

MEDIA RELEASE

Zurich, 8 September 2011



Yves Klein at a performance of *Anthropométries de l'époque bleue* in the Galerie Internationale d'Art Contemporain, Paris, 1960

Art After Tabula Rasa

**Lecture cycle:
The First Years. Art in the Post-War Period**

World War II brought devastating rupture to the history of European art. After 1945, however, artistic life was extremely diverse and full of vitality: great figureheads of modernism such as Picasso and Matisse were still productive, while a fresh generation was exploring new artistic paths. Their achievements will be described in a series of talks from late September until December at the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) in Zurich and the Museum of Art in Winterthur.

World War II provisionally put an end to the innovative departures in modern art. Major European artists fled overseas, the Nazis confiscated new collections in German museums. In many countries, private collections were destroyed by looting and forced sales.

After 1945, artists confronted a need for fundamental reorientation. Were they to pick up where modernism had left off, or attempt a radical renewal of art? Great names of the pre-war period like Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse were still alive, and in the ensuing years their late periods were to set new yardsticks. The formal expression of what was now classical modernism persisted, not least among the young generation of painters from the Ecole de Paris, identified with Art Informel and Tachisme. But there were also new currents turning away from traditional painting, such as Nouveau Réalisme, whose adherents transformed everyday reality into art with the aid of new techniques and materials. A different course was pursued by Pop Art, where the imagery of a consumer society was elevated to the status of "fine art".

In Switzerland, which had been spared the war and preserved a broad spectrum of artistic activity, the Concrete artists of Zurich around Max Bill persevered in the style of Constructive pre-war modernism to international acclaim. In Italy, too, opposing positions emerged: although Giorgio Morandi remained at the forefront for many years, he gradually faced competition, from Lucio Fontana, for example, whose unconventional view of space charted new territory.

Walter Grasskamp, the eminent German art critic, will open the lecture cycle. The series concludes with a panel discussion moderated by Roger Fayet, Managing Director of the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA).

The talks will take place every two weeks from 27 September until 20 December 2011, with the venue alternating between the home of SIK-ISEA and the Museum of Art in Winterthur. The series accompanies the [exhibition](#) of the same name at the museum. The talks have been organised jointly by SIK-ISEA and Kunstmuseum Winterthur.

Open programme

Venue and Exhibition

The talks will be held on Tuesdays at 6.30 pm, and the venue will alternate between SIK-ISEA and the Winterthur Museum of Art.

SIK-ISEA, Zollikerstrasse 32 (near Kreuzplatz), CH-8032 Zurich

Tuesday, 27 September 2011, 6.30 pm

Walter Grasskamp

André Malraux und das *musée imaginaire*. Eine Homestory

Tuesday, 25 October 2011, 6.30 pm

Michael Lüthy

Lichtensteins Picassos: Kunstparaphrase und Bildreflexion

Tuesday, 22 November 2011, 6.30 pm

Dieter Schwarz

Wege durch Italien

Tuesday, 20 December 2011, 6.30 pm

Roger Fayet (moderator)

Panel discussion

Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Museumstrasse 52, CH-8400 Winterthur

Tuesday, 11 October 2011, 6.30 pm

Elisabeth Grossmann

konkrete kunst – kalte kunst?

Verena Loewensberg im Kreis der Zürcher Konkreten

Tuesday, 8 November 2011, 6.30 pm

Rainer M. Mason

Paris à l'écart et au centre: Bram van Velde, Fautrier, Michaux

Tuesday, 6 December 2011, 6.30 pm

Christian Klemm

Alberto Giacometti

Attendance at the talks is free. No registration is required.

The [exhibition](#) will run from 21 August until 20 November 2011 at the Museum of Art in Winterthur. It includes paintings, sculptures and works on paper.

Contact for further information

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