

Esther Schipper

mehdi chouakri

FESTIVAL!

A project by Esther Schipper and Mehdi Chouakri
Mehdi Chouakri, entrance: Mommsenstrasse 4, D-10623 Berlin

New exhibition bi-weekly
June 12 – August 6, 2020

Angela Bulloch | Gerwald Rockenschaub, opening June 12, noon – 6 pm
Isa Melsheimer | N. Dash
Anri Sala | Saâdane Afif
Ari Benjamin Meyers | Charlotte Posenenske



Festival! begins with the friendship of artists and of their two gallerists, forging a bridge across 25 years and new beginnings, across personal, formal and conceptual affinities and yet-to-be-discovered connections.

To begin: Twenty-five years ago, Esther Schipper and Mehdi Chouakri were both recent arrivals to Berlin. Schipper had opened her space in the Auguststrasse in 1995 but was still traveling back and forth to her Cologne-based gallery. Chouakri was studying / had just concluded his art history studies in Paris and was visiting the city. When Chouakri opened his own gallery in Berlin in 1996, their friendship grew, sharing a mother tongue, the experience of being a relative outsider in the city, and also many cultural reference points. Reinforced by shared intellectual interests and similar affinities for the art emerging in the 1990s, and by the many friendships that existed among the artists in their respective programs.

Last March an exhibition by Saâdane Afif in the gallery's series **Pièce Unique** especially caught Schipper's attention: she was excited both by the work and the concept of the space and when she told Chouakri, the idea of a collaboration formed. Opened in 2017 the smaller of his two spaces in Mommsenstrasse in Berlin Charlottenburg, with its two narrow rooms and library, combines the imperfections and the charm of a distinctly non-white cube exhibition space. It is here that Chouakri has presented both his series **Pièce Unique**, single works by artists from his gallery, and hosted projects by other galleries. But this is no ordinary year and the project, originally planned for later this year, has now developed into a sequence of stories about affinities that will unfold in a two-week rhythm, bringing together one artist from each gallery.

The first pair will be Angela Bulloch with Gerwald Rockenschaub. The artists, who have exhibited together in the past, could be said to share a formal vocabulary informed by both minimalism and the digital. Angela Bulloch analyses and challenges the structures defining our social behaviours, with a sustained conceptual approach. Her work spans many media, manifesting her interest in systems, patterns and rules, as well as her preoccupation with the history of shapes and human interaction. The recent series of sculptures combines her interest in the logic of geometry and seriality with a graphic quality.

Initially known as part of the so-called Neo-Geo movement emerging in the early 1980s, Rockenschaub's unorthodox approach to ingrained visual expectations is essential to his approach—he continuously seeks to thwart these in subtle, technically precise ways. The distinct proximity of his colours, shapes, and above all his artificial, synthetic materials to the world of product design is as familiar as it is alienating.

The following pairings will be Isa Melsheimer and N.Dash, who share a distinct approach to the materiality of their works, Anri Sala and Saâdane Afif who are great friends, and Ari Benjamin Meyers whose practice informed by his training as conductor shares a modular improvisation with works by Charlotte Posenenske.

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