Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Breaking the walls, Dino appears
Curated by Leiko Ikemura
May 10 – Aug 01, 2025
Opening: May 09, 2025 / 6 – 9 pm
Lina Bo Bardi, Martin Creed, Rudolf Finisterre,
Günther Förg, Dan Graham, Leiko Ikemura,
Tomie Ohtake, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Schütte,
Álvaro Siza, Thomas Struth, Philipp von Matt, Chen Wei

Leiko Ikemura, Haus-Frau (House-Woman), 1991, Patinated bronze, 22 × 19 × 21 cm, Edition: 3/5, © Leiko Ikemura.

Curator's statement

The 'house' is an obsession since my childhood. I often dreamed of houses and stretches of water and I made notes of them. Some are fascinatingly lucid, others more traumatic…
Why this is so deeply embedded in me is that even as a child I wanted to build houses and this probably has to do with experience of our house being destroyed by a typhoon… so houses are protection and danger at the same time. They stand between human needs and nature.

This project approaches the interface between art and architecture.
When art becomes visible in the context of spaces, it elevates the other and reveals its essence in a deliberately positioned location.

When architecture drops its function, it becomes sculptural, takes on the porosity of the walls, or creates a coexistence with art that needs a vessel for itself or questions this.

The invited personalities gently touch this interface, which makes the inside and outside permeable.
They interact with each other – change sides – and thus enter into a dialogue.

No floor plans of buildings are shown here, models become a universe in themselves.
House ideas are sometimes dreamy or traumatic. Sculptures are reminiscent of the possibilities of buildings.

When definitions and roles dissolve – what happens?

The constellation of participants opens doors to a different perception of touch, even confrontation, questioning each other.

Leiko Ikemura

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Press release

We are delighted to announce the group exhibition "Breaking the walls, Dino appears", curated by Leiko Ikemura. The theme-based interdisciplinary exhibition brings together visual artists and architects who find or create a poetic approach to the world through similar impulses. While the disciplines of art and architecture were linked during the Renaissance, they have diverged over the centuries within a world of increasing complexity and specialization in general perception. They have strengthened and autotomized their own dynamics; nevertheless, they have much in common.

Leiko Ikemura sees a significant parallel between the two disciplines, particularly in their process-based nature. In the moment of ideation, becoming, and creative process, the formative element, which has not yet been finally determined, constantly reconfigures itself: "Art has no other function than to be art. In connection with architecture, however, it becomes part of a manifestation. In its process-based nature, architecture is artistically involved in the sense that it is liberated from its function. Therefore, when the ideas dream, that is the moment of beauty and openness. The finished buildings almost conceal this process."

The exhibition is dedicated to the complex, synesthetic interweaving of architecture and art, the illumination of their boundaries and a reflection on their proclamations of autonomy. A space, a housing, a skeleton, a sculpture, and a body are defined between placement and omission, between what is to be seen and what has been decidedly left out. This also goes hand in hand with a constitution of "inside" and "outside". This symbiotic, reciprocal relationship also exists in art. A space also means the presence of a cavity. The contour of a sculpture defines the boundary between space and the surrounding or enclosed counter-space.

Both spheres not only create spaces, but also skillfully break them. Through disruptions and obstructions, they guide the gaze, create their dramaturgy in the three-dimensional experiential space. They develop a unique, ephemeral staging and narration only experienced in those spaces. They conceal, delay, obscure, reveal and emphasize. Perspectives, lighting conditions and incidence, light intensity and color, choice of materials and colors, spatial architecture and architectural interventions become a mobile "morph space" to be animated and reconfigured in every second, in every interaction: "The house is an animal, a living organism. It breathes and transforms. It cries and laughs, the place for emotions."

Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992), architect, theorist and curator, stands paradigmatically for a way of thinking that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Her projects combine social responsibility, constructive simplicity and a profoundly humane aesthetic. Trained in Italy and latterly working in São Paulo, she developed a radically open design approach that focused on social participation. The drawings and models for the *Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)* on display in the exhibition make it clear that the focus is not on the building itself, but on the public space beneath it. Her designs show an architecture that is not controlled, but remains appropriable – lively, human, permeable.

Tomie Ohtake (1913–2015), a central figure in Brazilian abstract art, combined Eastern philosophy with the formal language of Western modernism. Her late sculptures, such as the iconic red sculpture in Santos, Brazil, depicted in the exhibition, are characterized by curved lines, strong colour contrasts and poetic reduction – often inspired by Japanese calligraphy. Whether as loose installations in the urban space or as sculptural gestures in the exhibition space, Ohtake's works arise from intuitive clarity and refuse any fixed interpretation. Her works are brushstrokes that have become sculptural, poetic interventions in public space. They materialize an artistic exploration of space and movement that is reminiscent of architectural volumes without adopting their functional logic.

Dan Graham (1942–2022) was a key figure in conceptual art, whose work operated at the interface of architecture, media art and social reflection. Central to his work was the relationship between the individual, space and perception – a theme that manifests itself in his reflective pavilions as well as in his early text and photo projects. The works on paper *Video Project for Two Shops* and *Video Projection Outside Home* shown in the exhibition document conceptual interventions from the 1970s in which everyday architecture is transformed into social feedback systems. Graham thinks of space not as a form, but as an experience – permeable, situational, dialogical.

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Since 2013, Chen Wei has been developing his *New City* series, in which he reflects on the effects of rapid change in Chinese cities and urban space in all its complexity. His photographic tableaux, including *New Gate,* which has recently become part of the permanent collection of the Centre Pompidou and is now being shown in the exhibition, depict theatrically staged, deserted urban spaces – between hypermodernity and abandonment. In their artificial light dramaturgy and melancholic silence, urban surfaces become projection spaces for memory, isolation and social alienation.

Günther Förg's (1952–2013) photograph *Ledoux I* is part of his long-standing exploration of architectural modernism and its ideological-historical implications, the tendencies of which were already present in revolutionary architecture and classicism. The work is part of a series of black and white photographs in which Förg documented buildings of classical modernism from the 1980s onwards, as well as older works of significance in terms of architectural theory – including buildings by Adolf Loos, Mies van der Rohe and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Förg understands photography not as a neutral reproduction, but as a subjectively filtered form of approach. In *Ledoux I*, his characteristic, slightly blurred and grainy visual language meets the strictly symmetrical, almost utopian building concept of the *Pavillon des cercles* by the French architect of the Enlightenment, which was only realized posthumously in 1998 on the basis of his designs.

In his series *l.m.v.d.r.*, Thomas Ruff examines the visualization of modern architecture using buildings by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. He photographed the Haus Lange and the Haus Esters, for instance, as well as the Villa Tugendhat in Brno and the reconstructed Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona. In some cases, where the photographic conditions on site were unsuitable, Ruff used archive images and subjected the original photographs to obvious digital manipulation. The works shown in the exhibition, *d.p.b.02, h.l.k.07*, and *h.t.b.17*, emphasize the architect's play with the transitions between interior and exterior spaces, work with deliberate motion blur and react to the restrained aesthetics of modernism with sometimes intense colors – an analytical examination of the iconography of modernism.

Thomas Schütte, one of the most renowned contemporary artists, has also been working with radically experimental architecture for over four decades. In his finely crafted models, he takes up typologies of public buildings, but also designs individual retreats – always as critical commentaries on social structures. The 3D model *Library, Model 1:10* shown in the exhibition is exemplary of this approach: an autonomous space of thought, condensed into a sculptural form. By monumentalizing his models or transforming them into walk-in scales, Schütte shifts our perception of function, scale and meaning.

With his *Step Paintings*, Martin Creed transforms the principle of the serial, formally reduced application of paint into a pictorial architecture. Their ascending rhythm is formally reminiscent of staircases, cakes or pre-Columbian pyramid constructions – modular systems between ritual structure and geometric order, charged with emotional resonance and everyday imagery. Here, painting becomes a sculpture on the surface, a walk-in visual space that simultaneously negotiates order and subjectivity. They interweave everyday logic with metaphysical elevation.

Leiko Ikemura, herself a wanderer between different media, shows house sculptures and house drawings. Her hybrid formations defy clear attribution – they are simultaneously anthropomorphic, archaic and space-generating. In them, the notion of protection and retreat is intertwined with deeper, traumatically charged memorial spheres. These sculptures and drawings are corporeal imaginations – oscillating between the intimate and the universal. Her works approach the house as a primeval figure, as a shell, as a threshold, as a place of emotional coding. The bronze *House Woman* from 1991 resembles a monolithic block. The drawings *haus girl* and *haus tree* and the sculpture *Birth* likewise merge body, landscape and spatial volume into sensitive transitional forms. Her works are poetic vessels for a commemoration.

Philipp von Matt combines architecture, art and curatorial thinking in his work. His precisely and poetically composed buildings reflect an attitude that sees space as an atmospherically charged place in which material,

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light and proportion become silent carriers of meaning. His design processes are characterized by model-like, sculptural thinking; he often develops volumes in clay or cardboard models, in analogy to sculpture, whereby the space is "carved out" of the material. This artisanal approach stands in contrast to today's digital planning and allows for an extraordinary depth in dealing with proportion, layering and light. In his work, architecture becomes a medium of silent resonance that practices its own art of seeing.

Álvaro Siza is a Pritzker Prize winner and is considered one of the most influential architects of our time. His signature style combines tectonic clarity, site-specific sensitivity and sculptural economy. His buildings are less objects than atmospheric situations – they arise from an artistically conceived reduction that understands space as a resonance space between light, surface and movement. The drawings and wooden sculptures presented in the exhibition pay tribute to his subtlety. The contours of his drawings move across the paper in the most intricate manner. In contrast, the wooden sculpture *De Joelhos* – which translates as "On one's knees" – displays a minimalist-brutalistic archaism and appears in an almost devotional posture. In graceful figuration, the material wood captures the ethereal nature of the human being.

Rudolf Finisterre's biomorphic formal inventions are based as much on parametric research as on material poetic experience. His buildings operate between organic plasticity and constructive innovation – architecture here becomes the result of a sculpturally conceived, ecologically informed process in which form is not set, but generated. His artworks follow this line. The drawings *Jellyflower* and the concrete sculpture *Strings* develop from material tension, static logic and formal openness. Structures emerge that do not appear to be designed, but grow – like living entities, permeable, energetic.

In Thomas Struth's work, architectural space is the bearer of social complexity. His large-format photographs of laboratories, research facilities or urban infrastructures – such as the *Z-Pinch Plasma Lab, Weizmann Institute, Rehovot* – reveal the sculptural objecthood of technical spaces. In its controlled composition, lighting dramaturgy and social silence, architecture becomes a stage for epistemological processes. Struth shows how sheer endless human imagination is transformed into sculptural design. He leads us to enigmatic places that are mostly hidden; highly specialized apparatuses whose functionality is only understood by a few people, but whose potential influence on the lives of future generations can barely be predicted.

With this exhibition, Leiko Ikemura offers us a reading that moves away from an anthropocentric foundation towards a cosmological, holistic approach and is able to approach the archaic nature of creative processes. Philipp von Matt's contribution to the spatial design combines the complexity of the individual works and is able to guide the visitor's gaze through minimal changes and elastically form materiality and dimension.

(Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Yeliz Kaiser, Quotes: Leiko Ikemura)

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