

Öyvind Fahlström

Duration: 19 February– 21 April 2011

Location: Aurel Scheibler / ScheiblerMitte
Charlottenstraße 2, 10969 Berlin

In 1991, the gallery's founding year, we exhibited Öyvind Fahlström (1928-1976) for the first time in Germany in nearly two decades. This show was dedicated to Fahlström's last installation *Garden - A World Model*, 1973, a culmination of achievements and themes explored in his artistic career. Since then it has travelled the world and is currently on loan to Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, the seat of the Öyvind Fahlström Foundation and Archive since 1999.

We are grateful to Sharon Avery-Fahlström, The Öyvind Fahlström Foundation and Bartomeu Marí, the director of MACBA, for allowing us to show this singular and sensational work of art in Berlin within a solo show that marks the gallery's 20th anniversary and celebrates 20 years of close collaboration with the artist's Estate. Together with three freestanding sculptures, works on paper and several of his rare editions, it is the first larger presentation of the artist in Berlin.

Throughout his short life, Öyvind Fahlström remained interested in the printed word and, in particular, language itself. He began translating early on, worked as a journalist, wrote poetry and was one of the inventors of concrete poetry. The development of unique forms of sound and language and their translation into radio plays, films, happenings, images and objects was the essence of his art.

An assiduous observer of contemporary issues, he meticulously noted global political and ecological events that he deemed important and placed them in relation to each other. He took a critical stance toward imperialism, capitalism and the destruction of the rain forests, while vigorously supporting Third World issues. Like no other artist of his time, he understood how to transpose these concerns into an aesthetic form that was highly influenced by comic art.

Fahlström was not expressly concerned with the production of original prints but rather was intrigued by multiplicity in the large editions made possible by offset and silkscreen techniques, which he believed lent a wider audience.

Öyvind Fahlström is regarded as the pioneer of interactive multimedia art, and his oeuvre is seen as an integral part of his fight for social justice and his political activism. Fahlström employed a wide range of media and created new, "variable" picture forms, anticipating the present enthusiasm of the art world for interactive approaches by forty years. Combining poetry, conceptual art and popular imagery in a unique manner, Fahlström has become one of the most important artists for the younger generation.

Since our Fahlström exhibitions in 1991 and 2001 there has been increased discussion surrounding this extraordinary artist. International attention to his work has grown markedly, indicated by the retrospective initiated by IVAM in Valencia in 1992, by the traveling show "The Installations" at GAK in Bremen and at the Kunstverein in Cologne in 1995-96, followed by the presentation at the documenta X in 1997. In 2000 the MACBA organized a touring retrospective exhibition with venues in Europe and the USA and published a thorough accompanying catalogue. Daniel Birnbaum placed the artist at the center of his "Making Worlds" exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2009.



Image: Detail from Öyvind Fahlström, **Column no. 4 (IB-affair)**, 1974, silkscreen (twenty-six colors), 75.9 x 56.4 cm, 29 7/8 x 22 3/16 in., edition: 300, signed, dated