

Galerie Francesca Pia

Alvin Baltrop
Wade Guyton
Heimo Zobernig

Opening June 2, 17–20
June 3 – July 23, 2022

Galerie Francesca Pia is pleased to announce a group exhibition featuring works by Alvin Baltrop, Wade Guyton and Heimo Zobernig.

The comprehensive photographic oeuvre of Alvin Baltrop (1948-2004) only gained public notoriety after his premature death. Baltrop began photographing with greater intent while in the Navy. Following his service, he studied photography at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. His favored subject became the dilapidated warehouses along Manhattan's West Side piers, which he captured in a multitude of photographs between 1975 and 1986. At the time, the piers were an important meeting place for the members of New York's gay scene, for artists, but also homeless people and drug addicts.

Baltrop's small-format photographs present a largely voyeuristic view observed from afar, other pictures are more intimate or documentary-like. Such perspectives of this photographic approach convey the sense of libidinous attraction that emerged between the pier's ruinous architecture and the prevailing sexual permissiveness, without ignoring the violence that also characterized this area. Baltrop's series *The Piers* therefore is not only an important contemporary document of sexual and artistic experimentation, but also an extraordinarily intense and visually unique work in the history of the genre.

Wade Guyton (1972) created the large-scale, two-part work *Untitled* in 2013 for his solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Zürich. The abstract, black and white paintings from this series were printed on canvas using the same digital file as for his iconic black paintings. The formats here, however, appear exceptionally elongated and the canvases seem to duplicate the walls of the exhibition space. Thus, they exhibit not only their pictorial value, but also their object-like character and specific materiality. The large, seemingly empty surfaces of the paintings teem with disparate traces of their production. Rich in detail, these scratches, smears and folds contrast with the monumentality of the formats.

The two horizontal paintings were presented in the group exhibition *Black Sun* at the Fondation Beyeler in 2015; one of the two paintings was also included in Guyton's comprehensive retrospective, *Wade Guyton. TWO DECADES MCMXCIX-MMXIX* (2019/20) on view at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne.

Heimo Zobernig (1958) has developed an extraordinarily multifaceted and complex artistic practice since the early 1980s. His oeuvre includes painting and sculpture, theater and exhibition displays, performances and film. The artist's experimental approach to historically endowed concepts of genre and form insistently probes the boundaries associated with them anew.

The exhibition includes a pigmented foam work from the late 1980s, a distorted mannequin and two of Zobernig's minimalist plywood sculptures. While he recurrently refers to basic elements of modernist art production and its often-standardized forms, he circumvents the fetishization of the minimalist form by translating these into simple materials such as plywood, foam and dispersion paint and instead sets the attribution of meaning and purpose in motion.