

galerie gmurzynska

**Galerie Gmurzynska 50th anniversary booth at
Art Basel Miami Beach 2015**

Featuring a special exhibition curated by
Germano Celant
with artistic contributions by **Karl Lagerfeld** and **Zaha Hadid**



Robert Motherwell, *Arabesque*, 1989. Oil on canvas

To conclude Galerie Gmurzynska's 50th anniversary celebrations this year the gallery is pleased to announce a specially conceived showcase, assembled with renowned curator and critic Germano Celant.

Galerie Gmurzynska looks back to an extraordinarily rich exhibition history, having been at the forefront in introducing, re-contextualizing and reinvigorating key avant-garde positions through dedicated scholarship for a contemporary audience since the gallery's founding in Cologne in 1965.

Having realized over 300 exhibitions accompanied by some 250 publications spanning the Russian avant-garde, classic modernism, international postwar positions all the way to some of today's most visible cross-disciplinary practitioners, this showcase will reflect Galerie Gmurzynska's distinct curatorial philosophy.

"Galerie Gmurzynska has created a huge quantity of ideas over the course of its 50-year existence that has been stratifying into a one of a kind archeological site. At Art Basel Miami, each work selected for this project therefore represents a small moment of this activity through which the booth becomes a site of excavation and rediscovery."

- Germano Celant

To this end, Celant has carefully assembled a selection of works that each in their own way not only revisits and conveys Galerie Gmurzynska's trajectory over five decades but further constitute unique masterpieces of the 20th century in their own right.

For Miami, Celant has envisioned an extraordinary salon-style hanging, the overall effect of which he compares to an "avalanche", with the singular works together coalescing into one integral yet multilayered presentation enveloping the viewer.

On this occasion Galerie Gmurzynska is delighted to collaborate with Karl Lagerfeld, whom the gallery has represented for over 20 years, on a retrospective installation. The very first edition of Art Basel Miami Beach notably saw his signature installation of the Karl Lagerfeld Container in Downtown Miami as well as his memorable talk with the late Ingrid Sischy on the work of Kazimir Malevich.

Zaha Hadid, another longtime friend of Galerie Gmurzynska, will lend her unique style to the installation, as the gallery will showcase her latest large-scale table design in the center of the booth.

By realizing this showcase with such creative masterminds, Galerie Gmurzynska celebrates and continues a cross-disciplinary approach to exhibition making – presenting the legacy and relevance of the historical avant-garde in a continually new light in dialogue with the contemporary.

"Galerie Gmurzynska is a universe of people, activities, publications, posters, designs, displays, markets and cultural activities. The richness is in the attention toward the future and toward history, but also toward different languages: photography, sculpture, paintings, objects... possibly breaking down any residual thresholds between the arts."

- Germano Celant

Galerie Gmurzynska at Art Basel Miami Beach 2015
Booth B02
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Miami Beach Convention Center

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Germano Celant is internationally acknowledged for his theories on Arte Povera. Additionally, he is the author of more than one hundred publications, including both books and catalogues. He also curated hundreds of exhibitions at the most prominent international museums and institutions worldwide. Currently Celant is the Artistic and Scientific Superintendent of the Fondazione Prada, Milan; Curator of

Fondazione Aldo Rossi, Milan; and Curator of Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova in Venice. In 2015 he was the Curator of the exhibition “Arts&Foods. Rituals since 1851” for the Expo’s Art Pavilion, The Triennale, Milan.

Galerie Gmurzynska was founded in Cologne in 1965 with a focus on classic modern twentieth century art. Headquartered in Zurich, with further locations in Zug and St. Moritz, Galerie Gmurzynska is a leading international gallery for modern and contemporary art.



Robert Indiana, *Three*, 1965. Oil on canvas



Nikolai Suetin, *Suprematist City*, 1931. Pencil on paperboard

Galerie Gmurzynska in collaboration with Germano Celant

A primer on the history of Salon Style hanging on the occasion of Galerie Gmurzynska's special 50th anniversary booth at Art Basel Miami 2015

Galerie Gmurzynska is celebrating the gallery's 50th anniversary this year with a specially curated booth conceived by Germano Celant, one of the most esteemed and prolific curators working today.

This exhibition will bring together a selection of masterpieces spanning an entire century, from the earliest Russian avant-garde movements all the way to contemporary visionaries such as Karl Lagerfeld.



Room of Italian Art, New Hermitage, St. Petersburg



Salon De Louvre, Paris

The booth in Miami will be transformed into a modern-day salon, paying homage to the original Salon de Louvre as much as to the so-called St. Petersburg hanging style signature to the Hermitage Museum. Under the patronage of Catherine the Great in 18th century Russia, the salon served as a gathering place for diverse exchange, scholarly connoisseurship and novel aesthetic experience.



Leo and Gertrude Stein's Salon, Paris 1907



"0.10 - The Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting", St. Petersburg 1915

Mirroring Galerie Gmurzynska's pioneer position in rediscovering and presenting the breadth of Russian avant-garde art and modern masters this Miami Salon equally takes inspiration from the likes of Gertrude Stein's Paris Salon to the art-historically pivotal St. Petersburg exhibit, the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting" in 1915.



Picasso "Musketeers" at Palais des Papes, Avignon, 1973

The Salon meanwhile, has seen renewed interest through artists such as Allan McCollum, Claes Oldenburg, George Condo or Cindy Sherman, while Celant himself has deployed this curatorial format to great acclaim at the Prada Foundation in Milan.

Together Galerie Gmurzynska and Celant will critically explore the possibilities of this time-tested and surprisingly open exhibition format, and with it the continued value of passionate and informed connoisseurship, proving there still remain new avenues in developing the art fair's potential in communicating the latitude of modern and contemporary art.



"Picasso Mania" at the Grand Palais, Paris 2015



Prada Foundation, Milan

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20th century masters since 1965
www.gmurzynska.com

Half a Century at the Galerie Gmurzynska

by
Germano Celant

The *quadreria* or picture collection, made up of works that completely covered the walls in a dense and intense arrangement, so that the paintings were all amassed together and interfered with one another visually, was a characteristic element, in the 16th century, of the interior decoration of the palaces of princes and cardinals, and from the 17th century of the homes of the aristocracy as well.¹ From the Galleria Doria Pamphilj, designed by the architect Gabriele Valvassori, in Rome, Italy, to the Schönborn Bilder-Gallerie in Schloss Weissenstein, Pommersfelden, Germany, and the Schloss Belvedere in Vienna, Austria, art collections were presented as an ensemble of images, with the aim of demonstrating their magnificence and importance, as well as the intellectual effort that had gone into their assembly. The idea they set out to convey was that each work was a testimony of the past, and sometimes of the present too, an example of the study of scientific and other subjects, of religious iconography and of the events of political history.



Eduard Hau, *The Study of Italian Art*, 1856

It was a checkerboard system that allowed the collector to display the eclecticism and magnificence of his taste, but it also served to arrange the collection in thematic or chronological order, offering the nobility that made up the public of the time a visual route to follow on their visit. At times, as in the case of the Fridericianum museum in Kassel, set up by Frederick II and built to a design by the architect Simon Louis du Ry between 1769 and 1777, the encyclopedic collection comprised musical instruments, suits of armor, scientific apparatus and naturalistic finds, and the exhibition turned into a confused jumble of things in which a domino effect extended to entire rooms, creating an all-embracing display from floor to ceiling. The intention, fully in keeping with the spirit of the Enlightenment, was to assemble a visual library in which the works were identified with ideas and visions that could be referred to and serve spiritual and intellectual progress, extending reason in doing and seeing to all the fields of human experience.

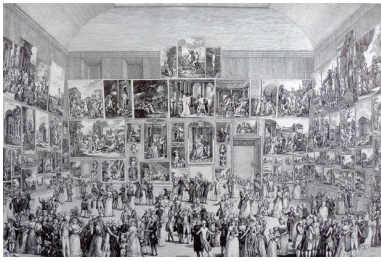
Such arrangements of art collections were intended to serve an educational purpose, and one that would soon be met by the creation of the Louvre: not just that of providing information about national schools, like the Italian, French and Flemish-Dutch ones, but also immersing visitors in an artistic milieu that would influence their understanding as well as elicit an emotional reaction. On the one hand the impulse of the Enlightenment to study the iconography of art, on the other the necessity to make participation less specialized, broadening it to take in a greater number of people.²

The practice of hanging a large quantity of paintings together on the wall continued for many years, up until the advent of the commercialization of objects, commencing with the first Universal Exhibition in London in 1851, where products, including works of art, were mixed up and put on sale without any selective criteria. In addition, the principles that govern public places, when they were visited by a large and diverse range of people, encouraged a lightening of the display, inducing exhibitors to reduce the

¹ Alessandra Mottola Molfino, *Il libro dei Musei* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 1992); Maria Teresa Fiorio, *Il Museo nella Storia* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2011).

² Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum: Old Master Paintings and the Rise of the Art Exhibition* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2000).

mass of things presented. And while the Salons in Paris continued for several decades to show paintings in the manner of a *quadreria*, so that it came to be known as “salon-style,” the dynamics of the market, increasingly focused on the display of exclusive products which led to a rarefaction of the presentation.³ The pictures and the sculptures were isolated, or placed on pedestals. It was no longer acceptable to show different periods and styles together, and the emphasis was placed instead on the identity of an artist or a group of artists that had adopted a common language.



Pierre Antonio Martini, Salon du Louvre, 1787

The avant-garde movements, from Impressionism to Expressionism, took the same line, organizing independent exhibitions and salons, seeking a confrontation with traditional and commercial art and shaping, in the end, a uniform approach to presentation, based on clear-cut relations of form, technique and material. Out of this came a method of displaying works that entailed hanging them individually in succession on the wall, and therefore isolating them, excluding any overcrowding, which was considered old-fashioned and dated, in order to give the painted or sculpted object its own space. And so the modern display was born, with its rarefied lexicon that permits a horizontal extension of the sequence of paintings, usually placed at the eye level of a human being of standard height. At the same time there was a reduction in the visual impact of the wall. Covered with velvet and drapes up until the 19th century, the historical avant-gardes and the first private art galleries chose to use simple materials like burlap. These in turn would slowly give way, at the beginning of the 20th century, to the color white, whose neutrality served to give greater emphasis to the colors and materials of the works, elements that were also brought out by the use of bright illumination.

The decongestion of exhibitions, so that works were selected and isolated, was also connected with the need of the market and the art galleries to stress their rarity and their uniqueness. This is a propensity that has continued to our own day, and has led to the emergence of a conception of art without any physical or historical context: to its being placed in a limbo where what counts is the identity of the buyer, who—in a dimension without space or time, created by the white box—can project his vision and his desires onto the product, in order to identify with it and appropriate it. An adaptation to a



Salon of Gertrude and Leo Stein at 27 Rue de Fleurus, 1910

generic and superficial interpretation that as early as the beginning of the 1900s prompted reactions from art lovers like Leo and Gertrude Stein, who in their Paris studio in 1907 assembled their collection as if it were a library from the Age of Enlightenment, focusing on Cubism from Pablo Picasso to George Braque. In addition, exhibitions like *0.10. The Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting, 1915*, and Ivan Puni's one-man show at *Der Sturm* in Berlin, 1921, all the way up to the *International Exhibition of Surrealism* at the Galerie de Beaux-Arts in Paris, 1938, and *First Papers of Surrealism* in New York, 1942, are examples of a rejection of the toughening of this view of art, which could not be treated as if it were made up of isolated and unique fragments, taken totally out of their context, but should be seen in its harmonious relationship with all forms of expression and all languages, interlaced and intermixed, until they were, in fact, bundled together with twine by Marcel Duchamp.

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0.10 The Last Futurist Exhibition, 1919



Ivan Puni, Der Sturm, 1921

³ Kenneth W. Luckhurst, *The Story of Exhibitions* (London-New York: Studio Publications, 1951); Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Antonello Negri, *L'arte in exhibition. Una storia delle esposizioni* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2011).

From the time of the Madrid conference, in 1934, at which the most appropriate methods for the presentation of works of art in museums were discussed, the directors of these institutions were invited to make their selection of collections on a qualitative rather than quantitative basis.⁴ This transformed the typology of display, pushing it toward an “ideal” presentation. Attention was focused on the independent characteristics of each object, which was isolated and highlighted, so that illumination—by electric light, which first appeared in pioneering interventions in museums in Stockholm and Paris, in 1933—was declared a fundamental instrument for its perception and interpretation. The principle of accumulating many works on a wall gave way to that of the individuality of each painting and, on the floor, of each sculpture. In fact there was a shift toward a breakup of collections, separating their constituent elements one from the other and presenting them singly,



Joseph Beuys during the installation of *Richtkräfte* (einer neuen Gesellschaft), 1974 – 1977, Nationalgalerie, Berlin

in order to characterize them better and focus on their complexity and uniqueness. In parallel, the lightening of the impact of the setting became a generalized approach that influenced display in public as well as private spaces. From this moment on the *quadreria* vanished and only reappeared as a creative intervention by the artist, who turned it into an “environment”: an ensemble composed of fragments that form a whole. Such environments have been produced by artists from Kurt Schwitters to Allan Kaprow, from Claes Oldenburg to Edward Kienholz and from Joseph Beuys to Louise Nevelson.⁵ Or it has been adopted as a curatorial device, to draw attention to a particular thematic or historical set of works produced by an artist, from Picasso to Cindy Sherman.

At the end of the 19th century, with the advent of industrialization and the increase in the rarity of unique objects, their place taken by mass-produced ones, the particularly precious character of the work of art, due to its original and creative component, became a stimulus to create a new market, different from the one for antiques and old masters. An economic value was assigned to the taste for modern art, and this went hand in hand with an increase in the number of people, especially in America, interested in assembling collections that would later end up in museums,⁶ and a consequent proliferation of dealers, ready to meet the demands and desires of these enthusiasts. And so the collections of leaders like J. Pierpont Morgan, Albert C. Barnes, Solomon Guggenheim, David Rockefeller and Leonard Lauder were formed. While the art market was initially dominated by dealers like Paul Durand-Ruel and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, followed after the Second World War by people like Julien Levy and Alfred Schmela in Europe and Sydney Janis and Leo Castelli in the United States.

It is worth pointing out that, after the advent of the historical avant-gardes, from Cubism to Futurism, from Constructivism to Dadaism, from Neoplasticism to Surrealism, at the end of the Second World War—which had seen women make an important contribution to the survival and resurgence of the belligerent nations—a large number of female gallerists entered the world of the art market. Following the suggestions of wealthy but daring women collectors, such as Louise Arensberg, Baroness Hilla von Rebay and Peggy Guggenheim, they opened private and commercial spaces devoted to modern and contemporary art. The first to do so was Denise René in Paris in 1944, followed in 1955 by Colette Allendy, Ileana Sonnabend and Iris Clert, while in New York Betty Parson’s gallery opened in 1946 and Martha Jackson’s in 1952. In 1955 one was opened in Milan by Beatrice Monti and in 1959 another by

⁴ Fiorio, *Il Museo nella Storia*, 129-33.

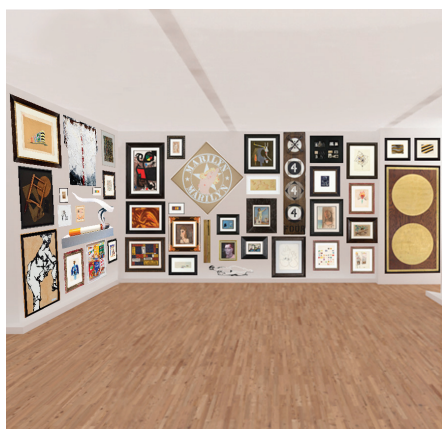
⁵ Germano Celant, *Arte/Ambiente, dal Futurismo alla Body Art* (Venice-Milan: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia/Gruppo Editoriale Electa, 1977).

⁶ Germain Seligman, *Merchants of Art: 1880-1960: Eighty Years of Professional Collecting* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1961); Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and Francis Crémieux, *My Galleries and Painters* (New York: Viking Press, 1965); Calvin Tomkins, *Merchants and Masterpieces: The History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1973); Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1977); Laura de Coppet and Alan Jones, *The Art Dealers* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1984); Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Paul Durand-Ruel, *Mémoires du marchand des impressionnistes* (Paris: Flammarion, 2014).

Virginia Dwan in Los Angeles.⁷ Their contribution to the history of art in the present day has been fundamental as they helped to spread and promote movements ranging from European Kinetic Art and Object Art to American Action Painting and Abstract Expressionism, and subsequently those of Pop Art, Minimal Art and Land Art too.

It was in this climate of a growing awareness of modern art and its history that Antonina Gmurzynska opened her gallery in Cologne in 1965, deciding initially to devote her attention to the European avant-gardes of France and Russia. She focused in particular on movements like Suprematism and Constructivism, which for decades had been excluded from the studies and analyses of art historians because of their political and ideological connotations. It was an inclination that led her from 1966 onward to promote figures like David Burliuk and, over the decades to come, making use of her direct contacts with the artists' families, Alexander Rodchenko, Mikhail Larionov, Paul Mansouff, Ilya Chashnik, Nikolai Suetin and Vladimir and Georgii Stenberg. She was also able to draw on her knowledge of private and public collections in Moscow and Leningrad, where works by Kazimir Malevich, El Lissitzky and Vladimir Tatlin were to be found. A program that saw the staging of major historical exhibitions like *Russian Artists of the 20th Century* (1968), *From Surface to Space: Russia 1916-1924* (1974), *Kazimir Malevich. On the Event of His 100th Birthday* (1978) and *From Painting to Design: Russian Constructivist Art of the 1920s* (1981). In 1971 she turned her gaze on Surrealism and later the whole gamut of the avant-gardes, with exhibitions on Kurt Schwitters (1978) and Fernand Léger (1985). With the drive and vision of Krystyna Gmurzynska supported by Mathias Rastorfer, from 1991 as director and from 1996 as partner, the gallery chose to stress feminine influences on the history of modern art, with *Cherchez la Femmes* (1992) and *Rodchenko-Stepanova: Moscow-Paris via Cologne* (1993). It went on to expand the areas of its interest to take in the tendencies of the sixties, from Yves Klein to Donald Judd, from Louise Nevelson to David Smith and from Robert Indiana to Wilfredo Lam and Tom Wesselmann, as well as to open up to the diversity of creative languages, exploring everything from photography to design and architecture, from Karl Lagerfeld to Richard Meier and Zaha Hadid.

In 2015 the Galerie Gmurzynska is celebrating fifty years of activity. It now has branches in Zug, Zurich and St. Moritz and has staged over two hundred and fifty exhibitions and brought out more than two hundred catalogues and other publications on art. Thus it is difficult, if not impossible, to cover every moment in the course of the gallery's development over that time, a course that is now part of history. To embrace the half-a-century's worth of works that have passed through its spaces and made that history, and put together a collection of surprising and unfamiliar events and documents on the occasion of Art Basel in Miami, the decision has been made to go back to the idea of the visual library: the *quadreria*. A way of looking back at the past as well as bearing witness to the present by assembling paintings and sculptures that have spent time on the walls and floors of the gallery. The aim to convey to both the



Booth rendering, Galerie Gmurzynska at Art Basel in Miami Beach 2015

specialist and the lay public the impossibility of setting boundaries to an artistic and cultural enterprise that has lasted for fifty years, as well as to highlight the dynamism and diversity of the languages, from the decorative to the artistic, from the photographic to the architectural, that have marked the span of time covered by the Galerie Gmurzynska, from colors to furnishings, from frames to projections. It is a gigantic mosaic formed out of creative fragments that intersect with one another, avoiding a linear view. What counts instead is both the whole and the individual work, as moments of free reflection that, like a game of cards, are laid out on the table of seeing and perceiving: a *quadreria* of constantly shifting ideas and visions with which to examine the past and foresee the future.

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⁷ For a timeline of the emergence of women in the world of collecting and art galleries, see Germano Celant, *Virginia Dwan-Dwan Gallery* (Milan: Skira, 2016), forthcoming.