

Keitelman Gallery

SENSE OF COLORS

Keitelman Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition that brings together works by modern and contemporary artists around the federating notion of color.

This proposal, which acts as a starting point for multiple visual practices, consists here in examining how each of the selected artists has used color, paying attention to its physicality, its meaning and its scope.

Across the aesthetic trends that pervaded art during the 20th century, creators hardly ever overlooked the importance of color. Either consciously or unconsciously, color involves our perceptive powers and is often privileged to convey numerous symbols.

Color is an inexhaustible notion that opens up horizons for the utmost freedom of expression and variety of meanings.

The exhibition epitomizes the richness and plurality of color through emblematic works from different periods and movements.

Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889 – 1943) allows us to plunge straight into geometrical abstract art, where color is processed as a flat tint within squares, rectangles or circles – as is the case here –, arranged on the canvas in a choreographic (the artist was dancer earlier in her career) as well as cosmologic (the drawing often evokes the movement of celestial bodies) composition.

One of the most renowned color theorists, **Josef Albers** (1888 – 1976) taught at the Bauhaus, Germany and at Black Mountain

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College, USA. He was interested in the subtle interactions that occur when combining, overlapping and blending colors, while persistently reverting to the same recurring shape or motif, i.e. a repetitive square. How sublime...

With **Yves Klein** (1928 – 1962), color took on a more ambiguous meaning, both metaphysical and mundane. In 1960, the artist officially patented his International Klein Blue (IKB), with which he made his monochromes, at the National Industrial Property Institute (France). Blue being admittedly a highly spiritual color, the act of appropriating it by means of a patent is a way to scorn the concept of artistic style, but also the concept of property in the original sense of the term, since such a free and inspiring thing as a color fundamentally belongs to everyone.

Siberian-born **Evsa Model** (1899 – 1976), a painter largely unknown to the general public, emigrated to Europe and then to the US, where he became a teacher and the partner of the famous photographer Lisette Model. He has left us with a body of work of much interest, where Color Field painting meets early pop art in an unexpected way, and which further conveys an aura inherited from Malevich and the constructivists.

Bram Bogaert (1921-2012) takes to color through the inordinate overflowing of matter.

Peter Halley (1953) too explores a form of minimalism, historically associated with the neo-geo movement and which draws on earlier developments in abstract art through to pop art and to

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what would steadily assert itself, over the 1980s, as “appropriationism” – that is, a practice involving *détournement* and a reuse of images.

Allan McCollum (1944) is concerned with the principle of repetition, of limitless reproduction. In line with pop art, his practice takes on an ambivalent dimension, tinged with a naïve and exhilarating strength specially passed on to the viewer through an invigorating research on color, and concurrently, with a critical strength that points to the excesses of consumption and accumulation of goods.

Los Angeles-born painter **James Brown** (1951) spent years in Paris, where he studied, but also stayed in New York and later on, in Mexico. His paintings, often monumental, mainly come in earth colors and combine the lexicon of minimal art with tribal patterns, so as to sketch out what can be seen as cosmogonies. Each of them has its own range of colors.

German artist **Imi Knoebel** (1940) was a student of Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf, and yet freed himself from his mentor’s aesthetics. His creations lie between painting and sculpture, in a somewhat provocative spirit. Quite humorously, but also with majesty and sensuality, Knoebel draws on the supposedly anachronistic pictorial language of abstract art, picking out its unexplored potentialities in terms of composition and disruption of the frame.

Among the Belgian artists in the exhibition, **Marcel Broodthaers** (1924 – 1976) offers a counterpoint with a work that addresses

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color from a more conceptual and political perspective, by indirectly and cheerfully questioning the way we instinctively identify as being part of a nation, usually symbolized by a flag and its colors.

Contrary to Broodthaers' approach, **Georges Meurant** (1948) makes abstract oil paintings on canvas or wood, where he juxtaposes sequences of squares to emphasize the vibration of their colors. It is a work about the painter's palette, about the shades we feel deeply close to and which constantly appeal to us.

Michel Mouffe (1957) makes bulges in the canvas in order to highlight the tensions and colors. He seeks "a blinding effect at first, to be reexamined over and over again"... "He understands color as a vibration, and shape as the completion of the line's movement".

Ann Veronica Janssens (1956) is interested in the symbolic properties of color as much as in its effects on our bodies, in our eyes. In this respect, her work stands on the dividing line between poetry and science – a line that may prove to be thinner than is generally assumed.