

PRESSEINFORMATION

Not much to look at Ways of Abstraction 1920 until today

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The Von der Heydt Museum is once again spreading its treasures: After "ZERO, Pop and Minimal", the focus is now on abstraction: from classical modernism to current trends in non-representational painting. Major works by well-known artists are on display as well as long-hidden treasures from the depots. A number of new acquisitions from recent years will be exhibited for the first time ever. The show is named after the title of an important example of informal painting in the museum's collection: Jean Fautrier's painting "Not much to look at" from 1959.

In particular, the many surprising interrelationships between figurative and representational approaches on the one hand and non-representational or abstract art on the other can be experienced in the exhibition. For example, when the historical key figure Max Ernst meets a current artist like Pius Fox or when works by Amedée Ozenfant and Toulou Hassani, by Jean Dubuffet and Hannsjörg Voth, by George Mathieu and Katharina Grosse meet. The paths of abstraction in modernism are intertwined: a lively and open process with many participants.

Different ideas stand at the beginning of abstract and abstracting painting. They arose from the awareness that painting can do more than just translate the things one sees into the two-dimensional of the canvas. The idea that a painting consists solely of colours and lines on canvas and has no meaning beyond that originated around the DeStijl movement of the 1920s and can be traced to the colour painting of today. Artists such as Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky also did not focus on the real object for their abstract works, but looked inside themselves, combining external and internal experience. They had famous successors in informal painting.

The training of vision through abstract and non-representational art ultimately leads to the fact that even figurative pictures are read purely formally and the things depicted in them appearing strange, like self-referential structures of lines and colours. In fact, quite a few artists also take the opposite approach. In their works, the real object loses its everyday meaning: "Untitled".

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