

Daimler Art Collection

Private/Corporate III

Works from the Daimler Art Collection

and Helioid Spiekermann Collections: a dialogue

Daimler Contemporary, Berlin

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Foreword

For this third wave of dialogue between the Daimler Art Collection and other, German and international, private collections, our link is with a true ‘Rhineland’ collection that has been assembled with genuine passion. Over a period of 30 years, Helioid Spiekermann met many of the key figures of the art world in Cologne and Düsseldorf—not only as patients in her dentist’s chair, but also on her regular visits to the studios of Polke and Kippenberger, Herold and Knoebel—and followed closely the rise of the Cologne art scene, engaging over decades in pugnacious, committed and enthusiastic exchanges with the relevant galleries with which she came into contact. And so we find a link back to the beginning of our ‘Private/Corporate’ series, for of course Paul Maenz’s Cologne gallery was also a key figure in such exchanges.

Helioid Spiekermann lives amongst her art, whether at her home in Düsseldorf-Haan, surrounded by pond, sheep, geese and pigs, in her holiday apartment in the south, or in what

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used to be her dental practice. Nothing is spirited away into storage or has been acquired simply for the sake of it, in the hope that it will be ‘resurrected’ publicly in some museum or other. Since space is inevitably limited, the collection has not grown since the early 1990s by more than a very few select, more recent works. Until the practice was closed at the end of last year, patients were confronted with a dark, dramatic installation by Jonathan Meese. Works such as Jörg Immendorff’s early piece *Musée d’Art Moderne*, 1984, or Andreas Slominski’s cheerful *Blaufarbmühle*, 1996, were perhaps better suited to soothing patients’ nerves, while those in the waiting room could pass the time studying Arno Schmidt’s *Zettels Traum* instead of reading the usual magazines. At home in Haan, paintings by Kippenberger and Herold are honorary guests at the dining table (at which both of them have enjoyed the odd bottle of wine or the occasional excellent dinner of roast goose); fireside chats are held in the presence of and about Oehlen, Baselitz, Knoebel and Penck, while her daughters’ rooms feature Warhol graphics and Dokoupil’s *Frottee-Bild*, 1984. Helioid Spiekermann has condensed the spiritual dialogue that she herself has experienced with art into occasional highly original texts, such as those found in the delightful little book ‘Frech und ungewöhnlich am Beispiel Kippenberger’, 1994.

The main areas of focus of the Spiekermann Collection are demonstrated in our exhibition in the groups of works by Kippenberger, Knoebel, Polke and Baselitz. With the sure eye of a connoisseur, Helioid Spiekermann has gathered together major works by ‘her’ artists, among them Baselitz’ enormous *Kopf* in lime wood, 1979/84, Albert Oehlen’s collage *Die Wahrheit liegt in der Wohnung*, 1984, or Polke’s *Chinesisches Meer*, 1983. Reflecting Martin Kippenberger’s own attitude and artistic practice, the Spiekermann Collection juxtaposes all the different media used by the artist—canvas, poster, object, sculpture—without any sense of hierarchy.

We have brought into dialogue with these works some of the clearest and best-quality pieces from the Daimler Art Collection, principally examples of German art of the 1980s. We have very consciously avoided contrasting the dominance of narration and expression in the Spiekermann Collection with the geometric-constructive tendencies that have grown to characterize our own collection. Instead, the exhibition shows works by, amongst others, Baselitz, Oehlen, Fetting and Kippenberger, rarely shown in public. In addition, Andy Warhol’s massive painting *Friedrich der Große*, 1986, and the newly acquired and very impressive

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Atlantis by Langlands & Bell from 1989 are now on display for the first time in Haus Huth. Meese and Slominski from the Spiekermann Collection are matched with the younger Franz Ackermann, Markus Huemer, Ina Weber and Simone Westerwinter from the Daimler Art Collection. The block of works by Westerwinter in our collection is complemented by a new collage from the group of *JA-Arbeiten*, and the seven works by her in our exhibition are placed in a visual dialogue with Kippenberger and Warhol, both of whom, in their way, proved influential for the artist. Ina Weber's drawn intervention into mundane contemporary architectures also draws part of its radical energy from Kippenberger's model. We have complemented Markus Huemer's projection work dedicated to Blinky Palermo, acquired in 2002, with a work that addresses the aesthetic processes in Sigmar Polke's oeuvre in the form of digital projection.

To conclude, let us just mention a few more significant works in our private-public exchange. Günther Förg is represented in both collections with a large architectural photo, one from the complex of Förg's photographic researches in Tel Aviv (Spiekermann Collection), the other a surprising view of the site of the ancient Sybil in Cumae, Italy (DAC). A striking counterpoint to these is provided by Guillaume Bijl's *Composition Trouvée*, 1990, a three-dimensional still life of private taste formed in the border-zone between art, kitsch and design classics. From here visitors can then move on to Imi Knoebel's interpretations of constructive Utopias or perhaps to the anti-civilisatory world concepts of A.R. Penck.

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