

## Joachim Bandau - Drawings and Wall Objects

17. September - 12. November 2016

The year 1976 signalled a new beginning in Joachim Bandau's artistic work. Following the surreal figures of the 1960s, he now began an intensive exploration of architecture. The so-called Bunkerzeichnungen or "bunker drawings" (1976-1978) were the initial result: dark, large-format drawings permeated by memories of war that clearly express the terrifying monumentality of the bunker. More importantly they feature a fascinating variety of forms. Bandau's bunker variations appear as choreographies of massive shapes equally reminiscent of ancient pagan sanctuaries and Islamic burial towers as they are of such prototypical modern architecture as Claude Parent's church Sainte Bernadette du Banlay in Nevers. They reveal a view of the bunker shaped by architectural interest and ambivalent fascination, which the artist shared with his contemporaries: In 1976 Paul Virilio's Bunker Archaeology was released, a project that involved a seven-year study of the 18,000 bunkers that made up the Siegfried Line. The blueprint for the church in Nevers completed by Virilio and Parent in 1963 is a clear indication of the critical approval of the formal qualities of bunker architecture that began to be acknowledged at the time. Bandau's drawings from the 1970s and 1980s are thus not only to be seen, as Renate Puvogel has written, as "surrogate sculptures" that anticipated the interest in modern architecture clearly evident in the wall objects. The works also serve to re-evaluate bunker architecture itself and are, in terms of Bandau's overall artistic production, quite coherent. Wavering between architectural drawing and absurdist figurative pictorial invention, the bunker drawings serve to bridge the technoid "monstrosities" of the 1960s and the wall pieces of the 1990s, in which the influence of the vocabulary of the German "Neues Bauen" movement becomes evident. Travels to Tel Aviv in the late 1980s were a catalyst to thought and work processes that resulted in a plastic vocabulary of shapes consisting of open and closed surfaces and perpendicularly arranged bodies - spatial forms that when displayed on the wall seem like object lessons in minimalism. In reality they are anything but that. Bandau's answer to Donald Judd's problematic call for an art free of references was sculptural work in which not only personal experiences but also the contradictory modernist canon of forms play a decisive role.

Christina Landbrecht

Joachim Bandau (born in 1936) lives in Aachen, Germany; and Stäfa, Switzerland.

Bandau studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1957 to 1960. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at the Ludwig Forum Aachen and at the Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen. The Neues Museum in Nuremberg will show his sculptures from the 1960s and 70s in a solo exhibition in December 2016. Joachim Bandau's works have also been featured in numerous group exhibitions at such institutions as Sculpture Center, New York, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, the Städtischen Kunsthalle Mannheim, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, and at documenta 6. His works are included in the collection of the Drawing Centers in Berlin, Dresden and Vienna; the early sculptures are represented in the collection of the Neues Museum, Nuremberg, and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Galerie Thomas Fischer

Potsdamer Str. 77-87, Haus H  
10785 Berlin +49 30 74 78 03 85  
mail@galeriethomasfischer.de

