

**K.O. GÖTZ**

**Retrospective to mark his 100th Birthday**

MKM Museum Küppersmühle for Modern Art, Duisburg

March 21 to June 15, 2014

**MKM Museum Küppersmühle  
für Moderne Kunst**

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The name K.O. Götz is associated with the German Informel movement perhaps more closely than any other figure. In the February 2014, the artist celebrated his 100th birthday - a fitting occasion, therefore, for the MKM Museum Küppersmühle to honour this great master of abstract Informel art and celebrate his life's work with a comprehensive retrospective. Featuring some 70 works, drawn from seven decades of creative activity, the show traces his development from the mid-1930s to more recent works from 2010, many of which are held in the Ströher Collection. This impressive oeuvre vividly illustrates the striking intensity with which K.O. Götz has dedicated himself throughout his long career to the major genre of painting - and also affords a keen insight into the enormous diversity of his abstract creations.

**Freedom and independence as guiding principles**

*The First World War virtually passed him by, but the ensuing period, which saw the rise of Fascism and the Second World War and the attendant intellectual and artistic censorship, were, and are still, decisive in shaping his approach to life and art. Freedom and independence are the guiding principles to which he has remained true until the present day. Karl Otto Götz ranks among those artists who have restored the cultural dignity to our country after 1945, and he is also one of the most important ambassadors of freedom. This freedom has been reflected in his artistic career until the present day",* stated MKM Director Walter Smerling, characterising K.O. Götz's position as a painter and highly inspirational professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (1959 – 1979).

**Planning and coincidence**

Associated with these aspirational motives of freedom and independence is the rigorous abandonment of the traditional language of form, and of all figuration in the pictorial composition - which is common to all Informel artists regardless of nationality. In K.O. Götz's work, this aspect manifests itself in his distinctly rapid and spontaneous act of painting, which, however, is preceded by careful planning, and culminates in his uniquely characteristic pictorial technique, which he has continually refined over the decades. This rapid execution and his self-developed "squeegee technique" have become the hallmarks of his art.

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K.O. Götz's Informel style of painting began to crystallise in his early works. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, this development was further inspired by his encounters with artists such as Hans Hartung, Pierre Soulages and Wols and by his acquaintance with the works of Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning in Paris. In 1952 the so-called *Quadrige* exhibition in Franck's Zimmergalerie in Frankfurt am Main, unveiling works not only by Götz but also by Otto Greis, Heinz Kreutz and Bernard Schultze, heralded the launch of the German Art Informel movement.

This paradigm shift is spectacularly documented - as the title suggests - in 7.9.52 – Last Oil Painting (1952) featured in the MKM, which followed several early pre-Informel works and those of his so-called transitional phase of the 1950s. Henceforth, and until well into 2000s, the artist was to dedicate himself to the development of his gestural, dynamic and large-scale visual world.

Accordingly, the subsequent exhibition rooms guide the visitor directly into the Informel period of the 1950s and 1960s, which represents one of the highlights of this retrospective. A further focus lies in the powerful and energetic black and white works, which emerged during the course of the 1990s. As in his previous creative phase, they detail the experimental aspects to Götz's artistic practice, his continual quest for the new and the systematisation of the series, which came to define his entire oeuvre - and, as a counter-balance, push the boundaries of experimentation to the limit. In addition, several "classics" are also presented here, including the so-called "*Anti-Nuclear Missile Triptych*" from his CoBrA phase, two of the altogether three works from his monumental *Jonction* series, which the artist painted against the backdrop of German Reunification, and one of K.O. Götz's most recent works "*I-Elemente I*" from the year 2010.

Focusing specifically on the paintings within K.O. Götz's oeuvre, this show in the Museum Küppersmühle essentially charts the development of his painting works chronologically. In contrast, the great hall and three further exhibition rooms also offer surprising juxtapositions of works from his various creative phases. Both have the objective of granting Götz aficionados and "newcomers" alike a fresh insight into the unique visual language of this great exponent of Art Informel with its unreal, flowing patterns and forms and powerful structures and sweeping curves, and also of underscoring its significance for the post-war international art scene.

### **Organisation**

This exhibition is staged by the MKM Museum Küppersmühle for Modern Art, Duisburg in cooperation with the Nationalgalerie - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and the Museum Wiesbaden. Responsible for the organisation of this K.O. GÖTZ Retrospective celebrating the artist's 100th birthday in the MKM is the Foundation for Art and Culture e.V. Bonn. The curator of the exhibition is Ina Ströher.

### **Sponsoring**

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The Museum Küppersmühle is one of Germany's few private museums . In addition to the Ströher Collection, the MKM also stages a host of international travelling exhibitions, which without the generous support of private-sector enterprises, friends and sponsors could not be realised. The K.O. Götz Retrospective in the MKM has been made possible by the dedicated commitment of, and long-standing close cooperation with the NATIONAL-BANK AG. I would like to extend my warmest gratitude for their support.

### **Catalogue**

Accompanying the exhibition is a comprehensive catalogue featuring a joint foreword by Udo Kittelmann, Walter Smerling and Alexander Klar, together with the texts by Hans-Jürgen Schwalm, Heinz-Norbert Jocks and Melanie Franke [Ger./Eng., 224 p., 145 colour plates., hard cover, 30,- € (museum edition), Wienand Verlag, Cologne, ISBN 978-3-86832-165-4]

### **Press photos for download at:**

**<http://www.museum-kueppersmuehle.de/presse/pressebilder/ko-goetz-retrospektive-zum-100-geburtstag/>**

### **Next venue**

Museum Wiesbaden, July 11 to October 12, 2014

### **Events**

Sun, 6.4.2014 / 11 am.

"K.O. Götz 100. The Painter as Poet."

An Artist's Life – Images, Stories and Poetry featuring Art Informel

Thu, 24.4.2014 / 5:15 pm.

"Still Making His Mark at 100. On the Painting of K.O. Götz"

Special guided tours as part of the event series "Kunst und Genuss"

>> Further information available at: [www.museum-kueppersmuehle.de](http://www.museum-kueppersmuehle.de)

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Opening hours: Wed 2-6 pm., Thu to Sun and public holidays 11 am. to 6 pm.

Free admission for children and school pupils (aged 18 years and under).

Free admission every Thursday for residents of Duisburg (on presentation of a valid ID)

Guided tours every Sunday at 3 pm or by special appointment.

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