

Press release

March 2009

Paul Heimbach

Library Exhibition

25/03 – 15/05/09

Book presentation and opening

22/03/09 – 15:00 -17:00 hours



Photo: Paul Heimbachemann

A new exhibition with work by the German artist Paul Heimbach will open at the library of the Van Abbemuseum on Sunday 22 March 2009 at 15:00. *Werkverzeichnis der Bücher und Auflagenobjekte*, a new catalogue with his works will be presented as well. German artist Paul Heimbach (born in Euskirchen 1946, lives and works in Cologne) makes fragile artists' books and subdued works on paper, in which he studies seriality. Stringent rules are the jumping-off points to produce series of structures with a multiple potential for ordering.

Heimbach's early works from the 1960s are experiments based on sketching and painting principles. For his *Tuschebilder* (1968), for example, he conducted experiments with ink floating on water, and the felt-tip drawings made in 1967 and 1968 are reminiscent of the surrealist 'écriture automatique'. Despite this ostensible 'freedom', the orchestrated coincidence is already a controlling element in this early work.

Gradually, Heimbach's oeuvre changes, showing more interest in what can be reasoned out. Based on series of binary numbers, he combines horizontal and vertical colour strips.



Studio Paul Heimbach

With the range of possibilities this offers, abstract forms emerge as magical squares built on numerical information. Sequences and colour spectrums on transparent paper become layered systems with minor differences in nuance, such as in *Countdown* (2008), in which he maps out 720 permutations of a colour spectrum.

The encyclopaedic integrity Heimbach tries to achieve in his series is what appeals in his work. His books and works on paper, in which all the possible combinations of single elements are worked out to perfection, are conceptual and visual masterpieces.

In the series *From Dates* (since 2005), data related to individuals is transformed into a visual image of 200 thin horizontal lines according to a specific concept. In this series, Heimbach confines himself to the dates of birth and death of artists, composers and literary figures, translating these two facts into colour-coded lines. The results form a dignified tribute to the rich lives of the people chosen. Despite the use of these rather 'impersonal' hard facts as a basis, they nonetheless demonstrate the uncertainty of the logical principle. Especially those cases in which the photo of the portrayed individual is combined with the colour pattern show us that even 'dry' logical principles can generate subjective and metaphoric meaning.

Daily Calendars (1992) records each minute of the day. In doing this, Heimbach attempts to create a register of the passing of time in which any given day fits into the structure of every other day. And perhaps he is also ordering human existence into past and present, a conclusion he leaves to his viewers, however, because they are the ones who complete his work. The viewer will always devise a solution between the shape offered and a content, intended or otherwise, out of which emerges a conceptual understanding between the work and the viewer.

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Heimbach's new catalogue of work, *Werkverzeichnis der Bucher und Auflagenobjekte* (2009), refers to a statement made by conceptual artist Sol LeWitt: 'The idea becomes a machine that makes art'. LeWitt regarded the concept/idea as a rounded-off creative process, and saw it as separate from its effectuation. Likewise, the concept in Heimbach's work determines its outward manifestation and it is made according to a fixed system. Focusing merely on the formal and rational connotations of his approach does not do justice to Heimbach's work. The emotional merits and his imaginary reflections are, after all, undeniable and crucial facets of his work.

Curator

Diana Franssen, Van Abbemuseum

Partner

This exhibition has been realised in collaboration with Susanne Padberg, Galerie Druck & Buch, Tübingen (D)

Van Abbemuseum

Bilderdijklaan 10
Eindhoven

Opening hours Van Abbemuseum

Tuesday–Sunday, 11.00 - 17.00
Thursday, 11.00 - 21.00
(closed on Carnival's Tuesday)

Opening hours Library

Tuesday to Friday, 11.00 - 17.00
(closed on Carnival's Tuesday)

Admission prices Van Abbemuseum

adults: € 8,50
groups of 15 or more, 65+: € 6
students / CJP pass: € 4
Thursday evening from 17.00-21.00: free admission (until 31/10/2009)
Library: free entrance

See www.vanabbemuseum.nl for further information.

To editors:

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