

GEORG KARL PFAHLER

Hard Edge | 1963 -1984

Gallery One and Three

February 18 - March 19, 2022

[INSTALLATION VIEWS](#) [SELECTED WORKS](#) [ABOUT](#) [PRESS RELEASE](#) [ARTISTS](#) [PRESS](#)

GEORG KARL PFAHLER

HARD EDGE | 1963 - 1984

February 18 - March 19, 2022

Nino Mier Gallery is proud to present *Hard Edge | 1963 - 1984*, an exhibition of work by German artist Georg Karl Pfahler (1926-2002). Pfahler is known as Germany's first Hard Edge painter, having sustained many experiments with the relationship between color, space, and shape throughout his career. The exhibition will feature twenty-nine acrylic paintings on canvas and drawings on paper that celebrate the artist's legacy. *Hard Edge | 1963 - 1984* will be on view in Los Angeles from February 18 - March 19, 2022.

Pfahler graduated from the Kunstakademie Stuttgart in 1954, where he studied under Willi Baumeister. Though Pfahler was initially interested in sculpture, Baumeister noticed that the young artist had a rare talent for painting and encouraged him to pursue the latter medium instead. Much of Pfahler's early work is reminiscent of Baumeister's playful, abstract paintings, which were heavily influenced by the works of Paul Klee and Fernand Léger. But as Pfahler matured, so did his visual language, which began to take the form of color-blocked acrylic paintings, unique in their rigorous approach to space and color above form, and remarkable in their technical precision. In 1958, Pfahler developed his series titled *Formativ*, widely considered to be his first mature body of work. The series marked his emancipation as a painter, especially from the influence of Baumeister. However, it was not until 1962-1963 that Pfahler began incorporating his signature block-like forms and crisply demarcated color surfaces, which epitomize his subsequent series, including *Tex*, *West-Ost-Transit*, and *Espan*. These bodies of work form the premise of *Hard Edge | 1963 - 1984*.

The overall project of Pfahler's Hard Edge paintings is to separate the perception of color from an over reliance on form. Rather than using color as a means to depict real or imagined forms, form is reduced to the mere hard edge of a color field. His canvases are comprised of rounded, engorged shapes of monochromatic color, cultivating a more sensual feel than the color-blocked work of artists such as Ad Reinhardt and Josef Albers. Pfahler's trademark round edges, which soon became the iconic visual mode of German Hard Edge painting, were inspired by the shape of layered coasters. These undulating shapes do not respect the borders of their paintings, but rather overwhelm them, as though presenting us a small sliver of a larger phenomenon. As Dieter Honisch wrote, "...the relationship between Pfahler's colors

[is] an erotic one. They are concerned with one another, they respond to one another. They have something personal, something present, something of the here and now.” Or, as Pfahler himself put it, “For me, the concentration on color expresses a particular feeling for life. To this extent color, like art itself, is an inner necessity, meaning that I grant color a value which the object otherwise takes away from it, especially when it is committed to the depiction.” This articulation of the autonomous reality of color, or subservience of form to color, thematizes the essence of Pfahler’s practice from 1963 onwards.

In 1965, Pfahler rose to international recognition due to his work’s inclusion in the group show *Signale*, which took place in Basel, Switzerland. In *Signale*, Pfahler was exhibited alongside his American contemporaries such as Al Held, Ellsworth Kelly, Kenneth Noland, Leon Polk-Smith and Jules Olitski for the first time. Impressed by his work, Barnett Newman then curated Pfahler’s first show in the United States, which opened in 1966 at the cutting edge Fischbach Gallery on New York’s Upper East Side. It is rumored that Newman encouraged Pfahler to work on a larger scale—apartments in Germany were quite small at the time, unlike the big lofts where many New York City artists resided.

Continuing to garner attention on the international stage, Pfahler was selected to represent Germany at the prestigious Venice Biennale in 1970, alongside Günther Uecker and Heinz Mack. In 1981, Pfahler represented Germany at the São Paulo Biennial, the second oldest biennial after Venice. Pfahler enjoyed considerable success up until the Neo-Expressionist movement based around Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter began to take hold in Germany in the late 1980s. Despite the popularity of Neo-Expressionism, Pfahler continued to experiment with the constraints and boundaries of Hard Edge painting until his death at the age of 76. Today, his work is found in the permanent collection of many prestigious institutions, including the Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Neue National Galerie, Berlin; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, among others.

Georg Karl Pfahler (b. 1926, Emetzheim, Germany; d. 2002) studied at the Kunstakademie Stuttgart under Willi Baumeister. His work was exhibited in a major retrospective at Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, Germany (2001), which travelled to Von Der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany (2002). Other important exhibitions include the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany (1990); National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland (1988); Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany (1985); and Kunsthaus Zug, Zug, Switzerland (1979). The artist represented Germany at the Venice Biennale in 1970 and at the São Paulo Biennale in 1981. Pfahler’s work is collected by institutions such as Stadel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Chemnitz, Germany; Bundestag, Berlin, Germany; Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nurnberg, Germany; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany; Folkswang Museum, Essen, Germany and Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany.

[Download Exhibition preview](#)

NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES

Tuesday-Saturday
10am-6pm

info@miergallery.com
+1 (323) 498 5957

Gallery 1 7277 Santa
Monica Blvd
Gallery 2 7313 Santa
Monica Blvd
Gallery 3 7327 Santa
Monica Blvd
Gallery 4 1107
Greenacre Ave
Glassell Park 2700 W
Ave 34,
Los Angeles, CA

NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS

Tuesday-Saturday
10am-6pm

brussels@miergallery.com
+32 2 414 86 00

Rue Ernest Allard 25
Ernest Allardstraat
(Gallery 1)
Rue Ernest Allard 41
Ernest Allardstraat
(Gallery 2)
1000 Brussels
Belgium

NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK

NINO MIER GALLERY
MARFA

218 N. Highland St
Marfa, TX 79843