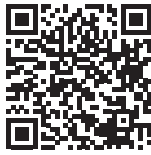


Meliksetian MB Briggs

June Art Fair

Bas Jan Ader

Please don't leave me



June 13 - July 19, 2022

VIP opening Monday, June 13th by invitation



Meliksetian | Briggs is pleased to present the work of **Bas Jan Ader** at the 2022 edition of the June Art Fair in Basel June 13 - 19.

A key figure in the history of conceptual art, working in installation, film, photography and performance, Ader's work is typified by a rigorous philosophical underpinning. Importantly and in contrast to many of his contemporaries, his work has "breached the ratio of the conceptual with aspects of the autobiographical, emotional, irrational, poetic, and even sentimental," a strand of conceptual art sometimes referred to as *Romantic Conceptualism*.

The centerpiece of the June presentation is the 1969 installation *Please don't leave me*. Simply composed with the titular phrase hand painted on a white wall, a string of illuminated light-bulbs hung down the center of the text, casting an elegiac glow, the piece is a key early work in the artist's oeuvre. The black text speaks of loss, abandonment, melancholy and pathos. It is ambiguous as one is left pondering the circumstances and the meaning of the phrase. Who is leaving whom? And why? But, as a critic in *The New Yorker* writes, "(Ader's) plea was sincere -

as desperate and enduring as those of Goethe's young Werther."

The use of language in contemporary art was a key strategy for many artists in the 1960s and 70s. Where Ader differs from his contemporaries is that unlike many of them who used language in a self-referential or tautological way, Ader's use of text works on a personal and subjective level yet it manages to transcend to attain the significance of the universal. The work speaks to the social anxieties of its time, the late 1960s, a time of social upheaval and change, as well as the era of the Vietnam war. Moreover, the work becomes hauntingly prescient, foreshadowing the artist's fated solo sea voyage, a trip that he never completed, leaving behind his friends and family.

The installation will be accompanied by three documentary photographs of three variations of the work made at the artist's studio in Claremont, California in 1969. Rarely seen in Europe, this installation was last presented in the 2019 exhibition *Disappearing: California c. 1970: Bas Jan Ader, Chris Burden and Jack Goldstein* at The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas curated by Philipp Kaiser, former director of the Kunsthalle Basel (catalog available).

As well, a selection of vintage photo works from the period, such as *Fall 1, Los Angeles*, 1970, *I'm too sad to tell you*, 1970, *Farewell to faraway friends*, 1971, and *Untitled (The elements)*, 1971 will be shown over the course of the fair.

Bas Jan Ader's work will be presented in Switzerland in two other exhibitions this June. Curator Adam Adam Szymczyk's new kunstverein, Verein by Association will present the installation, *Light vulnerable objects threatened by eight cement bricks*, 1970 for the first time in Europe and as its first exhibition, as part of the Zurich Art Weekend (show dates June 7-12, with a closing performance Sunday June 12 at 6pm). As well, the work *Fall 2, Amsterdam*, 1971, both the film and a series of photographs will be presented in the exhibition *Die unterbrochene Reise / The Interrupted Journey* curated by Lorenzo Meltzer at the Haus Am See, Unterägeri, Zug (near Zurich), opening June 18th.

<https://zurichartweekend.com/weekends/2022/june/exhibitions/verein-by-association>

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Bas Jan Ader (b. 1942 Winschoten, The Netherlands) received his Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Otis Art Institute of Los Angeles (1965) and his Master's of Fine Arts at the Claremont Graduate School and University Center, Claremont CA (1967). The artist was lost at sea in 1975 during the middle part of what was to be his grand trilogy of works entitled *In search of the miraculous*.

As well as the major 2019 exhibition in Fort Worth mentioned above, Ader's work has been exhibited widely in recent years including exhibitions in museums and institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Palais de Toyko, Paris, the Art Institute of Chicago, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna (MAMbo), Brooklyn Museum of Art, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany, Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, Austria, the Museu Serralves, Porto, Portugal, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Castello di Rivoli, Turin as well as at biennials like *Universes in Universe*, the 30th Sao Paulo Biennial, 2012 and *Viva Arte Viva*, at the Biennale di Venezia / Venice Biennale, 2017 curated by Christine Macel.

The artist's work is included in important public collections such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art / LACMA, Museum of Modern Art / MoMA, New York City, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and the Berkeley Museum of Art, Berkeley, CA among others.

References:

Eva Scharrer, *Romantic Conceptualism*, Artforum, October 2007.

Bas Jan Ader, *The New Yorker*, July 2016.