1969–70, which lent the show its title, as well as a greenhouse installation of cobalt blue pigments, kale, and live saturniids, tropical butterflies (*Tropenhäuser (Guayana)*, 1969–1972). Baumgarten designed the tropical setting using domestic vegetables.

The same year, the artist also showed his slide projection *Eine Reise oder Mit der MS Remscheid auf dem Amazonas (A Voyage or With the MS Remscheid on the Amazon)*, 1968/72, at the Documenta 5. The journey referred to did not actually take place. The ship is a historical cigarette advertisement, while the exotic continent is represented by ethnographic quotes and photographs of a reconstructed stage set. In this way, Baumgarten combined fiction and reality, while using a foreign culture as a mirror for his own. He did not travel to South America until 1978/79,

when he spent a year with the Yanomami Indians along the upper Orinoco in Venezuela. During his stay, he dressed like his hosts, learned their language, adopted their customs, and joined them on hunting excursions. This experience also changed his outlook on his own background.

Baumgarten also took part in the Documenta in 1982, 1992, and 1997 and is one of the most well-known German artists, especially on the American continent. His work *America 'Señores Naturales'*, 1983/84, for the German pavilion of the Venice Biennale was honored with the Golden Lion. Baumgarten also developed a photographic essay called *CARBON* for his solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 1989. This project is about the pioneering industrial achievements during the settlement of the North American West. In 1993, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York honored him with a solo exhibition called *AMERICA Invention*, 1985. Lothar Baumgarten had altogether eight solo exhibitions at Konrad Fischer's gallery, which represented him until 1998.

## Bernd und Hilla Becher

(b. 1931, Siegen—d. 2007, Rostock,  
b. 1934, Potsdam—d. 2015, Düsseldorf)

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Konrad and Dorothee Fischer knew Bernd and Hilla Becher from their student days at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. In the 1960s, the Bechers began photographing industrial buildings all over the world. For this, they developed a rigorous concept based on “objective” photography. The buildings were photographed from an elevated position and from a great distance with a plate camera using a long exposure. The motifs were always in the center of the picture. Foliage and surrounding buildings were faded out through blurring and overexposure. A blanket of clouds was also needed to guarantee a diffuse light without deep shadows. The buildings, which appear like “anonymous sculptures,” were also compiled into series of “typologies.”

In the fall of 1969, Konrad Fischer and the art critic and later gallery owner Hans Strelow organized the second installment of the *Prospect* exhibition in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. The show offered an “international preview of art in avant-garde galleries” and ran parallel to the Kölner Kunstmarkt (Cologne Art Fair). In the *Prospect* exhibition, 16 galleries showed works by 36 artists. Also, an international selection committee nominated an additional ten artists, including Hilla and Bernd Becher. *Prospect 69* was thus the first time their photographs were presented in the context of Conceptual Art. They also participated in the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunstrichtung* (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's Art Tendency)

a few weeks later at the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich, which was curated by Konrad Fischer and the museum's director Rolf Wedewer.

The Bechers had the first of eight solo exhibitions all together at Konrad Fischer's gallery in December 1970. In 1972, Konrad Fischer established a section devoted to Conceptual Art at the Documenta 5, where he also showed works by Bernd and Hilla Becher, among others. This was the international breakthrough for the artist couple.

## Joseph Beuys

(b. 1921, Krefeld—  
d. 1986, Düsseldorf)

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Joseph Beuys, who was represented by Alfred Schmela for many years, exhibited at Konrad Fischer's gallery for the first time in 1976. He presented relics from his performance or “action” called *Und in uns... unter uns... landunter* (And in us... under us... flooded), which he had performed during the *24-Stunden-Happening* (24 Hour Happening) on June 5, 1965, in the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal. This was the last event organized by the gallery owner Rolf Jähring, who was well-known in the 1960s for presenting the first Happenings and Fluxus events. The photographer Ute Klophaus documented Beuys' performance in photographs. She later recalled: “Joseph Beuys arranged his place at the beginning of the action, before the audience arrived. He would then operate starting from there for twenty-four hours. The crate formed the center.”

The objects Beuys showed at Konrad Fischer were remnants of this performance platform called the *Aktionssockel*, which consisted of an orange crate, a wax cloth, and a glass with algae submerged in water (originally Christmas roses). Two photographs documented the situation at the site, accompanied by handwritten installation instructions from the artist (*The Three Parts of the Performance Platform from 24 Hours, June 5, 1965, 0–24 h*). This collage became part of the collection of Dorothee and Konrad Fischer, who sold the work to a public collection in Dunkerque, France, in 1983. In early May of that year, Fischer also opened his new gallery space on Mutter-Ey-Strasse with a solo exhibition featuring

Beuys' *Dumme Kiste* (Dumb Box). This was followed by another exhibition there in December that included the installation *hinter dem Knochen wird gezählt—Schmerzraum* (One Counts behind the Bone—Pain Room) for which the artist encased the entire gallery space in lead plates.



Konrad Fischer and  
Joseph Beuys, 1983  
(photo: Konrad Fischer  
Galerie)

Marcel Broodthaers in 1971–72 at his *Section Cinéma, Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* at Burgplatz 12 in Düsseldorf, photo: Joaquim Romero Frias, Courtesy Museum Kunstpalast. AFORK, Düsseldorf

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## Marcel Broodthaers

(1924 Saint-Gilles/Sint-Gillis—1976 Cologne)

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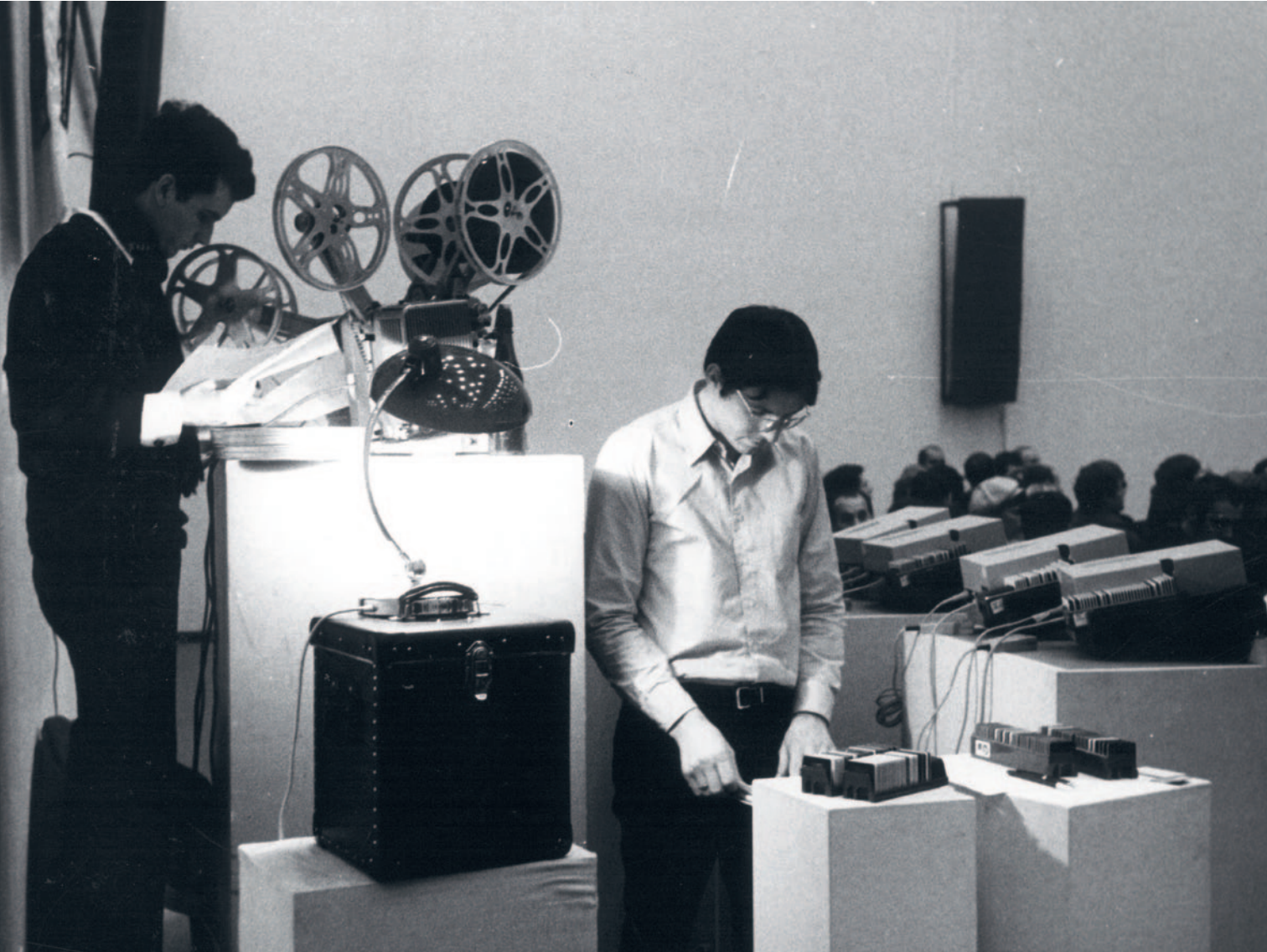
Marcel Broodthaers began his artistic career as a poet and a writer, but in 1964, he changed to visual art. Although his credo was “the games played by images and language are parallels,” text and language would remain his most important tools, and he employed these in physical spaces instead of in a book. He believed that spatial experience has a more immediate effect than the solitary act of reading. Therefore, the special characteristics of the place where a work of art is shown play an important role. In 1968, Broodthaers founded the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles) in his hometown of Brussels. In this “fictitious museum,” the Belgian artist expressed his fundamental criticism of the museum as an institution and its power to define what is art.

Through the gallery Wide White Space from Antwerp, Marcel Broodthaers participated in the Prospect exhibition series, organized by Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow. He was also represented in the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunstrichtung* (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's Art Tendency) in the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich, which was curated by Konrad Fischer and Rolf Wedewer. *Prospect 71* especially received special attention, because it was solely dedicated to the new media of photography, film, and video with its 110 projection works by 76 international artists.

Broodthaers lived in Düsseldorf from 1970 to 1972. In 1972, the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf honored him with a solo exhibition. He never exhibited at the Konrad Fischer Galerie during his lifetime, but after his death, the gallery devoted three exhibitions to him starting in 1978. The last show in 1990 included the work *Où est la Signature / Théorie de la Signature, (Where is the Signature / Theory of the Signature), 1971*—a portrait of the medium of film and at the same time a portrait of the artist.

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## Stanley Brouwn

(b.1935, Paramaribo)

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When Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow invited 16 international avant-garde galleries to participate in the exhibition *Prospect 69* in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, the newly established gallery called Art & Project from Amsterdam was among them. This gallery specialized in Conceptual Art and represented the Dutch Conceptual artist Stanley Brouwn. Brouwn created his first conceptual works in the beginning of the 1960s and had been originally associated with the international Fluxus movement. He is interested in measurements, paths, and distances between people and places. He believes his whole life is manifested in the steps he has taken and will take in the future.

The art magazine *bulletin*, which was published by Art & Project at irregular intervals, dedicated its eleventh edition to the exhibition *Prospect 69*, with a special focus on Stanley Brouwn. In October 1969, just a few weeks later, Fischer invited the Dutch artist to participate in the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunststrichtung* (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's Art Tendency) in the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich. This was the first museum exhibition of Conceptual Art in Germany and was curated by Fischer together with the museum's director Rolf Wedewer. Based on the similarities in their gallery's programs, Fischer and the two Art & Project gallerists, Adriaan van Ravesteijn and Geert van Beijeren, continued to cooperate in the following years. Stanley Brouwn's first out of five solo

exhibitions at Fischer's gallery opened in December 1970. The artist presented works documenting the number of steps he had taken while wearing a pedometer on his walks through several neighborhoods of Düsseldorf prior to the exhibition. The aspect of movement and the site-specific reference, which were key features in the exhibitions at Konrad Fischer's gallery at the time, were also central here. In 1970, Brouwn had his first solo exhibition at a museum in Mönchengladbach, and when Konrad Fischer and Klaus Honnef organized a section for Conceptual art at the documenta 5 in 1972, Fischer also included works by Stanley Brouwn.

## Daniel Buren

(b.1938, Boulogne-Billancourt)

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Daniel Buren has been exhibiting at the Konrad Fischer Galerie since 1969 and is one of the gallery's top artists. Like Konrad Lueg, he began his artistic career in 1962 with painting. However, he dropped this in 1967 in sudden a gesture of refusal, when he withdrew his paintings from an exhibition at the Salon de la Jeune Peinture in Paris. This act was carried out together with other members of the group BMPT—which also included Niele Toroni, who had an exhibition at Fischer's gallery in 1976. In their statement, the artists' group declared the following reasons for their action: "Because painting is a game. [...] Because to paint is to give aesthetic value to flowers, women, eroticism [...] and the war in Vietnam." After this, Buren decided he would work only with alternating colored and white stripes. With a standard width of 8.7 centimeters, he uses these stripes as "visual tools" for redefining public and private spaces. He defines this as "degree zero painting." An essential aspect of Buren's concept is to create works "on site—for, against, and according to the site." His works are thus closely tied to the place they are in and can only unfold their full effect there. After an exhibition is over, the works are destroyed, and nothing is left but the artist's description and several small souvenir photographs that Buren does not sell, in a gesture of rejecting the art market.

Buren participated in the exhibition *Prospect 68* in 1968, which Konrad Fischer organized together with Hans Strelow in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. Buren installed a large installation

by painting white and green stripes in an alternating pattern on two walls standing at right angles to each other. These stripes were also printed in the exhibition "catalogue newspaper." In the subsequent exhibition *Prospect 69*, he installed white and blue stripes on the same walls.

Also at this time, Buren had his first solo exhibition at Fischer's gallery. For *Position—Proposition*, the artist painted a small rolling file cabinet with blue and white stripes. The stripes did not remain only in the gallery; they also spread across the city: on billboards, construction site fences, in a hotel room, or a doctor's office. In the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception: Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunststrichtung* (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's Art Tendency) at the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Morsbroich in 1969, the first museum exhibition dedicated to Conceptual Art in Germany, the curators Konrad Fischer and Rolf Wedewer also presented works by Daniel Buren. For this, the artist wrote his statement "Mise en garde!" (Warning!), which was published in the artists' book accompanying the exhibition. It was Daniel Buren's first publication in German and became a critical key text about Conceptual Art.

(b. 1948, Sheffield)

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In 1971, the magazine *Studio International* published an interview by Georg Jappe with Konrad Fischer. Alan Charlton, who was in his final year at the Royal Academy in London and had been looking for places to exhibit in a gallery without success, read it with excitement and jumped on a plane to Düsseldorf. He walked into Fischer's gallery with a handful of slides and said to him: "I am an artist from London and I like to make an exhibition with you." Without saying a word, Fischer looked at the slides then said: "I come to London on Wednesday to see the paintings." Fischer thus became the first gallerist to offer Charlton a show. The exhibition took place in 1972 and consisted of six large *Square Hole Paintings*, after which he had many more shows at Fischer's gallery. Charlton is still one of the few painters in the gallery's program today.

Konrad Fischer also acted as a mentor for the very young artist. In 1975, Fischer took Charlton to New York and introduced him to the American artists he represented and arranged for him to have an exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery. Their relationship was like that of a teacher and student. For Charlton, "each time making an exhibition back with Konrad was sort of a test. I always felt that I had to do my best. [...] If he made just one comment like 'looks good, Alan,' then you were already completely happy."

Alan Charlton is still one of the gallery's main artists today. In his exploration of the functions and possibilities of painting, he

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began creating monochrome gray paintings in 1970 in which he works with very sculptural pictorial supports with stretcher bars that are 4.5 centimeters in depth. He is ranked as one of the most important English Conceptual artists today. In 1997, a few months after Konrad Fischer's death, Charlton dedicated a catalogue for his major exhibition in Nîmes to the memory of his gallerist and friend with the words "the first person to believe in me."

## Hanne Darboven

(b. 1941, München—  
d. 2009, Rönneburg)

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"The Düsseldorf thing is truly wonderful. K. König handled everything with us; the two crates took off for Düsseldorf with Pan American yesterday evening, and are there this morning. K. Fischer has been informed. Have no costs at all; everything covered by the gallery!" wrote Hanne Darboven to her parents from New York. After finishing her studies, she had moved to New York in 1966, where she lived for two years, becoming part of the city's art scene. Sol LeWitt, who was very fond of her *Konstruktionen* (Constructions), her most recent drawings on graph paper, introduced her to several gallery owners and curators, including Kasper König. Through him, she got in touch with Konrad Fischer. After showing Carl Andre's work, Fischer wanted his second exhibition to be with Darboven's *Konstruktionen* in December 1967. This would have been her first solo exhibition, but to Darboven's and König's great consternation, shortly before the exhibition, Fischer decided to combine her drawings with serial sculptures by Charlotte Posenenske, apparently as a way of structuring the long and narrow gallery room. Fischer tried to offer pacifying words in a letter: "A consolation for Hanne: a two-woman exhibition is quite the same as a one-man show. I'm very much looking forward to meeting Hanne, and give her my regards." Darboven's indignation apparently did not have a lasting effect on her relationship with the gallery, because she had a number of solo exhibitions there in the following years. On Konrad Fischer's initiative, Hanne Darboven also had her first museum exhibition

in Mönchengladbach in 1969. Counter to his usual practice, Fischer also showed an exhibition of her works titled *Ein Jahrhundert in einem Jahr* (A Century in a Year) for an entire year—from January 1 to December 31, 1971—at his gallery on Andreasstrasse. This show demonstrated Darboven's idiosyncratic system of recording (life) time, which she used to investigate the passing, experience, and remembrance of time.

## Jan Dibbets

(b. 1941, Weert)

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Konrad Fischer got to know Jan Dibbets when he was still going by the name of Konrad Lueg. Six weeks before opening his exhibition space, Lueg took part in the exhibition *Dies alles, Herzchen, wird einmal Dir gehören* (One Day, Darling, All of This Will Belong to You), organized by Paul Maenz. It took place on September 9, 1967, in the Galerie Dorothea Loehr in Frankfurt and lasted only one evening, from 7:45 p.m. to 9:55 p.m. The exhibition featured Lueg as well as seven other artists, including Jan Dibbets. For his contribution, Dibbets poured 15 sacks of sawdust into the courtyard of the gallery, leaving an oval space empty in the middle that looked like a distorted circle from a certain perspective. The oval shape quickly disappeared after all the guests walked over the sawdust in the beginning of the show. Lueg liked Dibbets' work. Later, under his real name of Konrad Fischer, he organized the first solo exhibition in Germany for the Dutch artist from August 15 to September 17, 1968. Paul Wember also took notice of Dibbets through Fischer and invited him to take part in the show *Audio-visuelle Dokumentationen* (Audio-Visual Documentations) at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld. This was Dibbets' first museum exhibition.

The Dorothea and Konrad Fischer Collection includes a number of earlier works by the Dutch artist that are prime examples of his main themes, which include the observation of light, perspective, and space. Dibbets once said: "I make most of these works with ephemeral

materials: sand, growing grass etc. These are demonstrations. I do not make them to keep but to photograph. The work of art is the photo." If we look at *Square perspectief correctief / groot vierkant* (Perspective Correction / Large Rectangle), 1968, for example, we see an almost perfect square that appears to be parallel to the picture plane, with a meadow in the background. In reality, it is a photograph of a trapezoid marked by the artist in the grass. Through the distorted perspective of the photographer's standpoint, the trapezoid looks like a square. Because human perception tends toward the simple, concise shape, it is hard to imagine a flat trapezoid on the meadow. Space and plane thus engage in a paradoxical tension.

Konrad Fischer presented Jan Dibbets' work in his gallery altogether twelve times and he is still one of the gallery's main artists today. Dibbets said, "I did exhibitions in Düsseldorf on account of Konrad. He was the most important art dealer of all in the last 25 years of the 20th century. Everything that was special was with Konrad."



(b. 1933, New York City—  
d. 1996, Riverhead, N.Y.)

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The exhibition *Serielle Formationen* (Serial Formations), which was shown at the Studio Galerie of the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main from May 22 to June 30, 1967, included 48 international artists chosen by the exhibition's curators, Paul Maenz (who later became a gallery owner and art collector) and the artist Peter Roehr. Paul Maenz knew several artists personally from his time as an art director at an American advertising agency in Frankfurt and New York. Like Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Sol LeWitt, the American artist Dan Flavin also had one of his earliest European shows in Frankfurt. Konrad Lueg also participated in the show, as an artist. With the exhibition, the organizers wanted to "make it clear that, although serial manifestations are an international phenomenon, they are simultaneously an expression of entirely different artistic strategies and concepts."

Dan Flavin was one of the most important Minimal artists. He began to experiment with light as a material in 1963. His preferred pictorial means were white and colored fluorescent tubes, which he used to create sculptures or fill entire rooms in which the architecture reflects the light, thus forming a union with it. Visitors are also immersed in the light and are thus integrated into the installation. Flavin dedicated many of these works to other artists and well-known figures in the art world (*Untitled (for Don Judd, colorist) 1, 1987*).

In 1968, Dan Flavin participated in documenta 4 in Kassel—the documenta that made history as "documenta americana,"

due to the high number of artists from the US. After that, his former fellow artist Konrad Lueg, who was now again appearing under his birth name Konrad Fischer, invited him to come and do a solo exhibition in Düsseldorf in 1969. Under the title *Fluorescent Light*, Flavin showed six works with fluorescent tubes at the gallery on Neubrückstrasse, followed by another solo exhibition in the gallery on Platanenstrasse in 1981.



(b. 1943, St. Martin in Thurn,  
b. 1942, Plymouth)

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The artists Gilbert Proesch and George Passmore have been working as the artist duo Gilbert & George since the 1960s in London under the motto "Art for All": "We like art that is visual, very direct, meaningful, or, as we call it, has a moral dimension. We are talking about sexuality, religion, feelings, happiness, unhappiness." The two artists are not interested in "elitist thinking" in art; instead, they strive to appeal to all people. For this, they use their own bodies as material in order to merge art with life. As such, their works had little in common with the minimalist program of Konrad Fischer's gallery. Fischer got to know Gilbert & George in 1969 at the preview of the famous exhibition *Live in our Head. When Attitudes Become Form* in London, which began in Bern then toured many European cities. Because they were disappointed about not being included in this exhibition, Gilbert & George decided to stage a performance, as "Living Sculptures", to attract attention. With their faces and hands covered in a metallic paint, they caused quite a sensation. Konrad Fischer, who they later said was "the most famous art dealer in the world at that time," invited them to Düsseldorf that very night. He then recommended them to the director of the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, where they performed *The Singing Sculpture* in the exhibition series between in 1970. Fischer organized a tour of this performance to various major German cities. He also invited the duo to take part in the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer neuen Kunst-richtung* (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's

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Art Tendency) in the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich in 1969, and they participated in the *Prospect* exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1970 and 1971. Konrad Fischer continued to help raise their international reputation in the following years. At his suggestion, Rudi Fuchs, the director of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, organized their first major solo exhibition called *Photo-Pieces 1971–80*. In 1981, this show traveled to the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, the Kunsthalle Bern, the Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou in Paris, and the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London.

In Gilbert & George's opinion, Konrad Fischer focused too much on the US and Minimalism, and in 1980 they decided to leave Konrad Fischer's gallery because he had become too "American" for their taste.

(b. 1924, Ann Arbor, Michigan—  
d. 1997, Truro, Massachusetts)

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In 1969, the young avant-garde gallerist, writer, and curator Seth Siegelau exhibited four artists in an empty office in New York: Robert Barry, Joseph Kosuth, Laurence Weiner, and Douglas Huebler. Huebler created a work out of sawdust, which disappeared after six hours and exists only in a series of photographs. The exhibition comprised just a few physical works, because the real presentation consisted of a catalogue in the form of a binder. In the binder, Huebler also explained his conceptual approach in a programmatic statement: “The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more. I prefer, simply, to state the existence of things in terms of time and/or place.” He thus developed a documentation system consisting of photographs, drawings, maps, and descriptions.

In March 1969, the same four artists also participated in the *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* exhibition in the Kunsthalle Bern, which was curated by Harald Szeemann with the help of Konrad Fischer. When Fischer invited Seth Siegelau to get involved in *Prospect 69* in the fall of that year, Siegelau again chose Barry, Kosuth, Weiner, and Huebler. This time, they did not show a single work. Instead, their contribution consisted of four short interviews published in the exhibition “catalogue-newspaper.”

In January 1970, Douglas Huebler’s first solo exhibition in Europe was at Fischer’s gallery. This was followed by four

more exhibitions, the last in 1974. When Fischer organized a separate section for Conceptual Art at the documenta 5 together with Klaus Honnef in 1972, he again included Huebler and his three fellow artists.

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(b. 1940, Battle Creek, Michigan)

Stephen Kaltenbach belongs to the first generation of Conceptual artists. The San Francisco Museum of Art organized a solo exhibition of his work already in 1967, followed by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1969. In the same year, Kaltenbach also participated in Harald Szeemann’s legendary exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern, as well as the show *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunstrichtung (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a Today’s Art Tendency)* at the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich, which was curated by Konrad Fischer and the museum’s director Rolf Wedewer. Despite these encounters, he did not exhibit at Fischer’s gallery, which was perhaps why Kaltenbach’s works were then only presented in a few group exhibitions in Europe. In 1974/75 he took part in the show *Multiples: Ein Versuch, die Entwicklung des Auflagenobjekts darzustellen (Multiples. An Attempt to Present the Development of the Object Edition)* at the Neue Berliner Kunstverein. In the mid-1990s, Kaltenbach’s works began to be shown in Belgium, England, and Israel. In 2005, he finally had his first European solo exhibition with Dorothee Fischer. The Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection now owns a work from his major series called *Time Capsules*, which are metal containers with comments or instructions engraved on the surface. These are reflections on life and death, like “Where are we going” (*Time Capsule WHERE ARE WE GOING, 1969*). On the *Time Capsule* in the Museum of Museum Art in New York, the artist wrote that it should not be opened before his death.

## On Kawara

(b. 1933, 1933 Kariya, Präfektur Aichi—d. 2014, New York City)

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On Kawara sent Konrad Fischer a postcard every day from New York in 1969, from April 1 to the end of July. On the back of these postcards, the artist rather bureaucratically stamped the correct date, the exact time when he got up, and his address (*I Got Up (1 Apr.—30 July 1969)*). On Kawara continued this work titled *I Got Up* for many years. It combines conceptual austerity with an almost intimate, personal message. In 1970, the first 30 postcards addressed to Fischer were shown in the exhibition *between 5* in the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. It was On Kawara's first show in Europe. Soon after, On Kawara's first solo exhibition, called *made in New York from 1970–1971*, was presented at Konrad Fischer's gallery. After this, the artist regularly exhibited at the gallery, the last show being in 2006. The date paintings from the *Today Series* also demonstrate his obsession with reflecting on his own lifetime and time in general (*MAR.25, 1997, 1997; MAY.18, 1995, 1995; NOV.3, 1996, 1996; 12DEC.2000, 2000; from Today Series (1966–2013)*). These act as a kind of storage media for the 24 hours of the day when they were painted.

On Kawara continued to gain international fame, regardless of Fischer's help. He participated in the documenta four times: in 1977, 1982, 1997 and 2002. However, he was not represented at Harald Szeemann's documenta 5 in 1972, when Konrad Fischer and Klaus Honnef organized a section on Conceptual Art called "Idee + Idee / Licht" (Idea + Idea / Light).

## Harald Klingelhöller

(b. 1954, Mettmann)

Harald Klingelhöller was one of the young Kunstakademie Düsseldorf graduates who had a group show at Konrad Fischer's gallery on Platanenstrasse in 1983. This "quasi second generation of artists" also included Ludger Gerdes, Wolfgang Luy, Reinhard Mucha, and Thomas Schütte. In the beginning of the 1980s, Minimal Art was no longer in style. Instead, the German neo-expressionists (Neue Wilde) and Italian neo-expressionists (Transavanguardia & Arte Cifra) were very successful, both of which Fischer did not have a high opinion of. Klingelhöller later said that this group exhibition was seen as "the Düsseldorf answer to the wild [neo-expressionist] painting in Cologne" and had been organized on "initiative of Thomas Schütte." Schütte was a close friend of Fischer's and had already had a solo show in his gallery in 1981. The participating sculptors later exhibited together again in the Museum Haus Esters in Krefeld and in the Kunsthalle Bern, among other places. They were called the "model builders," although they did not regard themselves as a real group.

Harald Klingelhöller develops his sculptures through the principle of addition. Their constructions seem fragile and open. He uses materials that are mostly ephemeral: primarily cardboard and insulation boards. The end results thus resemble models. The artist said: "My forms share many qualities with models, after all. The model has the advantage that it proposes a solution, but does not deliver. It is a strategy to leave things open and not create closure. This is very important,

## Jannis Kounellis

(b. 1936, Piräus)

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but some details and elements are also finished to a higher degree."

Harald Klingelhöller had his first solo exhibition at Konrad Fischer's gallery in 1985. He had two more shows there before Konrad Fischer's death, followed by another four with Dorothee Fischer. He is still one of the gallery's top artists today.

When the well-known German art critic Heinz-Norbert Jocks asked Konrad Fischer about Harald Klingelhöller, he answered: "I simply found him interesting."

Jannis Kounellis was born in Greece and has been living in Rome since the mid-1950s. He is one of the founders and most important representatives of Arte Povera ("poor" art), which developed in Turin in 1967. Kounellis uses everyday objects and natural materials in his works—even dead and live animals. In January 1969, the artist presented twelve live horses in an exhibition room in the Roman Galleria L'Attico for his installation *Dodici cavalla vivi*. This spectacular action came to be regarded as a milestone in the history of Arte Povera. In the fall of 1969, Fabio Sargentini, Kounellis' gallerist, represented him and another Arte Povera artist named Eliseo Mattiacci in the *Prospect 69* exhibition at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, which was organized by Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow. The top Arte Povera gallerist, Gian Enzo Sperone from Turin, was also there presenting four artists from this movement. The show had a decisive impact on the international success of Arte Povera. A few weeks later, Jannis Kounellis took part in the exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* in the Kunsthalle Bern, which was curated by Harald Szeemann in cooperation with Konrad Fischer. This avant-garde exhibition, which was controversial at the time but is legendary today, also helped to promote Arte Povera. Fischer began to get more deeply involved in Arte Povera in 1977 through the gallery in New York he had founded together with Sperone. In January 1979, Kounellis had his first solo exhibition at Fischer's gallery, followed by five more solo shows and several group

(b. 1964, Glasgow)

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shows, the most recent in 2016. Kounellis is still part of the gallery's core group of artists today.

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After Konrad Fischer's death, his wife Dorothee became the sole director of *Ausstellungen bei Konrad Fischer* (Exhibitions at Konrad Fischer). She continued to cultivate the gallery's focus on Conceptual Art, while also adding new aspects. Thus, in 1998 and 1999, she invited young artists to take part in a series of group exhibitions which she titled *Fischer's Frische Fische* (Fischer's Fresh Fish).

Then in 2000, Dorothee Fischer presented a solo exhibition of a young artist who was also a musician and DJ from the subcultural scene of Scotland: Jim Lambie. Lambie had already made a name for himself with his polychromatic installations called *Zobops*. These consist of brightly colored vinyl tape that Lambie sticks to the floor. The stripes are arranged parallel to each other, letting walls, protrusions, and built-in furniture influence their course. The result is a vibrant, psychedelic pattern that makes the room and the beholders in it feel like they are vibrating, as if to music. In the gallery on Platanenstrasse, Lambie showed a *Zobop* that covered the floor of the gallery, along with other works.

In his second solo exhibition at the Konrad Fischer Galerie in 2004, Lambie presented the installation *Turntable (My Boyfriend's Back), 2004*, which consisted of 11 table tops with electric motors in a reference to music, like the modified record covers that were also presented in the show.

In 2005, Jim Lambie was nominated for the Turner Prize, the most important award for young artists in the UK. By this time, he had become well-known, also in Germany, thanks to his participation in numerous group exhibitions.

(b. 1928, Hartford, Connecticut—  
d. 2007, New York City)

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Konrad Fischer most likely saw Sol LeWitt's work for the first time in 1967 in the exhibition *Serielle Formationen* (Serial Formations) in Frankfurt, in which he also participated as a painter under his artist's name Konrad Lueg.

One of the founders of Minimal and Conceptual Art, Sol LeWitt focused primarily on simple, geometric, stereometric forms in serial arrangements. While the idea or the concept behind the work is essential, its realization is not so important.

In his *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art*, Sol LeWitt explained: "When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair [...] It is usually free from the dependence on the skill of the artist as a craftsman. [...] What the work of art looks like isn't too important. [...] No matter what form it may finally have it must begin with an idea."

It was Carl Andre who helped to convince LeWitt to do an exhibition with Konrad Fischer. After Carl Andre and Hanne Darboven, Sol LeWitt was thus the third artist to present his work at Fischer's gallery located on Neubrückstrasse. It was also LeWitt's first solo show in Europe. Prior to the opening on January 6, 1968, Konrad Fischer used his network of contacts to get the American artist more shows: "Sol wrote to me that he would like to exhibit in several places in Europe (through our enterprise, naturally) and, up to now, I have Bischoffsberger [sic] in Zurich

and Meyer in Esslingen for this." In 1969, LeWitt also participated in the exhibition at the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich called *Konzeption/Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunst-richtung* (Konzeption/Conception: Documentation of a To-Days Art Tendency), curated by Konrad Fischer and Rolf Wedewer.

Konrad Fischer held LeWitt in high regard, and he dedicated altogether twelve solo shows to him. The gallery still regularly presents Sol LeWitt's work up to this day.

In 2010, a special gift by the artist was realized at the Kunstsammlung, *Scribbles: (KF), Wall Drawing # 1227, 2007*. Sol LeWitt designed the concept of this wall drawing on the tenth anniversary of Konrad Fischer's death as a way of honoring the many years of dedicated work by his friend and gallerist. After LeWitt died in 2007, Dorothee Fischer acted on his behalf and chose the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen to receive this donation. This work had been first realized in the Galerie Konrad Fischer in February 2007 according to the artist's instructions.

(b. 1945, Bristol)

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"I have never felt so spontaneously enthusiastic about anyone as I did about Richard Long," said Konrad Fischer about the first time he saw one of the British sculptor's works. This was in 1967 at the group exhibition *Dies alles, Herzchen, wird einmal Dir gehören* (One Day, Darling, All of This Will Belong to You) in the Galerie Dorothea Loehr in Frankfurt, where Fischer, alias Lueg, also took part. However, Long was not present himself at this spectacular evening exhibition. He was still studying at the St. Martin's School of Art in London, like Gilbert & George and Jan Dibbets.

Richard Long is one of the most important representatives of Land Art. Like Minimal Art, this movement also originated in the US. Land Art is usually created outdoors in the landscape and can range from small interventions with natural materials to the remodeling of entire areas with heavy machinery. Richard Long's art consists in taking conceptual walks all around the globe, which he documents with photographs and texts. The experience of space, time, and nature are thus his main focus. On his walks, he creates ephemeral stone and wood sculptures, which he either removes afterwards or lets decompose. In museums and galleries, Long installs works made of boulders, rocks, driftwood, and/or other natural materials, or he paints wall pictures using colored mud.

Konrad Fischer was enthusiastic about his work, and he invited Richard Long, who was only 23 years old at the time, to do his first solo exhibition at

his gallery in 1968. For the show called *Sculpture at Konrad Fischer Düsseldorf*, the sculptor placed 1,318 willow branches in long parallel lines on the floor of the gallery. He had collected the branches at the River Avon Gorge, close to Bristol. The work sold immediately. Dorothee and Konrad Fischer later bought it back for their own collection (*Sculpture for Konrad Fischer*). The first picture under "Exhibitions" on Richard Long's official webpage shows a photo of this work in Fischer's gallery space located at Neubrückstrasse 12.

Collectors and fellow artists have long held Long's works in high regard. His first exhibition in the US in 1969 was organized with the help of Carl Andre. In 1972, he participated in Documenta 5, where his works were also included in the section "Idee+Idee/Licht" (Idea + Idea/Light), which was organized by Konrad Fischer and Klaus Honnef. In 1989, he received the Turner Prize, which is the most important British award for young art.

Richard Long's list of exhibitions at Konrad Fischer is long; the latest was in November last year. After the death of the gallerist, the artist created the work *Circle for Konrad* in 1997, which is now also part of the collection of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen.





(b. 1939, Düsseldorf—  
d. 1996, Düsseldorf)

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“When I paint my name is Konrad Lueg (Lueg is my mother’s maiden name) to avoid possible confusion because the name Fischer is so common,” said Konrad Lueg, whose real name was Konrad Fischer. He began studying painting at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the winter semester 1958/59, where he was taught by Bruno Goller and later Karl Otto Götz. There, he got to know fellow students who would later become important in his career, like Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter. Richter and Konrad Lueg / Fischer remained friends for the rest of their lives, although their friendship was not always free of conflict.

Lueg was well connected in the Düsseldorf art scene already as a student. His close friendship with the artist Peter Brüning, who was ten years his senior and introduced him to international art movements, was especially important to him. Gerhard Richter later said about Lueg: “He was very well informed and he had this cool manner, like Humphrey Bogart. He knew what was going on and how things worked. He knew the mechanisms. He was more arrogant than the other students because he knew more and wasn’t so sentimental.”

After Konrad Lueg was forced to leave the academy in the fall of 1962, he began looking for places to hold exhibitions, which he was also willing to organize without the help of a gallery if necessary. At this time, his artistic work developed from panel painting to performances with audience participation. Impressed by a

reproduction of a work by Roy Lichtenstein, Konrad Lueg, Gerhard Richter, and Sigmar Polke decided to found a kind of German Pop Art called “capitalist realism” in 1963. Lueg thus began painting motifs based on photographs of everyday life. His joint exhibition with Richter in the Düsseldorf furniture store Berges called *Leben mit Pop—Eine Demonstration für den kapitalistischen Realismus* (Life with Pop—A Demonstration for Capitalist Realism) in 1963 is legendary. In 1965, he began combining figuration with ornamentation, which he applied with a pattern roller used for painting walls. These patterns increasingly took on a life of their own, and in the end Lueg began stretching plastic foil or textiles with patterns on picture frames. He had a solo exhibition at Alfred Schmela’s gallery in Düsseldorf in 1964, and one at René Block’s gallery in Berlin in 1966. In December 1966, he took part in the series of events called *Hommage an Schmela* (Homage to Schmela) with the performance “Kaffee und Kuchen” (Coffee and Cake) in which he transformed the Galerie Schmela into a middle-class living room by hanging wall patterns, his own plastic foil pictures, and Richter’s portrait of Schmela on the walls. In 1967, Konrad Lueg participated in the programmatic exhibition *Dies alles, Herzchen, wird einmal Dir gehören* (One Day, Darling, All of This Will Belong to You) in Frankfurt. At this show, he got to know artists whose work he would later exhibit in his own gallery, which opened only a few months later. In 1968, he created works called “Schattenwände” (Shadow Walls), which are

**1**  
Alfred Schmela (center),  
Konrad Fischer (right),  
and unknown individual,  
ca. 1965, photo: Konrad  
Fischer Galerie

**2**  
Konrad Fischer during  
the setup of Documenta 5,  
1972, photo: Konrad  
Fischer Galerie

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canvases painted with phosphorescent color and placed in dark rooms with the idea of beholders casting their shadows on the pictures with the help of a flashlight, thus creating their own imagery.

Despite the attention his art received, Lueg gave up his career as an artist around 1970, after which he devoted his time solely to his gallery, which he ran under his real name. He continued to be represented in the occasional group show, however, and in 1970, Heiner Friedrich in Munich also presented a solo exhibition of his works, followed by Rudolf Zwirner in Cologne in 1980. Three years after his death, in 1999/2000, the retrospective *When I Paint My Name is Konrad Lueg* was shown in the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center New York, followed by *Ich nenne mich als Maler Konrad Lueg* at the Kunsthalle Bielefeld, and *As a Painter, I Call Myself Konrad Lueg* at the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.) in Gent.

**2**



**1**



## Robert Mangold

(b. 1937, North Tonawanda, N. Y.)

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Robert Mangold is one of the few painters to be represented by the Konrad Fischer Galerie. The American artist began developing the shaped canvases that are so characteristic of his work in the first half of the 1960s. He is interested in the fundamental questions of painting and explores issues like the relationship between the outer shape of the picture and its inner structure of lines and color planes. Unlike the Minimal artists, Mangold does not work with serial forms based on mathematical calculations and industrial materials to make the artist's handicraft superfluous in the process of creating the work. Instead, intuition and chance play a large role in his work.

Mangold had his first solo exhibition in the Fischbach Gallery in New York in 1965. After Marilyn Fischbach began cooperating with Konrad Fischer in 1968, she promised to help him when she heard that he was interested in Mangold. After Mangold's first European solo show took place in the Galerie Müller in Stuttgart in March 1968, the gallery owner Heiner Friedrich from Munich, with whom Fischer also cooperated, presented drawings by the artist in a group exhibition in April the same year. When Fischer was asked by Harald Szeemann to organize a section on Conceptual Art at Documenta 5 called "Idee + Idee/Licht" (Idea + Idea/Light) together with Klaus Honnef in 1972, he included Mangold's works. After this, they were shown at his gallery. Because the John Weber Gallery in New York has been representing Mangold since 1974, the artist

was represented by both Fischer's gallery and the John Weber Gallery in the exhibition *Prospect 73* at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, which was organized by Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow. Fischer had kept close contact with John W. Weber, the former director of the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles, since 1968, and after this show, Fischer became Mangold's official representative in Germany. In April 1974, Mangold opened his first solo exhibition in Fischer's gallery, followed by three more shows before Konrad Fischer died and another five when Dorothee Fischer was the gallery's director.

## Piero Manzoni

(b. 1933, Soncino, Cremona—d. 1963, Milan)

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Dorothee and Konrad Fischer bought Piero Manzoni's *Achrome, 1962*, from Mia and Martin Visser, whom they had met through Kasper König. The two collectors were also the first buyers at the Fischers' gallery, and they remained faithful customers for many years.

Manzoni made this object with "angel hair," a material used for Christmas decorations. The Italian artist, who died young, is regarded as a pioneer of Conceptual Art. In 1958, he presented his first version of *Linea m 1000*, which is a paper roll in a metal canister on which he had drawn a line 1000 meters long. In the same year, Manzoni also created his first *Achromes*. These are "colorless" panels to which he attached pieces of fabric that he had soaked in either plaster or kaolin – a soft type of clay that can be easily formed. These works do not represent or mean anything, and they do not refer to anything but themselves. Later, Manzoni also used other "colorless" materials for his *Achromes*, like cotton, glass wool, and fiberglass.

Manzoni's goal was to purge art of all expressive qualities to expose its core. He thus questioned the authorship of the artist and the idea that art had to be original. His most famous project was his artist's edition of artist's feces preserved in cans (*merda d'artista*).

Although Konrad Fischer did not organize an exhibition for Piero Manzoni, he offered several of the artist's works for sale in 1973/74.

## John McCracken

(b. 1934, Berkeley, California—d. 2011, New York City)

"My works are minimal and reduced, but also maximal. I try to make them concise, clear statements in three-dimensional form, and also to take them to a breathtaking level of beauty." This is how John McCracken characterized his sculptural works, which he began creating as a student of painting at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s.

McCracken's works were shown for the first time in Europe at the Paris Biennale in 1967. Konrad Fischer wrote to his friend Kasper König in New York in November that year: "McCracken is being highly praised here by those who saw his things there; unfortunately, I have seen only photos, but also in terms of color: I think he's very good!" In March 1969, McCracken had his first solo exhibition in Europe at Galerie Ileana Sonnabend in Paris. Shortly after, in November 1969, the exhibition *Kompas IV Westkust USA* opened in Eindhoven, Netherlands, which then traveled to Dortmund and Bern (as *Kompas West Coast USA*). This was probably where Fischer saw original sculptures by the American artist for the first time.

More than ten years later, on January 15, 1980, Fischer contacted McCracken again by writing a letter to the Meghan Williams Gallery in Los Angeles, who represented McCracken at the time: "From ARTFORUM I learned that you will have a [*sic*] exhibition of John McCracken in february [*sic*]. I was always very interested in his work and I'm very curious about what his new

(b. 1925, Milan—d. 2003, Turin)

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sculptures look like." Another nine years passed before McCracken finally presented his work at Fischer's gallery in November 1989. This was also the artist's first solo exhibition in Germany, and it included *Pilot*, 1989, among other works.

Mario Merz showed one of his now famous igloos for the first time in the exhibition *Prospect 68*, which Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow organized at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf as a reaction to the first Cologne Art Fair in September 1968. The artist was interested in the fragile relationship between nature and culture and strove for a world where humans could live in harmony with nature. In 1967, Merz formed a group together with Jannis Kounellis, Giuseppe Penone, and others, for which the young art critic Germano Celant coined the term *Arte Povera* ("poor" art). For *Prospect 68*, 16 international avant-garde galleries were invited to present new trends at their booths. The gallerist Ileana Sonnabend chose Merz as well as two other *Arte Povera* artists, Bruce Nauman, and Robert Morris. Konrad Fischer was already in contact with Celant, who was also the driving force behind *Arte Povera*. Both *Prospect 68* as well as the legendary exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* in the Kunsthalle Bern and other European cities, which was co-organized by Fischer, contributed decisively to the international recognition of *Arte Povera*. Mario Merz also presented his work in Fischer's gallery for the first time in March 1970. In this first solo exhibition by the artist in Germany, there was an igloo with Fibonacci numbers on it, accompanied by a drawing including sections of the famous series of numbers. In this number sequence discovered by the medieval mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci, each successive number in the series is the sum of the two preceding

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numbers. For Merz, the sequence was a metaphor for stable, natural growth that originates from what comes before it, while continuing infinitely. With altogether nine solo exhibitions and several group shows, Mario Merz had a significant influence on Konrad Fischer's program.



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## Juan Muñoz

(b. 1953, Madrid—  
d. 2001, Ibiza)

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When the Spanish artist Juan Muñoz humorously addressed Konrad Fischer in a fax as “Estimado Señor Konrado *Pescatore*” (My Esteemed Mr. Konrad Fisherman) (pescador being a literal translation of his last name), this showed how the two men were fond of each other.

While Fischer continued to develop his gallery’s program, he never lost sight of its original focus on Conceptual approaches. In the 1980s, he thus began to woo a new generation of artists. Juan Muñoz was integrated in the program of *Ausstellungen bei Konrad Fischer* (Exhibitions at Konrad Fischer) in 1988 when the first of his three solo shows at the gallery opened. The Spanish artist’s figurative works have also been presented in group exhibitions at the gallery. Muñoz began his career working with architectural elements, like balconies and banisters. These he installed in rooms and integrated into the architecture, letting the sculpture and room form a unit—similar to Carl Andre, who was a model for Muñoz. Then in the end of the 1980s, the artist began adding more and more human figures in a clear reference to the beholder.

In 1991, Juan Muñoz had a solo exhibition in the Museums Haus Esters/Haus Lange in Krefeld. For this occasion, he created *Krefeld Banister* (*My Favourite Banister*) by removing the wooden banister in the historical building of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in Krefeld and re-installing it in a new position on the exhibition site.

After Konrad Fischer’s death, Juan Muñoz left the gallery, much to regret of Dorothee Fischer. The artist thus also gave up the only gallery offering him long-term representation in Germany.

(b. 1941, Fort Wayne, Indiana)

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"He made things possible," said Bruce Nauman about his close friend and gallerist Konrad Fischer. Like Carl Andre, the American artist was one of the most important figures in the gallery's program, and still is today. His cooperation with the gallery has lasted many decades, despite Konrad Fischer's death.

Fischer originally contacted Bruce Nauman through Kasper König, who had visited him in his studio in San Francisco in 1966. On Fischer's invitation, Nauman travelled to Europe for the first time in 1968 to create a new work on site. He recorded his violin, which he brought with him, as well as other sounds at the gallery to create soundtracks. The name of the exhibition was *6 day week—6 sound problems* and could be seen, or rather heard, from July 10 to August 8. It consisted of a tape recorder on a table, a chair with a pencil attached to it, and six different audio tapes. Each tape ran between the tape head and the pencil, creating a loop. A different recording was played each day of the week: Mondays it was *walking in the gallery*, Tuesdays *bouncing two balls in the gallery*, Wednesdays *violin sounds in the gallery*, Thursdays *walking and bouncing balls*, Fridays *walking and violin sounds*, and Saturdays *violin sounds and bouncing balls*. Time and the exhibition space thus became part of the artwork itself and could be experienced in a new way.

Bruce Nauman appeals to the beholder physically and directly as a way of provoking an immediate emotional reaction. He thus goes beyond the limits of

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Minimal and Conceptual Art. "From the beginning I was trying to see if I could make art that did that. Art that was just there all at once. Like getting hit in the face with a baseball bat. Or better yet, like getting hit in the back of the neck." This has been the goal of the artist's multifarious body of work, which comprises sculpture, videos, performances, and interactive installations.

Shortly after the exhibition at Fischer's gallery, Nauman had several other important shows in Europe. In the same year, he also took part in Documenta 4 in Kassel, which focused on contemporary art for the first time and was later called "documenta americana" because of the high number of American artists. In 1969, Harald Szeemann invited Nauman to participate in the legendary exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern. His participation in these shows was made possible through Fischer and his contacts. According to Nauman, he "knew everybody." It was only after this European tour that Nauman began gaining recognition from museums in the US. In 1972, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art organized *Bruce Nauman: Work From 1965 to 1972. An Exhibition*, which then travelled to Düsseldorf, Eindhoven, and Milan.

The friendship between Konrad Fischer and Bruce Nauman went far beyond the organization of exhibitions. Bruce Nauman was and continues to be an important

artist in the gallery's program and the Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection. The Fischers later bought that first work *Six Sound Problems for Konrad Fischer, 1968*, from the original buyer, who had hung the tapes like ribbons on the wall.



(b. 1947, Garessio)

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Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow invited 16 avant-garde galleries to participate in the exhibition *Prospect 69* in September 1969. One of the galleries was the Galleria Gian Enzo Sperone from Turin, the city that was the intellectual center and birthplace of the Arte Povera movement. The gallery brought several representatives of this movement, including the young Italian artist Giuseppe Penone, who showed the photo series *Alpi marittime*, 1968. This series documents the artist's interventions in the Maritime Alps, where he walked in nature and interacted with it through minor interventions involving trees and creeks. Growth, the passing of time, and the relationship between humans, nature, and art are the themes that he addresses in his work.

Konrad Fischer and Giuseppe Penone probably met for the first time at *Prospect 69*. Only a few weeks later, Fischer included the Italian artist in the exhibition *Konzeption / Conception. Dokumentation einer heutigen Kunst-richtung (Konzeption / Conception: Documentation of a To-Day's Art Tendency)* in the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen in Schloss Morsbroich, which he curated together with Rolf Wedewer and is regarded as the first museum presentation of Conceptual Art in Germany.

In 1977, Fischer founded another gallery in New York together with Gian Enzo Sperone. After this, although Sperone continued to represent Penone, he allowed Fischer to sell his works in Germany. In 1981, Penone finally had his first show at Fischer's gallery. After this,

Fischer dedicated three more solo shows to him, the last in 1990, after which Penone had solo exhibitions with Dorothee Fischer in 1998 and 2007 / 08.

(b.1963, Hildesheim)

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After Konrad Fischer's death in 1996, Dorothee Fischer became the sole director of the gallery. She continued to cultivate the gallery's program, while also developing it further. She therefore decided to include several younger artists, like Manfred Pernice, who was born in 1963. His first solo exhibition at the gallery was in 1998, followed by several others. The artist's sculptures are made of incidental materials that are processed in an intentionally rough and haphazard way, giving them a model-like appearance. As such, they are vaguely reminiscent of works by the "model builders" Ludger Gerdes, Harald Klingelhöller, Wolfgang Luy, Reinhard Mucha, and Thomas Schütte, whose first show at Konrad Fischer's gallery was in 1983. Like them, Pernice integrates his works into the exhibition space by playing on its architecture and conditions.

Pernice's approach harmonizes Konrad Fischer's innovative idea from 1967 to invite artists to develop a concept specifically for his exhibition space, and Pernice's works also share common characteristics with Konrad Lueg's works. Like Lueg, Manfred Pernice is interested in exhibiting and in exhibitions as such. He not only presents works by other artists as well as found and everyday objects in his installations, and he explicitly refers to the theme of "exhibitions" in many of his titles. The audience also plays an active role in Manfred Pernice's works: he turns things around and lets people become "both viewers and viewed." This is similar to Konrad Lueg's work "Schattenwände"

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(Shadow Walls) in which beholders cast a shadow on phosphorescent pictures with the help of a flashlight, thus creating their own imagery.



## Ulrich Rückriem

(b. 1938, Düsseldorf)

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Ulrich Rückriem met the American Minimal artist Bill Bollinger at the Galerie Rolf Ricke in Cologne in the spring of 1968. Bollinger invited Rückriem and his artist friend Blinky Palermo to come to New York. Without further deliberation, they jumped on a plane to the US. There, they met Carl Andre through Kasper König, who was also living in New York. Andre had had the first exhibition at Konrad Fischer's new gallery at the end of 1967. Rückriem was deeply impressed by Andre's work, and he decided to change his artistic approach. Where before he had been using wood and band iron for his sculptures, now he preferred stone blocks taken directly from the quarry. He split and sawed the blocks, and sometimes sanded and polished them. The drawing *Untitled, 1969*, from the Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection reveals how the cuts in the stone are made. In the end, Rückriem puts the parts he has created together again to form a whole, letting the crevices and drill holes remain as traces of his artistic method.

Through König and Andre, Rückriem also got in touch with Konrad Fischer. In December 1969, he presented his new stone sculptures, which he created after his journey to the US, in Fischer's gallery. In 1971, Rückriem was also represented by the Düsseldorf video gallerist Gerry Schum, with whom Fischer was cooperating at the time, in the exhibition *ProspectPROJECTION*, which Konrad Fischer also co-organized. The sculptor went on to have seven more solo exhibitions at Konrad Fischer's gallery,

the last in 1989, and Fischer continued to refer him to other galleries and museums.

## Robert Ryman

(b. 1930, Nashville, Tennessee)

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Konrad Fischer and the Munich-based gallerist Heiner Friedrich, at whose gallery Konrad Lueg had had a solo exhibition in 1967, became partners of sorts at the end of the 1960s, and they "shared" a number of artists. When Fischer's friend Kasper König from New York recommended Robert Ryman to him, he was cautious at first. König had sent him an issue of *Newsweek* with a color reproduction of a work by Ryman. Fischer wrote back: "It would be my pleasure, as discussed, to do a Bob Ryman exhibition; it's just not clear to me what Bob has arranged with Friedrich."

When Ryman eventually flew to Germany in the fall, the two gallerists split the cost of the ticket. On November 21, 1968, the American artist's first solo show in Europe opened at Fischer's gallery on Neubrücke-strasse. It consisted of works from Ryman's *Classico* series, which were later also presented in March 1969 in the Conceptual Art exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern, which was co-organized by Fischer.

Ryman is constantly finding new ways to explore the infinite possibilities of the color white—in all its shades, nuances, and changes due to lighting conditions. The artist sees this as a means of investigating the foundations of painting. To this end, he uses canvas, paper, oil paint, and gouache, as well as many other different types of picture supports and paint materials. The Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection includes works by Ryman in which he focuses on

Conté crayons (*Blue Line Drawing #2 (#69.224), 1969*), acrylic paint on a polyester fabric (*Untitled (#69.219), 1969*), and enamel paint on aluminum panels (*Untitled (#73.312), 1973*). In two of these works, stripes of masking tape also direct our gaze toward the support and hence the limits of the picture.

After the show at Fischer's gallery, Ryman opened a solo exhibition at Friedrich's gallery in Munich in December 1968. The works exhibited at Fischer's gallery in Düsseldorf were originally from the gallerist Marilyn Fischbach in New York, who represented Ryman in the US. In April 1969, she requested that Fischer discuss all his endeavors concerning Ryman with her, including the sales he had already closed. Then in May, she offered to let him take over Ryman's representation in Europe with her cooperation.

Ryman had six solo shows altogether at Konrad Fischer's gallery, the last in 1992. In 2001, Ryman had another solo exhibition with Dorothee Fischer.

Neubrückstrasse: the building at Neubrückstrasse 12 with the gallery space in the gated passageway, 1977, photo: Dorothee Fischer

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(b. 1943, Bronxville, N.Y.—  
d. 2003, New York City)

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A few months before the opening of his gallery, Konrad Fischer flew to the US for the first time. He split the extremely high airfare at the time with Heiner Friedrich, the gallery owner from Munich. In exchange, Fischer shared the results of his research in the US with Friedrich. Konrad Fischer wrote about his journey: "I went to America for the first time in April 1968, and called people up—not Warhol or Lichtenstein, that's not interesting, but Judd. In his studio I discovered Sandback." The young artist had been recommended to him before in February by John W. Weber, the director of the Dwan Gallery in New York.

Still in April, Fred Sandback presented several drawings in a group exhibition at Heiner Friedrich's gallery. Then in May, Sandback had his first solo show ever at Fischer's gallery, in which he stretched elastic strings and wires from the wall to the floor of the gallery. Like three-dimensional drawings, these outlined planes and three-dimensional shapes. Sandback later used acrylic strings for his suspended constructions in which he dissolved the traditional notion of a sculpture as a hermetic three-dimensional object. The thin lines stretched across the room interact with it. The artist referred to this as a drawing "that is habitable."

Konrad Fischer also helped Sandback to get a solo exhibition at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld in July 1969. Although Sandback did not exhibit at Fischer's gallery again, Fischer

(b. 1969, Rheydt)

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continued to recommend him to other European galleries in the course of the 1970s.

"At the moment, I only find high-quality, young artists in my own vicinity, something which astounds me. Not at all in America," remarked Konrad Fischer in 1989. Fischer was constantly working to further develop his gallery's program. While never losing sight of Minimal and Conceptual Art, in the 1980s he also began concentrating more on young art from Europe, and later from West Germany—especially North Rhine-Westphalia, where many of the artist whom Konrad Fischer found interesting were also graduates of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf.

Gregor Schneider belongs to the generation of young artists who began presenting sculptures and installations at Konrad Fischer's gallery in the 1990s. Shortly after he graduated, he had his first solo exhibition in 1993 in Fischer's gallery on Platanenstrasse, where he realized several "wallpieces".

Schneider's installations are accessible sculptures, and architecture is a main theme in his work. He alters exhibition rooms so radically that they are no longer recognizable, thus transforming them into sites of often extreme physical and mental experiences. He also remodeled his parental home in Rheydt over many years. In 2001, Gregor Schneider won the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale for his work *Totes Haus u r Venedig 2001* in the German pavilion. He presented photographs and videos of this work at Konrad Fischer's gallery the following year. Schneider is still one

(b.1954, Oldenburg)

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of the gallery's main artists today, and he continues to exhibit there roughly every three years.

Thomas Schütte worked as an assistant at Konrad Fischer's gallery while still a student in the 1970s. He probably got to know Fischer through Gerhard Richter, who was his teacher at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, as was Fritz Schwegler. In 1979, Schütte created a wall painting of a large fish at Fischer's gallery on Neubrückestrasse, while realizing an art project in which he painted two doors yellow at the gallery on Platanenstrasse at the same time. After Schütte had a solo show at Rüdiger Schöttle's gallery in Munich in 1980, he had his first of many solo exhibitions at Konrad Fischer's gallery in 1981.

Thomas Schütte is one of the most important contemporary German sculptors and is also internationally well-known. He won the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2005. The artist became famous for his models of imaginary buildings. His extraordinarily diverse oeuvre also comprises sculptures made of traditional materials, like clay and bronze; graphic works, like drawings, etchings, and water colors; and actual architecture.

Konrad Fischer and Thomas Schütte were close friends. The sculptor said in an interview that in the mid-1980s he was a regular guest at Dorothee and Konrad Fischer's home, where they shared meals and played cards. Schütte's spoke with much personal feeling when he said: "We were very close. Konrad was my main advisor. He could comment on any problem with a short remark that was always right. He could clearly assess the situation in regard to what to do or not, or

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whether to take a break, etc. [...]

For me, Konrad played an extremely important role between teacher and father." Regarding Fischer's opinion of his later figurative work, the artist said: "Konrad didn't like that at all." However, he exhibited it nonetheless: "As long as it was authentic, the main criterion of his entire generation, it was okay." The gallerist in turn said about Schütte that "everything is possible with him, abstract as well as totally figurative forms. He first paints heads and then tiles. Or he does sculptures, at other times houses or models. Then the abstract emerges again. Each time, I have to newly imagine myself in his position."

When Konrad Fischer died, Thomas Schütte drew his friend on his deathbed and sculpted four clay heads with swaddling bandages as "a kind of memorial." One of these (*Blumen für Konrad—Konrad (Grüner Kopf)* (Flowers for Konrad—Konrad (Green Head), 1997, is now owned by the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen through the acquisition of the Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection. Thomas Schütte also dedicated twelve watercolors of flowers to Fischer, *Blumen für Konrad* (Flowers for Konrad), 1997 / 98. Schütte is still one of the gallery's main artists today.

(b. 1937, Muralto)

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In the fall of 1969, the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf hosted the *Prospect* exhibition for the second time. This show was organized by Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow and was intended as a parallel event to the Cologne Art Fair, which featured only German galleries. Fischer and Strelow invited 16 international avant-garde galleries to present their artists in a group exhibition. In addition, there was an international selection committee, whose members included the Swiss curator Harald Szeemann and the director of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Paul Wember. This committee selected an additional ten artists that would be shown, and one of them was Niele Toroni.

*Prospect 69* was Toroni's first show in Germany. The painter, who was born in Switzerland and had been living in Paris since 1959, had founded the short-lived artists' group BMPT together with Daniel Buren and two other painters in 1966. They questioned the traditional methods of art and replaced the emotionally charged, gestural painting of the 1950s with a more conceptual approach. While Daniel Buren worked with standardized stripes, Niele Toroni reduced his painterly means to what he called "empreintes" (imprints), which he always made with the same no. 50 paintbrush at intervals of 30 centimeters, usually on a white picture support. The support can be made of paper, canvas, oil cloth, or foil, or it can be a wall, floor, or window of an exhibition room. Toroni also likes to integrate the specific characteristics of a room into his work.

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Although Niele Toroni never had an exhibition at Konrad Fischer's gallery, Fischer collaborated with Toroni's dedicated gallerists, Yvon Lambert in Paris and Françoise Lambert in Milan.

(b. 1966, Mannheim)

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In the summer of 2000, Dorothee Fischer launched a new type of exhibition series called *Aroma*. In this group exhibition, works by young artists were shown alongside established artists. It included several artists, such as Gregor Schneider, Manfred Pernice, as well as Paloma Varga Weisz, who presented two sculptures and several drawings.

Dorothee Fischer first noticed the artist at the so-called tours, or annual exhibitions, of students' work at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. After training to be a woodcarver, Varga Weisz was taught there by Tony Cragg and Gerhard Merz. She draws her inspiration from art historical models and traditional forms of representation: historical religious art, as well as fairy tales, myths, and legends, which are still part of the collective archive of images in our culture today. These she integrates into her figures to lend them emotional power. Her male-female and animal-human hybrids, and her chimera explore basic human experiences, and they appeal to deeper layers of consciousness. Varga Weisz says she does not "want to convey a specific feeling, but trigger one in the beholders. I cannot control what is initiated in each case. I can only control the appearance and the expression of the figures."

Varga Weisz had a solo exhibition with Dorothee Fischer in early 2002. This also raised ratio of women artists represented by the gallery. Since then, the sculptor's works continue to be shown at the gallery regularly. Paloma Varga Weisz is one of the most renowned contemporary

artists in Germany and around the world, and she recently had a major solo exhibition at the Castello di Rivoli near Turin in 2015.

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(b. 1942, New York City)

"1. The artist may construct the piece. 2. The piece may be fabricated. 3. The piece need not be built. Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receiver-ship." This is the artistic credo of Lawrence Weiner, who is one of the founders of Conceptual Art. He published this "statement of intent" for the first time in the catalogue for a group exhibition organized by the avant-garde gallerist Seth Siegelaub in an empty office in New York at the beginning of 1969. The year before, Weiner had also published a book that was intended as an exhibition with Siegelaub.

Lawrence Weiner uses language as a material in his sculptures. He primarily installs his texts on walls, in museums, and in public spaces, but they can also appear in newspapers, in a book, on a postcard, or on a manhole cover in New York. For his retrospective in the K21 in 2008, he put a sentence that he had conceived in 1995 on a tram: EINE LINIE GEZOGEN VOM ERSTEN STERN DER ABENDDÄMMERUNG BIS ZUM LETZTEN STERN DER MORGENDÄMMERUNG (A line drawn from the first star at dusk to the last star at dawn). Weiner describes actions, processes, and states in clear and concise words. His sentences in his artworks never have a subject; instead, they are formulated in an impersonal way and are as neutral as their appearance in sanserif capital letters. In this way, the artist leaves room for the individual ideas of readers or those realizing his works,

letting them rely on their personal experiences and preferences. Everyone has the freedom to become active. Weiner thus takes himself out of the equation as the creator of the artwork. Whether as a thought, a written text, or a concrete action, all manifestations of his works have the same validity.

Fischer was extremely fascinated by Weiner's approach, and Weiner had a solo exhibition at Fischer's gallery in April 1969. Since then, the artist and the gallery have been working together for many decades, and Weiner remains one of the gallery's main artists today. Lawrence Weiner's works are still strongly powerful and popular today. He is one of a few of the first generation of artists represented by the gallery to participate not only at Documenta in Kassel in the 1970s and 1980s, but also in 2012. In Dorothee Fischer's obituary in 2015, Weiner recalled the mission of the Fischers. In the tried and true form of his wall installations, he wrote his statement in capital letters: "KONRAD & DOROTHEE FISCHER ABANDONED THEIR PERSONAL DREAM OF MAKING ART & THREW WHATEVER RESOURCES THEY COULD MUSTER TO BEGIN A GALLERY THAT WOULD BRING SOME OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS TO DÜSSELDORF TO MINGLE & EXHIBIT TOGETHER."





previous pages  
Dorothee Konrad Fischer  
at the end of the 1960s,  
photographer unknown.

Dorothee Fischer at  
the exhibition Mit der  
Möglichkeit gesehen zu  
werden: Dorothee and  
Konrad Fischer; Archiv  
einer Haltung at MACBA  
Barcelona, 2010,  
photo: Marta Perez

# Dorothee and Konrad Fischer— Biography

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Dorothee Fischer (née Franke) was born March 27, **1937**, in Wuppertal. Konrad Fischer was born April 11, **1939**, in Düsseldorf. Between **1956** and **1962**, Dorothee studied to be an art teacher at the Kunstakademie (Academy of Art) Düsseldorf, where Konrad also studied painting from **1958** to **1962**. They got to know each other at the Academy in **1961**, and they were married in **1964**. In **1967**, they opened *Ausstellungen bei Konrad Fischer* (Exhibitions at Konrad Fischer's) at Neubrückestraße 12 in Düsseldorf. In **1970**, their son Kasper David was born, and in the same year they opened a second exhibition space located at Andreasstraße 25 with an exhibition of Gerhard Richter. In **1973**, their daughter Berta Ada was born, and the exhibition space on Andreasstraße closed. The gallery moved to Platanenstraße 7 in **1974**. The gallery space on Neubrückestraße continued to be used until **1980**. On November 24, **1996**, Konrad Fischer died in Düsseldorf. Dorothee Fischer became the gallery's sole director. In **2007**, she opened the Konrad Fischer Galerie in Berlin. On May 9, **2015**, Dorothee Fischer died in Düsseldorf. Berta Fischer became the director of the galleries in Düsseldorf and Berlin.

Artists' statements about Konrad and Dorothee Fischer are from the book *okey dokey Konrad Fischer* by Brigitte Kölle (Cologne: Walter König, 2007), which includes informative and entertaining interviews with the artists who came into contact with the Konrad Fischer Galerie.

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