

PETER BLUM

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For me art always explains itself through art. I have no other criteria for evaluating art than those of art. I mean this both in the technical sense as in the sense of an ethical responsibility. It is my relationship to tradition that shows me which way to go in the future.

- Helmut Federle

Peter Blum is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings by **HELMUT FEDERLE** (born 1944, Solothurn, Switzerland). Now based in Vienna, Federle lived and painted in New York from 1979 to 1983. His most recent one-man show in New York was at Barbara Gladstone in 1990; his previous exhibition in New York, 1987, was at Mary Boone and Barbara Gladstone. Last year, Federle was the subject of one-man exhibitions at the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany and the Kunsthalle, Zurich (show travelled to the Moderna Museet, Stockholm and the Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany).

The exhibition, entitled **Basics on Composition**, is on view from March 5 through May 28 at Peter Blum, 99 Wooster Street.

In the spirit of "elective affinities" (*Wahlverwandtschaften*) Federle readily acknowledges his ties to certain art of other times and cultures. Emphasizing these links, the exhibition includes paintings by **Piet Mondrian** (1872-1944), *Composition*, 1932, and **Ferdinand Hodler** (1853-1918), *Die Bucht von Genf mit dem Mont Blanc vor Sonnenaufgang*, 1918, as well as a 15th century **Icon of the Feast of the Intercession of the Virgin** from Novgorod, Russia. This encounter between Federle's recent paintings and the earlier works provides a first-hand view of influence and continuity.

The exhibition is an exploration of abstraction. With his vocabulary of geometric motifs and linear elements, Federle's affinity to **the Bauhaus** or **de Stijl** might be the most obvious. Other less explicit aspects of his ideals, themes and priorities become evident in the presence of the earlier works. His characteristic bands of color and strong horizontals may be seen to suggest forms of land, sky or water. Compositional order is created by the confrontation between the natural and the geometric. In the **Basics on Composition** series, symmetry and repetition are important components. The repeated use of an established format gives latitude to content and symbolic interpretation, much in the way the makers of religious icons

BLU MARTS INC.
99 Wooster Street
New York, N.Y. 10012
Tel (212) 343-0441
Fax (212) 343-0525

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worked within conventions and upheld long revered visual traditions.

For further information and photographs, please contact Peter Blum or Nancy Deihl. The gallery is located at 99 Wooster Street at Spring Street. Hours are Tuesday-Friday 10-6, Saturday 11-6 and Monday by appointment.

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