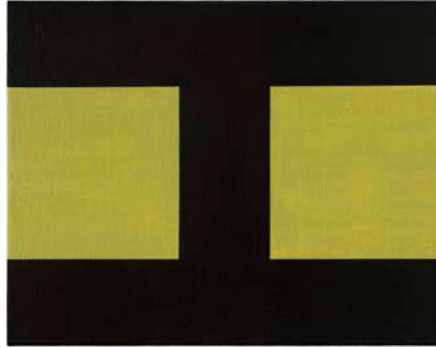


# Helmut Federle

## *Basics on Composition*

January 16 – March 13, 2021  
Opening reception: Saturday, January 16, 10am – 6pm



Peter Blum Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of Helmut Federle entitled, *Basics on Composition* at 176 Grand Street, New York. This is the artist's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. There will be an opening reception on Saturday, January 16, from 10am - 6pm. Please email, call, or [book online](#) to reserve a viewing time.

Helmut Federle has developed a body of work over four decades that is characterized by both painterly and geometric imagery rooted in spirituality, symbolism, and a closeness to nature. He engages in the tradition of geometric abstraction, renewing and expanding it, exploring the relationship between figure and ground, between order and disorder, between movement and stillness. Federle began investigating the "reclining H" in 1979 while living in New York, using the first letter of his first name as its basic, now iconic, form. Subsequently in 1992 and 1993 he primarily created the series entitled, *Basics on Composition* and he has now resumed the series since 2019. The exhibition will survey works from the series spanning from 1992 to 2020.

Each of the variations in the series measure 15 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 19 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (40 x 50 cm) and emit their own unique, emotional presences. The bars of the "reclining H" and the two squares that result from it as open ends on the left and right become individualized, equivalent geometric surfaces that repeatedly reverse the traditional figure-ground relationship and deny balance and cohesion. Gestural entries, both in the dark bars and in the typically yellow, green, or yellow-green squares, formulate among the defined edges, sometimes lyrically and sometimes defiantly. The surfaces of the resulting squares can be opaque or have visible brushstrokes with delicate variations between each painting's color. The "reclining H" areas defined sharply, can be matte or glossy, while the color of the form, most often black, is also expressed in gray, red, or a combination further dividing the form.

Federle defines his painting as "vegetative" and "climatic" applying this to the interplay of color and form that are characteristic of his work. Many of the paintings have subtitles that do not reference their content, rather they are associations and stimuli in Federle's life which accompanies and determines his work. As the writer and professor John Yau relates, "Within every tradition there is a strenuous argument between the forces of repetition and the forces of renewal. In painting, this is particularly true of the geometric tradition which originated in the early decades of this century. Federle is one of the few contemporary artists to renew the geometric tradition. He understands that balance and closure are not ends in themselves, and that self-sufficiency and well-ordered design are not necessarily geometry's destination."

**Helmut Federle** (b. 1944, Solothurn, Switzerland) lives and works in Vienna, Austria and Camaiore, Italy. Federle represented Switzerland in 1997 at the XLVII Venice Biennale. Select solo museum exhibitions include: Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2019); Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland (2012); Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, France (2002); Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (1999); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (1999); Galerie national du Jeu de Paume, Paris, France (1995); Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (1992); and Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland (1992). Select museum collections include Tate Modern, London, UK; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany; Albertina, Vienna, Austria; Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Netherlands; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

For more information and images, please contact David Blum or Kyle Harris: [art@peterblumgallery.com](mailto:art@peterblumgallery.com) or +1 (212) 244-6055  
Gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm; Saturday, 11am – 6pm

Image: Helmut Federle, *Basics on Composition C (April at Kamikochi)*, 2019, oil on canvas, 15 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 19 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (40 x 50 cm)