

Press release, 22.7.2010

### **"complete concrete"**

**An exhibition on the 100-year development of constructivist, concrete and conceptual art and its effects on the present**

**With numerous key works from the in-house collection, first-class loaned works and fascinating individual presentations on historically relevant artists as well as young artists, the museum Haus Konstruktiv, in two instalments with various sections, is setting off an explosion of completely concrete approaches!**

**"complete concrete" 27/08/2010 – 30/01/11**

**The museum shall be closed from 01 to 09/11/10 for conversion from instalment 1 to instalment 2 of the exhibition**

**Exhibition opening "complete concrete" instalment 1: Thursday (start of the 2010 season), 26/08/2010, 6:00 pm**

**Exhibition opening "complete concrete" instalment 2: Wednesday, 10/11/2010, 6:00 pm**

### **Minimal-maximal**

Reduction is in again: ZERO is undergoing a major revival internationally, key op-art artists are being rediscovered and young galleries with a contemporary programme are exhibiting significant conceptual artists of the 1960s and 70s. And with many young artists addressing issues of a reductionist nature, we can already speak of a new generation of "neo-conceptualists". In short: constructivist, concrete and conceptual topics are in the forefront once more and totally contemporary.

### **Concretion, constructivism, conceptual art and their effects on the present**

For several years, the museum Haus Konstruktiv, which emerged from Zurich's history of concrete art, has addressed precisely this cross-generational dialogue between artistic positions of the past and their continuation in the present. On the one hand, art history develops along a continuing timeline and on the other hand it never ceases to amaze when this very timeline is also overridden: today, works by the early concretists or the first conceptual artists look fresher than ever and the artists of the grandchild generation are handling this heritage in an admiring, yet confident manner. Why? This is the question we would like to pursue in our exhibition project "complete concrete".

### **"complete concrete" at Haus Konstruktiv**

The museum Haus Konstruktiv is following the trail to the beginnings, the manifestations and the developmental lines of reductionist approaches and designing an ordered presentation, in which over 100 years of art history come to life on four storeys. Our credo is that the clarity and sensuousness of reductionist art hold within them a wealth of timeless ideas, investigation of which continually yields new, fascinating findings. Based on the themes of the in-house collection, which has almost doubled in size in the last six years, we have developed the comprehensive exhibition project "complete concrete": with numerous key works from our collection, first-class loaned works and fascinating individual presentations on historically relevant artists and young artists alike, the result, in two instalments with various sections, is a veritable explosion of completely concrete approaches!

### **When it began: possible timelines of concrete art**

Russia is considered to be the cradle of constructivism. Vladimir Tatlin, Kazimir Malevich, El Lissitzky, Lyubov Popova and Naum Gabo are among the pioneers of the Russian avant-garde. In 1915, Malevich wrote the manifesto "From Cubism to Suprematism". In 1930, the Dutch artist and theorist Theo van Doesburg, together with fellow artists Otto Gustav Carlsson, Jean Hélion, Léon Tutundjian and Marcel Wantz, compiled the manifesto "The Basis of Concrete Art".

According to Max Bill, the development of concrete art began in 1910 with Wassily Kandinsky's watercolour "première œuvre concrète", which marks the start of a new autonomous type of composition with colours and forms. In 1960, Max Bill exhibited this work in his now legendary exhibition "concrete art - 50 years of development" at Helmhaus Zurich. Thus, with Bill's time reckoning, we would be celebrating the 100-year jubilee of concrete art this year.

According to Richard Paul Lohse, on the other hand, the beginnings of concrete art can already be seen in around the year 1900, namely in the geometrically structured pastels of Augusto Giacometti. And not to be forgotten: a constructively inclined pictorial understanding can be found in many paintings from as long ago as the 18th and 19th centuries.

However, the exhibition project "complete concrete" will not document a conflict between experts, but instead intends to open the time window and to draw the public into the fascinating history of concrete art. While its starting point perhaps cannot be exclusively attributed to a single work, its innovativeness has continued to have a groundbreaking effect since the beginning of the 20th century at the latest.

### **Five months of "complete concrete" at Haus Konstruktiv**

The exhibition "complete concrete" is subdivided into two instalments with various sections (solo and group exhibitions). Only the large hall on the ground floor remains unchanged for the entire five months, thus forming the foundation of the presentation, so to speak:

#### **"complete concrete" instalment 1 minimal-maximal > 27 August to 31 October 2010**

Ground floor: A "timeline" guides the public through the decades from 1900 to 2010 with works and texts. Four key works by the "Zurich Concretists", the reconstruction of the legendary "Bar Aubette" (1926-28/1998) by Sophie Taeuber-Arp and the contemporary work "Perfect Square" by Carsten Nicolai also offer three exemplary perspectives on constructivism, concretion and conceptual art.

1st floor: "Homenaje a Hélio Oiticica", a video installation by Magdalena Fernández (born 1964 in Caracas, lives in Venezuela)

2nd floor: In memory of Heinz Gappmayr (1925–2010), "Texts", 1962/86, a portfolio from the Haus Konstruktiv collection

3rd floor, large hall: "Systems", a group exhibition with works from the Haus Konstruktiv collection as well as loaned works

3rd floor, small hall: "Matter shifted", solo exhibition by Natalia Stachon (born 1976 in Katowice, lives in Berlin)

4th floor: Individual presentations: "Russian constructivism», Andreas Christen (1936–2006), Fred Sandback (1943–2003) and Roy Newell (1914–2006)

#### **"complete concrete" instalment 2 metamorphoses > 10 November 10 to 30 January 2011**

Ground floor: "Timeline"

1st floor: "Metamorphoses – Georges Vantongerloo", a focussed selection of privately owned key works by this great pioneer of modernism (1886–1965)

2nd floor: Prints by the "Zurich Concretists" from the Haus Konstruktiv collection

3rd floor, large hall: "New Realities", a group exhibition with works from the Haus Konstruktiv collection as well as loaned works

3rd floor, small hall: solo exhibition by Tobias Madison (born 1985, lives in Basel and Zurich)

4th floor: "Lazar Marcovich Khidekel – the rediscovered suprematist", a solo exhibition with works from the estate of this Russian artist and architect (1904–1986)

1st to 4th floors: "Conversations in the Rockefeller Dining Room", a video project with the "Binz 39" stipendiaries in cooperation with Haus Konstruktiv, conceived by Lucia Coray, Henry F. Levy, Ursula Palla and Dorothea Strauss