

Paul Wunderlich

Biography

Paul Wunderlich was born in Eberswalde, outside of Berlin on March 10, 1927. After secondary school, military service and a short stint as a prisoner of war, he studied at the Hamburg Academy of Fine Art from 1947 to 1951. Fresh out of art school, he was entrusted with managing the academy's print workshop, where he made prints for Oskar Kokoschka and Emil Nolde, among others. After a three year stay in Paris he returned to Hamburg in 1963 as a professor of painting. He resigned from his professorship in 1968 to work as a freelance artist. Paul Wunderlich lived and worked together with his wife, photographer Karin Szekessy, in his home and studio high above the rooftops of Hamburg. They divided their time between that home and their second residence in the Provence of the South of France, where he died suddenly on June 6th 2010 surrounded by his family.

Paul Wunderlich belonged to a group of contemporary German artists with an international reputation. His work in painting, drawing, lithography and sculpture is appreciated worldwide. Wunderlich's artistry was linked to "Fantastic Realism," a unique and distinctive style developed around 1950 by a group of young European artists who chose images from their dream visions as subject matter. Often erotically charged, these fragmented universes brought together both exotic and everyday elements. In the tradition of the Surrealists, the Fantastic Realists chose to work with precise images and details culled from visual memory, then combined in strange and dreamlike ways. Unlike their contemporary Abstractionists or Expressionists, they emphasized communicating with pure imagery as opposed to gesture in paint. Their lines are clear even when the image is distorted. In Fantastic Realism, subjectivity is often emphasized with the image of an open head or torso out of which spills the fantastical landscape. The head or torso emphasizes the role of the individual and the personal nature of the reality projected.

Paul Wunderlich belonged to the second generation of Fantastic Realists, sometimes called Magical Realists. These artists have remained faithful to the tradition albeit with contemporary imagery. Paul Wunderlich, the most prominent among them, had developed a style slightly cooler in temperament and more analytical. Often borrowing from classical mythology, he emphasized the human form within a context that blends together contemporary and historical references. With cool aloofness, Wunderlich transports the viewer into a world of surreal eroticism and aesthetic symbolism. Again and again, Wunderlich spiced his Fantastic Realism with a startling dose of irony.

After Picasso and Max Ernst no other artist has contributed as much to the sculpture of painters as Paul Wunderlich. The thematic for his sculptures and objects is closely linked to his paintings, drawings and lithographs. Wunderlich sculptures and objects combine the simplicity of an idea with the refinement of the material, and imagination with perfection in shaping something into a perfect form.

As an artist, Paul Wunderlich remained faithful to his own artistic visions. Over a period of several decades, Wunderlich's complex and comprehensive body of work enjoyed numerous exhibitions in museums worldwide.

Chronological Biography

- 1927 Born March 10th in Eberswalde, Brandenburg, in Germany
- 1945 Served in German Army
- 1947 Studies graphic arts-University of Fine Arts, Hamburg, Germany
- 1963 Professor of Graphic Arts-University of Fine Arts, Hamburg, Germany
- 1951-60 Received a teaching contract for etching and lithography techniques
- 1960-63 Lived and worked in Paris, produced numerous lithographs
- 1963-67 Professor, Hochschule fur Bildende Kunste, Hamburg
- 1965-70 Various exhibitions throughout the world
- 1970 Stayed in New York
- 1971 Married Karin Székessy
- 1973 Lived and worked in Italy and France
- 1976-81 Stayed in Switzerland and Belgium
- 1981 Bought a house in Provence
- 1983-86 Devoted himself intensively to sculpture
- 1987 Concentrated on lithography
- 1987-89 Large format color lithographs using new techniques
- 1990 Sculpture, painting (including paraphrases in the style of Lukas Cranach and The Ecole de Fontainebleau)
- 1991 Exhibitions in London and Darmstadt
- 1992 Large sculptures, exhibition in Copenhagen
- 1992 Exhibition in Belgium
- 1994-95 Retrospectives in several Japanese museums (Tokyo, Osaka, Hokkaido, Gifu). Further large and small sculptures.
- 1996 Exhibitions in London and Barcelona, pastels and a book on angels based on poems by Alberti
- 1997 Devoted time to animal sculpture

2010 July 6th - Dies suddenly at his home in the South of France

Solo Exhibitions

- 1949 Overbeck-Gesellschaft, Lubeck, West Germany
- 1951 Hamburg Artists' Club-Hamburg, Germany
- 1955 Hamburger Künstlerclub Die Insel, Hamburg, Kushiro City Art Gallery, Hokkaido
- 1957 Congress for the Freedom of Culture-Hamburg, Germany
- 1958 Galerie Nebelung, Dusseldorf, Orangerie, Eutin, West Germany
- 1960 Dragonsrestall Gallery-Hamburg,Germany
- 1962 Galerie Brusberg, Hannover Galerie Diogenes, Berlin Galerie Brockstedt, Hamburg
- 1963 Print Club Gallery-Philadelphia, PA
Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts
Galerie Sydow, Frankfurt
Galerie Niedlich, Stuttgart
San Francisco Museum of Art, California
Galerie Rothe, Heidelberg Germany
Galerie Niepel, Dusseldorf
Museum of Art, Miami, Florida
Eric Locke Gallery, San Francisco
- 1964 Galerie van de Loo, Munich, Germany Galerie Brechbuhl, Grenchen, Switzerland,
- 1964 Arco Gallery-Rome, Italy
Musee des Beaux-Arts, Mons, Belgium
Galerie Ernst Hauswedell, Baden-Baden, Germany
Galerie Neipel, Dusseldorf
- 1965 Kaiserslautern, West Germany, Galerie Wilbrand,
- 1965 Munster, West Germany
Kubus-Austellung, Hannover
Europa Center, Berlin
Kunstverein, Dusseldorf

- Städtische Galerie, Bochum, Germany
 Galerie Brusberg, Hannover
 Kunsthalle, Mannheim, Germany
- 1967 Overbeck-Gesellschaft, Lubeck,
 Galerie Wolfgang Ketterer, Munich
 Galerie Toni Gerber, Berne
 Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand
- 1968 Redfern Gallery, London
 Galerie Passepartout, Copenhagen
 Galerie d'Eendt, Amsterdam
- 1968 Perls Gallery, Los Angeles
 Phoenix Gallery, Berkeley, California
 Kovler Gallery, Chicago
- 1970 Galerie Brusberg, Hannover
 Staempfli Gallery, New York
 Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen, Germany
 Kunsthalle, Gelsenkirchen, Germany
- 1971 Galerie Aronowitsch, Stockholm Galleriea Schwarz, Milan
- 1971 Amos Andersonin Taidemuseo, Helsinki, Perls Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1971 Tokyo Gallery-Tokyo, Japan, Berggruen Gallery-San Francisco, CA
- 1972 Staempfli Gallery, New York
 Galerie Berggruen, Paris
 Galerie Andre Francois Petit, Paris
 Galleria La Bussola, Turin
 Anglolare Gallery of Contemporary Art, Milan, Italy
- 1973 Redfern Gallery, London, Galerie Levy, Hamburg
- 1973 Baukunst, Cologne, Staempfli Gallery-New York
- 1974 Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Art Contacts, Paris
 Kunsthalle, Kiel, Germany

- Nouvelle Vision Gallery-Tokyo, Japan
 University Gallery-Amherst, Mass
- 1975 Lehmbbruck Museum, Duisburg, West Germany
 Kunstverein, Augsburg, West Germany
 Galerie Cour, Saint-Pierre, Geneva
 Galerie Orangerie, Cologne
- 1976 Veranneman, Kruishoutem, Belgium
- 1976 Galerie Octave Negru, Paris
- 1976 Galerie Uddenberg, Goteborg, Sweden
- 1976 Galerie Berggruen, Paris
- 1977 Redfern Gallery, London
- 1978 Negru Gallery-Paris, France
- 1980 Redfern Gallery, London
 Seibu Museum, Tokyo
 Kunsthalle, Kiel
- 1983 Fondation Veranneman, Gent, Belgium
- 1985 Le Bateau Lavoir, Paris, Galerie Sonet, Stockholm
- 1987 Redfern Gallery, London
 Schleswig-Holsteinisches Museum, Schleswig
- 1990 Hohmann Gallery, Hamburg
 Galerie Trigano, Paris (FIAC)
- 1991 Redfern Gallery, London 'New Paintings, Sculpture, Pastels & Prints'
- 1994 Gerhard Wurzer Gallery, Houston
- 1995 Major retrospective exhibition - touring to four museums in Japan
 Mitaka City Art Gallery, Tokyo
 Navio Hankyu Museum, Osaka
- 1996 Redfern Gallery, London
- 1999 The Hart Gallery, Carmel, CA, Palm Desert, CA, Chicago, IL
- 2009 Christian Hohmann Fine Art, Palm Desert, CA