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## EXPLORING THE ARCHIVE: ON SURREALISM

von Bartha, Basel  
Nov 12 – Jan 28, 2023

In an ongoing research project, von Bartha examines more than 50 years of the gallery's work with a dedicated exhibition 'Exploring the Archive' in the Basel north space.

Featuring historical publications and bibliophilic treasures, documents, photographs and works from the private collections of the von Bartha family, the exhibition presents a tribute to artists of the surrealist movement with whom the gallery has had a intense appreciation over several years.

One of von Bartha's inaugural exhibitions in 1972 showed French Surrealist **Yves Laloy (1920 Rennes - 1999 Cancale)**. His mode of expression is unique and very straightforward. He often took inspiration from Navajo patterns and you will find puns hinting at his friendship with and esteem for André Breton ("*A mon Ami Breton*") who called Laloy the only "*Constructivist Surrealist*".

Margareta and Miklos von Bartha were able to purchase the significant painting, "*Art Amour Liberté*" by **Konrad Klapheck (b. 1935, Düsseldorf)**, from **André Breton's** private collection. This initiated an intensive exchange of opinions with the artist himself, as well as the incorporation of works by Klapheck into their collection. Klapheck's style of painting combines Neorealism, Surrealism and Pop Art (long before Pop Art existed). His first painting executed at art school depicted a typewriter and he continued to use machines and apparatuses, as well as everyday objects, as models for his paintings. Since becoming acquainted with André Breton in 1961, Klapheck became known as the "*Machinery Painter*" of the Surrealists.

Another important discovery was **Fleury-Joseph Crépin (1875 Hénin-Liétard - 1948 Montigny-en-Gohelle)**. He painted 345 oils on canvas, all of which were dated and numbered. Crépin was convinced that the Second World War would stop when he had painted his 300th painting. This turned out to be the case, as that specific work was dated May 7, 1945. His work was to be cited as an example by the Surrealists. All his paintings demonstrate a technique of dripping paint onto the canvas and depict

# VON BARTHA

dreamt temples with exact symmetry. A key work in Crépin's oeuvre is the painting of such a symmetrical temple entitled „No 41“ shown in the exhibition, which was also part of the travelling exhibition „Parallel Visions - Modern Artists and Outsider Art“ at LACMA (Los Angeles) in 1992 and at Kunsthalle Basel in 1993. Crépin was first introduced to Margareta & Miklos von Bartha by Carl Laszlo, the gallery's mentor in von Bartha's early days.

Around 1920, **Pierre Roy (1880 Nantes - 1950 Milano)** joined the Surrealists. Roy is known for his realistically painted works depicting ordinary objects in surprising arrangements. His works were part of multiple group exhibitions at von Bartha in the late 70's and early 80's, and remain present in the private collection of the von Bartha family today. His career blossomed in the USA around the time of his MoMA exhibition in 1936. He is represented in the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, the Musée d'Arts de Nantes, as well as in Tate Modern, London, The Art Institute of Chicago, MOMA, New York and The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The gallery is pleased to open it's archives for the first time to the public, weaving the lines between the linking points of a more than 50 years' passion for art and collecting.

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