

Where Art Might Happen: The Early Years of CalArts

30 August – 10 November 2019

Opening: Thursday, 29 August 2019, 6:30 p.m.

Press preview: Wednesday, 28 August 2019, 11 a.m.

Artists in the exhibition: Michael Asher, David Askevold, John Baldessari, Ericka Beckman, Ross Bleckner, Barbara Bloom, Troy Brauntuch, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Klaus vom Bruch, Judy Chicago, Eric Fischl, Simone Forti, Jack Goldstein, Douglas Huebler, Stephan von Huene, Allan Kaprow, Mike Kelley, Alison Knowles, Suzanne Lacy, Matt Mullican, Daniel Joseph Martinez, John Miller, Susan Mogul, Ann Noël, Sandra Orgel, Tony Oursler, Charlemagne Palestine, Stephen Prina, Anthony Ramos, Ulrike Rosenbach, David Salle, Miriam Schapiro, Mira Schor, Jim Shaw, Wolfgang Stoerchle, Mitchell Syrop, Carry Mae Weems, James Welling, Faith Wilding, Christopher Williams and Emmett Williams.

The exhibition was curated by Dr. Philipp Kaiser (Curator, Los Angeles) and Christina Végh (Director of the Kestner Gesellschaft). From 13 March to 7 June 2020, the group show will be on view at the Kunsthaus Graz.

Where Art Might Happen: The Early Years of CalArts focuses on the legendary founding years (1970–1980) of the California Institute of the Arts, which has produced numerous well-known artists. This wide-ranging group exhibition presents a variety of perspectives on the school: parallel movements from the milieus of Conceptual Art, feminism, and Fluxus as well as the school's radical pedagogical concepts will be brought together for the first time.

A Radical Model for a School gical concepts will be brought together for the first time.

CalArts, which was founded by Walt Disney, opened near Los Angeles in 1970. In its early years, the school developed a radical, groundbreaking model whose interdisciplinary nature was based on previous European and American examples such as the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College. It put teachers and students on equal footing and dispensed with a grading system. With the institutional establishment of conceptual and feminist concepts in John Baldessari's

"Post-Studio" course and Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago's "Feminist Art Program," CalArts played a pioneering role. Even then, the focus of the artistic debate was on current social issues such as the questioning of authorship, making artistic working methods more flexible, and the critique of patriarchal power structures.

The Exhibition at the Kestner Gesellschaft

Where Art Might Happen: The Early Years of CalArts focuses on the first ten years of the art school and for the first time brings together the school's teaching concepts and the artistic practices that developed out of them in a group exhibition. The exhibition features some 100 works by around forty artists, including works that will be presented to the public for the first time.

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The interdisciplinary nature of the school is evident in various artistic practices. This connection between Post-Studio and Fluxus was shaped by key figures such as Wolfgang Stoerchle with his conceptual video and performance works and Stephan von Huene with his kinetic sound sculptures. References to both the Post-Studio concept and the Feminist Art Program can be found in the approaches of artists such as Ericka Beckman, Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw, Tony Oursler, and Carrie Mae Weems.

The Exhibition and Research Project

The exhibition *Where Art Might Happen: The Early Years of CalArts* is the result of a three-year research project in cooperation with the Free University of Berlin (Prof. Dr. Annette Jael Lehmann), metaLAB (at) Harvard (Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Schnapp, Kim Albrecht), and IMAGE und CONTENT in Zurich (Reto Caduff, documentary filmmaker). The exhibition was supported by Verena Kittel as a research assistant and Julika Bosch as assistant curator.

The exhibition and research project are funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, the Volkswagen Foundation, and Stiftung Niedersachsen. The exhibition is also supported by the friends of the Kestner Gesellschaft and private donations.

Annette Jael Lehmann, professor at the Institute of Theater Studies at Free University of Berlin, along with students of her master's seminars, is publishing a work entitled *Tacit Knowledge: Post Studio/Feminism – CalArts (1970–1977)* with Spector Books. The highlight of the collaboration with the Free University of Berlin will be a public symposium that will take place on Saturday, 26 October 2019 at Schloss Herrenhausen in Hanover. The speakers will include Kim Albrecht, Amelia Jones, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, Jeffrey Schnapp, Beate Söntgen, Wolfgang Ullrich, and Eyal Weizman.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive catalog including essays by Géraldine Gourbe, Thomas Lawson, Annette Jael Lehmann, Glenn Phillips, Janet Sarbanes, and the editors of the book, Philipp Kaiser and Christina Végh, among others. The catalog, which is planned to appear in a German and an English edition, will be published by Prestel/Prestel DelMonico.

Further information: www.kestnergesellschaft.de

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