

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery to Represent Mary Bauermeister



Mary Bauermeister (b.1934), *Penoil-Celle Theme, 1971-2017*, ink, watercolor, lenses, wooden spheres, wooden pencils, offset print, glass and painted wood construction, 8 5/8 x 14 x 4 1/4 inches / 21.9 x 35.6 x 10.8 cm, signed

PRESS RELEASE: (New York—April 27, 2018) Michael Rosenfeld Gallery proudly announces its exclusive representation of **Mary Bauermeister**. The gallery has enthusiastically promoted Bauermeister's work for over thirty years, including her in group exhibitions. Most recently, she was included in *The Time Is Now*. Bauermeister will be featured, along with six others, in the gallery's forthcoming booth (C22) at Frieze New York (May 2–6, 2018) with a selection of her iconic lens boxes and stone reliefs. Honored to represent and further her legacy, Michael Rosenfeld states: "Mary Bauermeister has long been among my favorite artists and as a matter of fact, I have lived with her art as part of my personal collection for over thirty years! A visionary whose art since the 1950s has defied categorization, Mary is a legend; her pioneering work deserves our focus and attention."

A multidisciplinary artist known for her intricate and enigmatic assemblages, **Mary Bauermeister** (b.1934) was a seminal figure of the Fluxus movement – her studio was the meeting point for a number of defining artists of the movement. Her work plays an integral role in the discussion of art, both European and American, that emerged from the 1960s. Her reliefs and sculptures, which have incorporated drawing, text, found objects, natural materials and fabric, reference a plethora of concepts: from natural phenomena and astronomy to mathematics and language, as well as her own "spiritual-metaphysical experiences." Maturing amidst the currents of Minimalism and Pop Art, Bauermeister's art has resisted labels due to the singular expression of her interests and concerns, among them the simultaneous transience and permanence of the natural world with experimentations in transparency and magnification, multiplication and variation, structure and order, chance and ephemerality, introversion and extroversion. Her three-dimensional receptacles of thoughts, ideas and notes contain visual, conceptual and philosophical paradoxes that challenge perceptions and that offer literal and metaphorical windows into which one can glimpse the inner workings of the artist's mind.

Born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, Bauermeister attended secondary school in Cologne from 1946 to 1954, where she began creating her first works on paper under the supervision of her drawing teacher, Günther Ott, an early admirer of her artistic talent. In 1954, she began her studies at the Hochschule für Gestaltung (Ulm School of Design) in Ulm, where she took courses with Swiss artist, architect and designer Max Bill and Helene Nonné-Schmidt, who had studied with Paul Klee. Unable to align herself with the school's rigid constructive structure, Bauermeister wrote to Ott: "The only artworks which receive serious attention here are constructed, mathematically provable, rectangular..." She left Ulm after one semester, registering at the Staatliche Schule für Kunst und Handwerk (State School of Arts and Crafts) in Saarbrücken and studying with photographer Otto Steinert. In 1956, Bauermeister returned to Cologne where she supported herself by selling her pastel works on paper. Between 1960 and 1961, she rented a space on the top floor of Lintgasse 28, a space that fostered a cutting-edge environment, hosting numerous exhibitions, concerts and performances. Most notably, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Nam June Paik, Karlheinz Stockhausen and other avant-garde artists, musicians and dancers convened at the studio, partaking in many of the earliest Fluxus happenings and earning Bauermeister the title "mother of the Fluxus movement." She continued to nurture a close friendship with Stockhausen, an influential composer of electronic and serial music, with whom she also collaborated in a creative capacity; the couple would marry in 1967 and have two children, Julika and Simon. Bauermeister and Stockhausen later divorced in 1973. Two younger daughters, Sophie and Esther, were born from subsequent relationships with musician David Johnson and artist Josef Halavi.

In 1962, Bauermeister exhibited for the first time in a museum setting, in an interdisciplinary display of her work from 1958 to 1962 alongside recordings and scores by Stockhausen and other composers which was held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The Netherlands Organized by Jan Willem Sandberg, the museum's director, the exhibition traveled to two other Dutch venues: the Stedelijk Museum in Schiedam and, in early 1963, the Groninger Museum in Groningen. Sandberg had also mounted a concurrent exhibition, *Four Americans*, featuring Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Alfred Leslie and Richard Stackiewicz. Impressed with and inspired by the work of Rauschenberg and Johns in particular, Bauermeister left Germany for New York in October 1962 at the age of twenty-nine. Specifically, Rauschenberg's famous combine *Monogram* (1955-59, *Moderne Museet*, Stockholm, Sweden), which featured a taxidermied goat adorned with an automobile tire and mounted on a wooden platform, had a profound effect and signaled to Bauermeister the artistic freedom the United States, and New York especially, could offer her that Germany at the time could not.

In New York, Bauermeister entered the art world swiftly, moving into a studio at the National Arts Club in Gramercy Park in early 1963 and participating in the International Artists' Summer Seminar at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, NJ later that year. The program resulted in an exhibition at Riverside Art Museum, where budding gallerist Alfredo Bonino encountered her work for the first time. Bauermeister joined Galeria Bonino that winter and her work was initially presented at the gallery in the group exhibition *2 sculptors, 4 painters and, significantly, in her first solo show in 1964*, gaining the attention of institutions and critics alike. Indeed, the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, all in New York, as well as the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, all purchased examples of her work, prompting *The New York Times* art critic Brian O'Doherty to write: "It will be interesting to see if she has the intelligence and cunning to cope with the major success she is obviously going to have." The exhibition included early work, as well as the pieces that would define her time in the United States: her compositions with stones, sewn pictures, and the first lens boxes. Three more solo exhibitions at Galeria Bonino, in 1965, 1967 and 1970, would follow.

Bauermeister stayed in New York for the next 10 years, forming lasting friendships with a number of artists, musicians, choreographers and writers – in addition to Johns, Rauschenberg, Cage, Cunningham, and Paik, she also counted among her friends Ray Johnson, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Hans Namuth and Alan Ginsberg.

Throughout the 1960s, Bauermeister exhibited at numerous group exhibitions in the United States and Europe, including the esteemed *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture and Prints* at the Whitney Museum (1966) and the seminal *Pictures to be Read/Poetry to be Seen* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. In related exhibition materials, Bauermeister was frequently referred to as an American artist, and she was included in surveys of young American artists, epitomizing the innovative influence she had on the contemporary American art scene. In 1972, Bauermeister returned to Europe, settling in the house she built for herself in 1968 in the small town of Rösraath, near Cologne – surrounded by a large garden which would inform her later work – though she would continue to visit New York on a regular basis for installations and events. That same year, Bauermeister saw her first retrospective, held at the Mittelrhein Museum in Koblenz, Germany, which featured paintings, objects and works on paper from 1952-72. Also in 1972, she had her first solo exhibition at Galleria Arturo Schwarz in Milan, Italy and in 1974, she was given a retrospective showcasing two decades of work at the Rathaus Bensberg – the town hall – in Bergisch Gladbach.

In the late 1970s and continuing into the mid-1980s, Bauermeister began working with water and crystals to design commissioned gardens, both interior and exterior, meant for pleasure and meditation. Notable commissions included the gardens she designed for the corporate offices of the Landeszentralbank Wiesbaden in Wiesbaden, Kölnische Rückversicherung in Cologne and the Federal German Foreign Office in Bonn. In 1980, the Städtische Galerie Villa Zanders in Bergisch Gladbach presented Bauermeister's *Retrospektive 1955-1980*. In 1985, she was included in the international Crystallography Congress held at the Universität Bielefeld, where she presented a solo exhibition of her work and discussed the topic "Symmetries and Serial Processes in Art and Music" with faculty members of the university's mathematics department. The following year, Bauermeister joined the Postnukleare Aktionstage (Post-Nuclear Action Days), a festival of cultural programming in Wuppertal, where she spoke with political scientists and art historians on the "Socio-Political Relevance of Contemporary Art." Furthermore, Bauermeister participated in two exhibitions which exemplified her prominent role in shaping art of the 1950s and 1960s: *Die sechziger Jahre, Kölns Weg zur Kunst-Metropole – vom Happening zum Kunstmarkt (The Sixties – Cologne's Road to Becoming an Art Metropolis – from Happening to Art Market)* at the Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne (1986) and *Return to the Object: American and European Art from the Fifties and Sixties* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (1988).

In the last two decades, Bauermeister has participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions, most notably *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; *Welten in der Schachtel (Worlds in the Box)* alongside work by Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Cornell, Joseph Beuys, Nam June Paik and Andy Warhol, at the Wilhelm Hack Museum in Ludwigshafen (2010); *Point – Line – Plain – TV* at the Nam June Paik Art Center in Seoul, South Korea; and *Zero - Die internationale Kunstbewegung der 50er und 60er Jahre (The International Art Movement of the 50s and 60s)* at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin. In the past year, her work has been featured in the exhibitions *The Time Is Now* at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, *Zwischen den Zeilen Kunst in Briefen von Niki de Saint Phalle bis Joseph Beuys (Between the Lines: Art in Letters from Niki de Saint Phalle to Joseph Beuys)* at the Sprengel Museum in Hannover; and *Sound Goes / Image, Partituren zwischen Musik und Bildender Kunst (Scores Between Music and Fine Art)* at the Horst Jannssen Museum in Oldenburg.

Recent solo surveys of her work include *Mary Bauermeister. Die 1950er Jahre* at the Leopold-Hoesch-Museum & Papiermuseum in Düren (2013); *Mary Bauermeister-Da capo- Werke aus 60 Jahren* at the Mittelrhein Museum (2015); *Mary Bauermeister: The New York Decade* at the Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA (2015); *Pil Score Pil: Mary Bauermeister* at the Kunstmuseum Solingen (2017); and *Mary Bauermeister – Zeichen, Worte, Universen* at the Kunstmuseum Villa Zanders, Bergisch Gladbach (2017). In 2011, she published her first autobiographical book, *Ich hänge im Triolengitter – Mein Leben mit Karlheinz Stockhausen (Hanging in a Triplet Grid – My Life with Karlheinz Stockhausen)* (Edition Elke Heidenreich bei C. Bertelsmann).

Her work is represented in numerous museum collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo, NY); Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore, MD); Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, DC); LVR-LandesMuseum (Bonn, Germany); Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); Museum Ludwig (Cologne, Germany); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, NY); Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY); and Wilhelm Hack Museum (Ludwigshafen, Germany).

Bauermeister continues to live and work in Rösraath, Germany, and under her guidance, the Studio of Mary Bauermeister has begun work on a *Catalogue Raisonné*. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery looks forward to supporting this important scholarship.

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery is located at 100 Eleventh Avenue, New York, NY, 10011. Gallery hours are Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00AM–6:00PM. For visuals and additional information, please contact halley.k.harrisburg, Director, at (212) 247-0082 or hkh@michaelrosenfeldart.com.



Mary Bauermeister pictured Fall 2017 in Central Park, New York. Photo Ninja Elias Felbe.