

GUNTER DAMISCH *Werke 1981 – 2015*

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“Whenever his painting was described as ‘literary’, he gently corrected: no, he didn’t want to tell any stories. And indeed, he wasn’t depicting the world. Yet he was a world shaper, who opened up the space of the two-dimensional canvas into eternity by way of his serial colour tangles and accumulations, with swipes and scratches, with his streaky, spiky flagellates.”

Andrea Schurian: Gunter Damisch 1958-2016, Der Standard, 2016

Gunter Damisch, born in Steyr, Upper Austria, in 1958, who studied at the Academy of Fine Arts with Max Melcher and Arnulf Rainer and graduated there with a diploma in graphic art, advanced painting and (printed) graphics in equal measure, and often in combination, throughout his lifetime. As a guest professor at the academy himself, from 1992, and as a full professor, from 1998, he taught the master class for graphic art, while in his own work, beside the contrast between painting and graphics, he also concentrated on the contrast between the small and large format, and in his subjects evoked a representational-figurative and at the same time fantastic world, in a strongly rhythmical, emblematic and symbolic style. His oeuvre, decorated with numerous prizes (e.g. Otto Mauer Preis and Max Weiler Preis in 1985, Preis der Stadt Wien in 1995, Oberösterreichischer Landeskulturpreis für Graphik) moves between the possibilities of graphic approaches and the pastose, expressive gestures of large-scale paintings.

Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman proudly looks back on a long and fruitful collaboration with Gunter Damisch. In the years since 1986, the gallery has dedicated the artist twelve solo exhibitions and moreover has realised numerous contributions and joint projects, as for instance the project Macro Micro, in 2013, an exhibition of large-format woodcuts at the Albertina in Vienna, including an accompanying print publication. In one of the first comprehensive solo exhibitions after the artist’s death, in 2016, the gallery now presents a cross section (painting, sculpture, graphic art) from the work of Gunter Damisch, comprising all these facets and making clear that they by no means exclude but, on the contrary, complement each other.