

# S P A C E D O U T

GALLI

**WORKS 1989-1993**

15.05. – 14.08.2022, tgl. 10 – 18 Uhr

In cooperation with PSM gallery and brunand brunand gallery from Berlin, we present selected works by Galli from the years 1989 - 1993 at Gut Kerkow.

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„Die meiste Zeit brauche ich zum Sehen, das Malen geht dann ruckzuck“<sup>1</sup>

## Notes on the work of Galli

Hannelore Paflik-Huber

Galli's works are determined by figures, often even by only one figure. They do not bear any characteristic features and cannot be assigned to any particular person. It seems probable that all those depicted thus reflect the artist herself. With her figures, which stand in the center of the picture structure, she suggests an attitude that is emotionally charged. The bodies dominate the pictorial events as agents. Galli focuses on their physical constitution by showing the protagonists in contorted poses. Arms and legs are the actual center of the pictorial action. They gesticulate, are proportionally oversized or elongated, and determine the pictorial dramaturgy. Galli condenses her images by leaving out much in order to show the essence of an emotionally charged action.

The titles cannot be deciphered in a direct way. Often they have no direct relation to what is depicted. The imagination is stimulated a second time by the title of the picture. They sometimes originate from things heard by chance on the radio. The words or fragments of sentences are added to the picture after the completion of the respective work. They are fragments from the news, linguistic fragments from a heard Bach cantata, parts of poems or quotes from radio advertising. This is how titles such as "disinfected secret; just don't lose your temper; "weak wind, unwanted effect" come about.

Art history has placed Galli in the tradition of the Berlin Expressionists, such as Rainer Küchenmeister, Walter Stöhrer, her teacher Martin Engelmann and friend Max Neumann. This proves an origin that establishes the expressive as a stylistic device and the figurative as a theme. However, the proximity to various fellow artists does not explain much, because Galli's pictorial worlds can't actually be compared to anything else.

What distinguishes her own unmistakable aesthetic language? With confidently placed strokes she circumscribes a body or an association of bodies. In this way, she gives the sensitivities a special expressiveness. Presented side by side, Galli's paintings reveal the complexity behind the figures. In the 1989 work "oft man die Zitrone kaum sieht" (often you can hardly see the lemon), an intimate embrace is shown with just a few strokes. The connection to the title is the dominant color yellow. In some works, the color screams for our attention. Here, too, the question arises, where is the movement going? For whom is the particular bouquet of flowers intended? Arms and legs simulate movement. At the same time, the joining of the bodies is a conscious decision to reproduce a specific, intimate moment that seems frozen in time. Which direction will the figure choose? The bustle of arms and legs shows disruption and compactness at the same time. It is never just one thing, it is always another. Nothing is unambiguous. Her language remains ambiguous and is often contradictory and contrary in one and the same image. She does not want to commit herself, she does not have to commit herself, thus giving us the freedom to attribute different, even opposite, feelings to the figures.

In the 1980s and 1990s, when painters dominated the art field with their reinterpretations of expressionist stylistic devices, she was predestined, as a woman and as a small person, to redefine the great subject of art, the body, and she achieved this through a distinctive visual language. Galli knows exquisitely how to visualize the contrast between openness and decisiveness in one and the same figure. In her work she can stand for spontaneity and deliberateness at the same time. Something is captured that nevertheless wants to escape.

She also embodied the grotesque of historiography as the protagonist in the famous 1981 film "Freak Orlando" by Ulrike Ottinger. Here she played the chronicler. In the film, the filmmaker cast the roles with dwarfs, Siamese twins and women without abdomens. All have an equal position in a film that interprets the theme of Orlando in five episodes. The chronicler of the scenes is played by Galli, an artist dressed in a historical clerk's costume. In her

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<sup>1</sup> Galli in einem Gespräch mit Marianne Meinhold, in: Galli, Ausstellungskatalog, Galerie Georg Nothelfer, Berlin, 1985, o.S.

artistic work the burlesque, the passion, the ambivalence to the tragic as to the unfathomable plays a "weighty" role. Her means of dramaturgy are dynamics, pathetics and indeterminacy. The moments of movement dominate in her works. At the same time, there is a center towards which everything runs, or from which much wants to run. The dialectic of the theme finds its subtle correspondence in the figures.

Peter Anselm Riedl finds the apt words for this in the catalog of the Villa Massimo, Florence, 1990: "Again and again, corporeality is thematized as something that, in its complexity, strains the capacity for comprehension to the point of bursting." [2]

At Gut Kerkow we can see this in the more intimate drawings, the *Tageswerke*. They symbolize an openness of narrative, with the pencil set quickly and surely. In addition, the paintings, the gouaches, painted in pencil, colored pencil, watercolor, and oil on nettle or cardboard, are condensed offers to enter Galli's fantasy world. Unlike some of her fellow painters, who found their visual language in the 1980s and have largely remained wedded to that zeitgeist to this day, Galli's works continue to have great efficacy today. The South American curator-team of the Berlin Biennale 11, 2020 showed the pictures of the artist Galli and it was fantastic to see how these represent in their density a still valid pictorial correspondence for the themes of our present. The riddles and mysteries surrounding one of art's great themes, the body, have yet to be solved or revealed. Galli's unmistakable aesthetic is still as dense and relevant in 2022 as it was in the years of its creation.

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### **About SPACED OUT**

With the project SPACED OUT we, **Jochen and Christof Beutgen** in cooperation with **PSM** gallery, regularly host and produce exhibitions at Gut Kerkow in the Uckermark. SPACED OUT proposes a dialogue with contemporary art far away from the urban hustle and bustle. The aim is to contextualize the work of national and international contemporary artists in a rural environment to provide access to these practices to the local community; art is to be made experienceable for everyone on the estate. At the same time, we want to build our personal bridge between city and countryside with topics and artistic expressions that move us.