

Press information
Munich, 25 June 2020

a changing ratio
Rosemarie Castoro | Liz Deschenes
10 July – 22 August 2020

max goelitz presents, in collaboration with Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, an intergenerational female duo exhibition on Postminimalism featuring US artists Rosemarie Castoro and Liz Deschenes

max goelitz gallery's second exhibition continues its international, concept-based program with a presentation of two US artists, Rosemarie Castoro (1939–2015) and Liz Deschenes (*1966). Their dialogue introduces an expanded perspective on Postminimalist art, which can be seen as an addition to its protagonists since the 1960s. Their work is presented here for the first time in the German-speaking countries.

"For many years I have been following Liz Deschenes's work, admiring the technique behind her subtle, expansive photograms. Similarly, Rosemarie Castoro's life and work are rightly being rediscovered; Castoro deserves to be mentioned equally with the other titans of medium- and time-based art. I am extremely pleased to bring together these two important female positions of their respective generations in *a changing ratio* and to – jointly with our partner galleries of the exhibition – contribute to a reexamination and expansion of the Minimal and Postminimal canons." – Max Goelitz

The central characteristics of Castoro's and Deschenes's oeuvres include formal and substantive examination of particular mediums, and a reliance on temporal processes, that participate in the tradition of Minimal art, but also illustrate a liberated view of materiality. An engagement with medium-specific characteristics, a delving into other genres as well as the overcoming of traditional associations of certain mediums are particularly evident in their sculptural works. The exhibition showcases how the practices of both artists, from their beginnings in the field of monochrome painting, opened up into experimental, cross-media, process-based approaches, then into space, and towards an intellectual reflection involving the body.

Castoro was a pioneer of monochrome abstract painting. Her canvases emphasize the optical qualities of pure colour, and at the same time convey the idea of infinity through flatness and repetition of lines. The increasing openness of her later works towards space was already evident in the Prismacolor painting *Orange China Marker* (1967), in which acrylic paint is stroked diagonally across the canvas surface around an acute angle, with additional parallel pencil lines reinforcing this movement.

In her works on paper and photographs, Castoro also captured abstract elements such as time and working process. The conceptual drawings from her *Inventory* series (1968–69) are based on a particular number system she developed, demonstrating her obsessive attention to time and interest in alternative forms of expression. Her *Concrete Poetries* (1968–69) experiment with writing and typefaces as well as with the temporal expansion of language through speech and recording of her poems. Against the background of her training in choreography and modern dance, movement and a specific openness towards the viewer's body also gained greater importance in Castoro's later sculptures.

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Throughout her artistic career, Deschenes has continually expanded the traditional definition of photography by experimenting with the properties and possibilities of its constitutive elements: light, chemistry, time and paper. She develops many of her works at night, outdoors, slowly exposing light-sensitive paper to moonlight; the photograms react as well to atmospheric conditions such as temperature and humidity. The artist fixes the indexical images with a chemical mixture of ammonium, hydroxide and silver, which creates unique surface effects. Time, but also movement, are visible in Deschenes's slightly concave photogram *FPF #1* (2018), which recorded human steps on photosensitive paper. The horizontal, rectangular shape of the panels in this series corresponds to chronographic representations of the duration that a person's foot stays on the ground while walking at various speeds. Deschenes often transfers her photograms into sculptural or architectural objects that are hardly perceived as photographic. Her narrow, elongated wall sculptures, such as *Stereograph #35* (2019), consist of two orthogonal photograms and relate to nineteenth-century stereoscopy. When viewed at a certain distance and from a particular angle, the two almost identical images visually merge into one three-dimensional one. This spatial illusion, which is not physically present, plays with the capacity of human perception.

The direct juxtaposition in space of works by Castoro and Deschenes allows a fascinating reading of the former as sculptural drawings and the latter as sculptural photographs. All of the featured pieces are self-referential and medium-reflexive in their transformative modes of representation, according to their underlying principle of Minimalism. For instance, the flexible quality of paper led to the abstract forms of Castoro's tall and expansive galvanized steel sculptures *Black Flasher A* and *Black Flasher B* (both 1979). To imagine their forms, Castoro crumpled twenty-dollar bills and placed them upright on their narrow edges. Deschenes's large-scale Prototype for *Gallery 7 (3)* (2016) is a photogram mounted on an aluminium plate in a free-standing frame, which breaks with common perception due to its inclined angle. The work reflects the architecture of its surroundings as well as the visitor's movement through space, which makes the viewer an essential element.

max goelitz operates as part of a network of international partner galleries – including OMR, Mexico City, and Häusler Contemporary, Zurich – in order to guarantee the highest relevance in the market and foster artistic exchange. The exhibition *a changing ratio* continues and intensifies this collaborative approach to gallery partnerships, being realized in close collaboration with Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, which represents the Rosemarie Castoro Estate, and with support from Miguel Abreu Gallery.

About the artists

Rosemarie Castoro (1939–2015) was born in Brooklyn and worked her entire life in New York, where she was a central figure in the city's Minimalist and Conceptualist art scene. After studying at the Pratt Institute, she experimented with various forms of expression and media, from drawing, painting and installations to choreography and modern dance. In 1969 Castoro turned away from painting and began to deal with new experimental forms of expression of the New York avant-garde: conceptual text pieces, concrete poetry and performative interventions in the streets. Her formalistic work is often premised on an allegorical ambiguity. Recent major museum retrospectives have taken place at MAMCO, Musée d'art modern et contemporain, Geneva (2019) and MACBA, Museu d'art contemporani de Barcelona (2017). Castoro's works were included in two of Lucy Lippard's legendary *Numbers* shows, '555,087' at the Seattle Art Museum (1969) and '995,000' at Vancouver Art Gallery (1970).

Liz Deschenes (*1966) was born in Boston and lives and works in New York. She attended the Rhode Island School of Art and Design, where she initially enrolled in painting, but eventually switched to photography and graduated in 1988. In her artistic work, Deschenes confronts the assumptions surrounding photography as fixed image and extends this traditional view by experimenting with the medium's properties and possibilities. Her unique photograms are camera-less, long-term exposures on light-sensitive paper. Deschenes also creates sculptural and architectural objects that incorporate both their surroundings and the viewer through reflections. In 2019, parallel to the 58th Venice Biennale, Deschenes's works were part of the exhibition 'Luogo e segni' at the Pinault Collection – Punta della Dogana. Major solo exhibitions have been presented at the ICA, Boston (2016); MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2015); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2015); and Secession, Vienna (2012). Deschenes has been included in group exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (2016); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2015); the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014); Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2013); and the Whitney Biennial, New York (2012).

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