

### Partnerships & Sponsors

The *Research Center for Informal Art* cooperates closely with colleagues in universities, museums, and the art trade, as well as with private collections. It is assisted by an honorary advisory board, which includes Dr. Renate Goldmann (VAN HAM Art Estate, Cologne), Dr. Dieter Groll (Cologne), Ina Hesselmann (Stiftung Informelle Kunst, Darmstadt), Kay Heymer (Kunstpalastr, Düsseldorf), Prof. Dr. Sigrid Hofer (University of

Marburg), Hans Maulberger (Gallery owner, Munich), and Dr. Gabriele Uelsberg (Director of the LVR-Landes-Museum Bonn, now retired). Sponsors of the Research Center include the Informal Art Foundation, the MKM Foundation, the Reinhard & Sonja Ernst Foundation, the Maulberger Gallery, the K. O. Götz and Rissa Foundation, a private collection in Meerbusch, the Stark Foundation for Contemporary Art, and the VAN HAM Art Estate.

Translation: Neil Solomon

### Contact

Research Center for Informal Art  
Art History Institute of the University  
of Bonn

Prof. Dr. Christoph Zuschlag  
(Academic Lead)  
Dr. des. Anne-Kathrin Hinz  
(Research Assistant)

Regina-Pacis-Weg 1  
D-53113 Bonn

Email: [forschungsstelle.informellekunst@uni-bonn.de](mailto:forschungsstelle.informellekunst@uni-bonn.de)

Website: <https://forschungsstelle-informelle-kunst.uni-bonn.de>

4/



Layout: Vanessa Buffy

forschungsstelle  
informelle kunst

KHI

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

# THE RESEARCH CENTER FOR **INFORMAL ART**

at the Art History Institute of  
the University of Bonn



### Why a Research Center for Informal Art?

Informalism (or "art informel") was the central artistic innovation in the art of the 1950s. Various sources from art history flowed into informalism, which encompassed different parallel currents and triggered various reactions that continue to have an impact today. Informalism as a term does not designate a style, but rather characterizes an artistic attitude that rejects classical principles of form and composition as well as geometric abstraction. Informal art strives for an object-free, open, and processual pictorial form. Many of the subsequent artistic currents took it as a point of reference in one way or another, either by following on from it or by consciously distancing themselves from it. It is therefore all the more surprising that there has been no research center for this field until now, and that it has hardly figured in university teaching.

This gap is now being closed by the *Research Center for Informal Art*, which was established in June 2019 at the Department of Art History at the University of Bonn. It pursues the goal of intensifying the rather sparse research on informalism in recent years and, in particular, to involve and promote young academic talent. Informal art is to be examined in all its different facets in Germany, Europe, Japan, and the USA, adopting in this way a global and transnational perspective. Aspects that have received little or no attention to date, such as the significance of women artists or informalism in the former German Democratic Republic, will be examined, and at the same time, entrenched art historical narratives, such as the connotation that informalism can be equated with an art of freedom, will be critically questioned.

### Informalism in Bonn and the Rhineland

Bonn is an ideal location for intensifying research and teaching on informalism: the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn in conjunction with the Kunststiftung Hann Trier, as well as the Kunstmuseum Bonn, all possess representative works of informalism. Starting in 1972, the Henne-mann Gallery worked for decades to promote and disseminate this art, with the support of the curator and author Manfred de la Motte. The Rheinisches Archiv für Künstlernachlässe (Rhenish Archive for Artists' Legacies) in Bonn holds, among other things, the bequests of the sculptor Friederich Werthmann and the painter Marie-Louise von Rogister.

In any case the Rhineland may well have been the most important center of informalism in Germany: K. O. Götz, Gerhard Hoehme, and Peter Brüning taught at the Düsseldorf Academy. With

the Kemp Collection, the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf has an important private collection of Informal art. Bernard Schultze lived in Cologne for many decades; the Museum Ludwig now preserves a large part of his artistic estate, and another part is administered by the VAN HAM Art Estate. At Alfter Castle near Bonn, the Donnerstag-Gesellschaft (Thursday Society), founded as far back as 1947 around the artist Hubert Berke, staged the first exhibitions of abstract art in the postwar period. Parts of the estates of important galleries such as Galerie 22 in Düsseldorf and Galerie Der Spiegel in Cologne are housed in the Central Archive for German and International Art Market Research (ZADIK) in Cologne, which thus boasts rich source material.

### Goals & Projects

An integral part of the Research Center is the awarding of doctoral scholarships, the organization of workshops and conferences, the cultivation of national and international partnerships, and the initiation and staging of special exhibitions in cooperation with museums and other partners.

Since its founding, the Center has been working on the development of a study and teaching collection as well as a special library. Starting in 2021, scholarly publications as well as important source writings on informalism will appear in first translations in a specially dedicated series of publications.

title illustration: Judit Reigl, *Centre de Dominance*, 1957, oil on canvas, 144.5×152.3 cm, Collection Reinhard Ernst, Wiesbaden. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021. © Photo: Courtesy of Sotheby's.

1/ Helen Frankenthaler, *Zarathustra*, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 205.7×249.6 cm, Collection Reinhard Ernst, Wiesbaden. © Helen Frankenthaler Foundation Inc./

VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021. © Photo: Borgers/Hermann

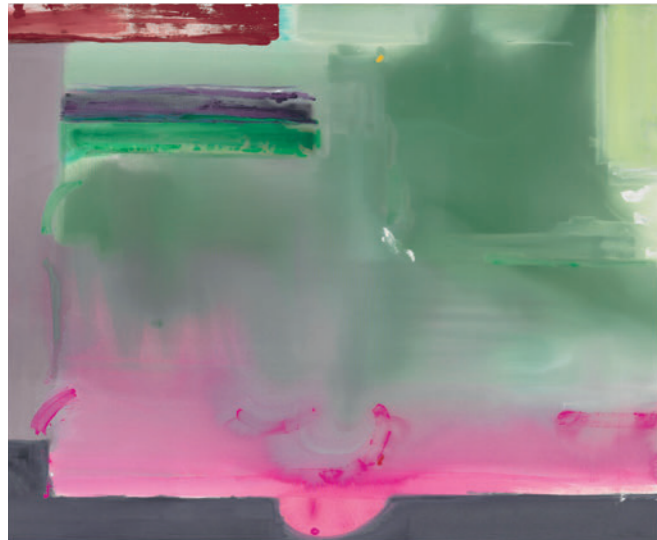
2/ Tōkō Shinoda, *Ascent*, ca. 1975, ink, gouache and silver leaf on board, 90.2×180.3 cm, Collection Reinhard Ernst, Wiesbaden. © Photo: Courtesy of Sotheby's.

3/ K. O. Götz, *Jonction II*, 1991, mixed media on canvas, two-part, 200×520 cm, Collection Sylvia und Ulrich

Ströher, Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg. Photo: Olaf Bergmann, Witten. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021.

4/ Emilio Vedova, *Contrasto '59-1*, 1959, mixed media and oil on canvas, 146×196 cm, Collection Sylvia und Ulrich Ströher. © Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova, Venice. Photo: Olaf Bergmann, Witten. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021.

1/



2/



3/

