

Mehdi Chouakri Fasanenplatz**MARTIN DISLER*****Stadt und Schatten***

March 14 — April 14, 2018

Opening

March 14 from 7 to 9 p.m.

»to look at the surface while drawing, and into the depths until tears flow from the eyes and sweat covers the body. the deepest drawings originate when I believe that the blood flows out of the pores like in sexuality. with a sweeping crash into the world. what a rushing speed of seeing. billions of handgranade shrapnels of the everyday war stick into my skin and form the eyes, and billions of pomegranate kernals of love stick into my skin and form the eyes.« — Martin Disler

Galerie Mehdi Chouakri presents an exhibition of drawings, paintings and terracotta works by the late Swiss artist Martin Disler (1949-1996). Disler's oeuvre discloses a riveting and ecstatic engagement with profoundly human notions of lust, love, excess, angst, mortality and hope.

The group of eight monochrome drawings emerged in 1993, during a period of time Disler spent in Vienna, where he focused primarily on writing the novel *Die Versuchung des Malers*. Characterized by compulsion and ambiguity, his works resemble existential battlegrounds— buildings, body parts, shapes and word sequences morph into a murky, chimera-like cityscape. His lettering alludes to advertising, but simultaneously reinforces a sense of disquiet, a lingering urgency. Writing is central to the work of Martin Disler: his novel *Bilder vom Maler* had been published in 1980, and he produced various artist books with accompanying texts throughout his lifetime.

From the mid-80s onward, sculpting became increasingly important for the artist— Disler's sculptures reify his multiplex painting and drawing processes. Produced in 1993, the terracotta works in the current exhibition carry transcendental heads and faces with body parts growing into bewildering directions. Disler was drawn to the alchemical process of burning: »Thousands of years before the Christian calendar, I kneaded a lump of clay; I formed the earth in the wordless, tender language of [my] hands, and accompanied the earth through the fire. As a transformed man, I took the transformed [material] from the blazing furnace; the hardened, slowly cooling shards of my life.«

Martin Disler's charged painting technique bridges the line between figuration and abstraction— he is associated with Neo-expressionism and the *Neue Wilden*. A vigorous zest for life, as well as the omnipresence of death, characterizes this generation of artists who set in motion the postmodern reevaluation of convention. Mehdi Chouakri is pleased to present a selection of Disler's multicolored paintings on paper from the 1980s.

During his lifetime, Martin Disler exhibited extensively throughout Europe, USA and Japan. In 1980 he took part in the Venice Biennale; 1982 at documenta 7. Solo exhibitions at prominent institutions, such as Kunsthalle Basel, Folkwang Museum Essen, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Musée d'arte Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Kunsthaus Zürich and Museum Ludwig followed.

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