

Exhibition

MAX ACKERMANN

Pionier der Abstraktion | *Pioneer of abstraction*

DIE GALERIE, Frankfurt am Main

March 12 – May 28, 2025

Opening: March 12, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

With the exhibition **Max Ackermann – Pioneer of Abstraction**, DIE GALERIE celebrates the life and work of a German pioneer of non-objective painting 50 years after his death.

Born in Berlin in 1887 and active primarily in Stuttgart and at Lake Constance, **Max Ackermann** (1887–1975) ranks among the absolute pioneers of German and international abstraction and deserves to be mentioned alongside celebrated contemporaries such as Willi Baumeister and Wassily Kandinsky.

Always eager to experiment and keen to try out new techniques and styles, the artist's work is characterized by an impressive and consistent degree of diversity. "*I master all styles*", the artist confidently claimed in the 1960s. Numerous historical events and upheavals had an impact on Max Ackermann's life and work: his studies in Weimar with Henry van de Velde, which he broke off in 1907 after only one year, were decisive for his early work, which was influenced by Art Nouveau; further stations in Dresden and Munich, via Frankfurt and Ilmenau, eventually led him to Stuttgart. In 1912, he joined the circle around Adolf Hölzel, which had a lasting stylistic influence on him, and became involved with the so-called "Wandervogel" (migratory bird) youth movement. After World War I, Ackermann increasingly explored political and social issues, also in his art; his work took on veristic traits, as he sympathized with communist and anarchist groups. The 1930s and 1940s mark the period of his "inner emigration". He lived in Hornstaad on Lake Constance in the house of his wife Gertrud Ostermayer, where he occasionally offered seminars. The NS regime condemned his art as "degenerate", effectively banning him from exhibiting and causing his works to be removed from national collections. However, this did not deter Ackermann, who continued to work tirelessly, constantly searching for new chromatic and formal compositions.

For a long time, Max Ackermann did not commit to a particular style of painting and alternated between figuration and abstraction, between verism and New Objectivity, between geometric shapes, linear compositions and pure color fields, until he ultimately settled on an exclusively non-representational pictorial language after 1948, when he was already over 60 years old. Continuously searching for a more spiritual, divine dimension in his art, he once expressed his view on abstraction as follows: "*Non-objective painting encompasses the solemn, the festive, the hymn-like, even the sacred*".

Comprising around 70 works, DIE GALERIE explores the vast range of this artistic genius, from extremely dynamic compositions often inspired by music, to large-scale color fields in varying shades of blue exuding a sense of calm and harmony. Painted between 1930 and the mid-1970s, the

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pieces in this exhibition work together like a perfectly orchestrated symphony of loud and soft tones, captivating the viewer's attention.

To accompany the paintings by Max Ackermann, DIE GALERIE is also presenting a selection of sculptures by the following artists from the gallery program: **Riccardo Cordero, Beate Debus, Sonja Edle von Hoefle, Dietrich Klinge, Herbert Mehler** and **Igor Mitoraj**.

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Address: DIE GALERIE
Grüneburgweg 123
60323 Frankfurt am Main

Duration of the exhibition: March 12 – May 28, 2025

Opening event: March 12, 2025, 6:30 pm (not public, prior registration required)

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HIGHLIGHTS



Max Ackermann
Gegenstandloses Bild
1933
Oil and tempera on plywood
153,4 x 52,1 cm
Signed, dated and inscribed verso



Max Ackermann
Figurales
1940
Oil on plywood
110,5 x 51 cm
Signed, dated and inscribed verso



Max Ackermann

Figur und Blumen

1947

Oil and tempera on hardboard

64,5 x 49 cm

Signed and dated lower right; signed, dated and inscribed verso



Max Ackermann

Ohne Titel

ca. 1949

Oil, tempera and pastel chalk on plywood

118 x 76,7 cm

Signed verso



Max Ackermann

Schwarze Zeichen

1954

Oil and tempera on plywood

120 x 80 cm

Signed, dated and inscribed verso upper middle



Max Ackermann

Chromatische Komposition

1955

Oil and tempera on plywood

119 x 54,5 cm

Signed and dated lower right; signed, dated and inscribed verso upper middle



Max Ackermann
Bild vom 9.4.58
1958
Oil and tempera on canvas
65 x 40 cm
Signed and dated verso on the stretcher



Max Ackermann
Feuerwerk
1961
Oil on canvas
120 x 100 cm
Signed, dated and inscribed verso on the stretcher



Max Ackermann
Bild vom 20.6.65
1965
Oil and tempera on canvas
100,5 x 90,5 cm
Signed and dated verso on the stretcher



Max Ackermann
Fanfarenbild
1965
Oil on canvas
120 x 100 cm
Signed and dated verso on the stretcher



Max Ackermann
o.T. (Überbrückungsvariante)
1972
Acrylic on cardboard
37 x 31 cm
Signed and dated verso upper middle

SCULPTURES



Riccardo Cordero
Origin of Life
2018
Bronze
51 x 48 Ø 35,5 cm
Signed and numbered
Nr. 1/3



Igor Mitoraj
Luna Nera
2011
Bronze
86,5 x 56 x 57 cm
Signed and numbered
Nr. 3/8



Beate Debus
Fluchtkreuz
2015/2016
Bronze
75 x 50 x 60 cm
Monogrammed and numbered
Nr. 1/6



Sonja Edle von Hoeßle
Peps
2023
Steel, burnished
96 x 33,5 x 33,5 cm
Nr. 2/3



Dietrich Klinge
Kopf Roes III
2009
Bronze
60 x 35 x 35 cm
Signed and numbered
Nr. 2/6



Herbert Mehler
Kilada
2021
Corten Steel
170 x 50 x 50 cm