

Artforum

Marlow Moss

HAUS KONSTRUKTIV

Selnaustrasse 25

February 9–May 7

Max Glauner, March 2017



View of “Marlow Moss,” 2017.

Twentieth-century clichés concerning women artists stubbornly persist to this day: Women artists are primarily motherly protectors (of the figurative), as in the case of Paula Modersohn-Becker or Frida Kahlo, or diligent collectors (diving into the depths of the existential self), as with Hanne Darboven or Tracey Emin. Given these preconceived notions, it is unsurprising that British artist Marlow Moss, along with her subtle interpretations of the Neoplasticism of Piet Mondrian and his cohorts, has to be rendered palatable here with the label “forgotten outsider.” Nor is it astonishing that her life as a gay and gender-bending artist—she lived with a woman and gave herself, in the image of a dandified gentleman jockey, a man’s name—is at times presented by others as a circumstance of her desire to enter the male-dominated domain of Concrete art, seeing as Moss herself played with the public’s perceptions of her.

Early on, she shed her epigonic status with respect to her role model, Mondrian, who was almost twenty years her senior. Her compositions built on primary colors and black-and-white grid patterns stand for themselves in this fantastically curated exhibition. Dynamizing the image space, a pair of black parallel lines running neck and neck appear in two versions of the mature work *Untitled (White, Black, Blue and Yellow)*, 1954. There are also sketches spelled out with mathematical precision, studies for larger pieces, and works such as *Composition in Red, Yellow, Blue and White*, 1956–57, from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, which—with its shimmering color modules—makes the artist an exhilarating discovery.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.