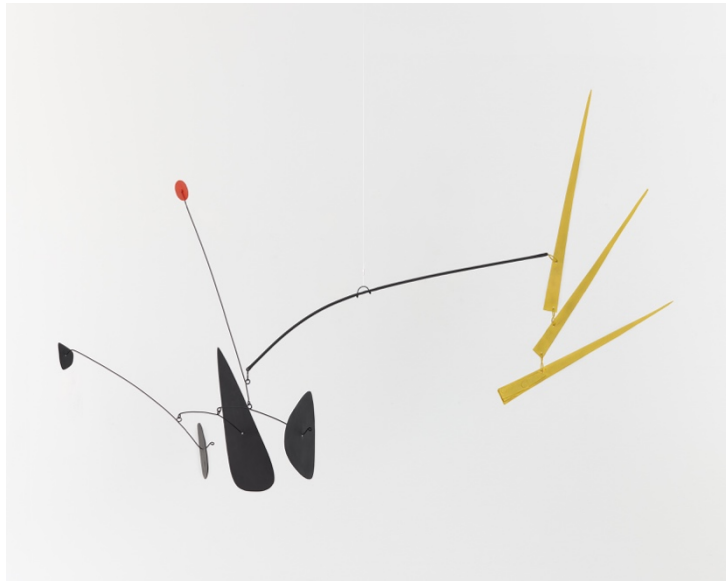


# LÉVY GORVY

LÉVY GORVY RETURNS TO ART BASEL WITH WORK BY LEADING  
POSTWAR AND CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS UNITED BY  
THE EMOTION, VIBRANCE, AND RELEVANCE OF RED

**Art Basel**  
Booth F9  
June 13–16, 2019  
Messe Basel, Basel



LEFT: ENRICO CASTELLANI. *Superficie rossa*, 1964. Acrylic on canvas, 39 3/8 x 31 1/2 inches (100 x 80 cm). © 2019 Enrico Castellani / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome. Photo: Stephen White. RIGHT: ALEXANDER CALDER. *Untitled*, 1943. Sheet metal, rod, wire, and paint, 33 x 42 x 28 inches (83.8 x 106.7 x 71.1 cm). © 2019 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein.

**Basel—Red.** The color of sex and death, of vitality and rage, of lipstick and viscera. Red incites us, but it is also the color that demands we stop absolutely. It is—for all its contradictions and perhaps because of them—a color the effects of which run very deep.

For its presentation at Art Basel 2019, Lévy Gorvy has assembled a group of modern and contemporary masterworks connected by red. Prominent in some of the works and discreet or totally absent in others, this hue resonates, perhaps more than any other, with the themes and emotions that define our times.

In addition to these works, Lévy Gorvy's presentation in Booth F9 will feature a selection of important paintings and sculptures by artists anchored in the gallery's program, including Enrico Castellani, Jutta Koether, Carol Rama, Germaine Richier, Pierre Soulages, and Günther Uecker. Rooted in both tradition and radical innovation, these works will be complemented by significant paintings and sculptures by Eduardo Chillida, Bruce Nauman, and Christopher Wool, among others.

## Highlights of Booth F9

Since the early 1980s, **Jutta Koether** has forged a practice that reckons with painting's histories, contradictions, and pleasures. In 1987, she adopted the formal and conceptual constraint of painting predominantly in the color red. A litany of nouns and descriptors—obsessed, electric, spiritual,

paranoia, astral, machine, aura—traverse the right panel of her 1990 diptych *100% (Portrait of Robert Johnson)*, a centerpiece of Booth F9. Named for the enigmatic blues musician, this painting features words in vivid crimson and burgundy, while a spectral face surrounded by pearls appears on the left panel. Text, gesture, and color converge to reflect Johnson's mythical proportions.

**Christopher Wool** began to self-appropriate in the late 1990s, incorporating imagery from his early work into new paintings using a silkscreen technique. He would either repeat a single image on canvas to the point of chaos or vandalize such an image by overpainting it, bringing together two opposing foundations of modern painting—gesture and mechanical reproduction. To create *Untitled* (2009), the artist layered and erased elements of previous works to form a palimpsestic accumulation that he photographed before silkscreening the resulting image onto linen in scarlet, black, and white. For Wool, this process represents self-negation, expressing the doubt and inquiry that has fueled his decades-long pursuit of new kinds of picture making.

In 1965, **Roman Opalka** began his *Détail* paintings as a way to manifest the unyielding passage of time in the face of mortality. This project was initiated when the artist painted the number 1 in the upper left corner of his canvas and then continued numbering sequentially in rows until he ran out of space. At this point, he proceeded on a subsequent canvas. Opalka continued the project for 46 years, until his death in 2011, understanding the series to be an act of self-determination. Here, the gallery presents *OPALKA 1965/1 - ∞, Detail 3029180-3047372*.

**Enrico Castellani's** *Superficies*, or “surfaces,” the first of which date to 1959, are monochrome reliefs featuring dynamic topographies of taut peaks and depressions. To create them, the artist stretched canvas over nails that were hammered into custom-built stretchers, before applying an even coat of paint. Brushed with light, the surface of a *Superficie* work becomes animated, extending the Renaissance technique of *chiaroscuro* into real space and time. In brilliant cobalt blue, Castellani's *Superficie blu* (1965) stages a drama of shadow and illumination that responds to the eternally changing conditions of its environment.

Two luminous alabaster sculptures, *Elogio a la Luz XIV* (1970) and *Bajo relive* (1973), by Basque artist **Eduardo Chillida** explore ways in which mass and volume inhabit and contain space. Chillida understood that space is not in fact empty, but relational, situational, and contingent. “Perceiving directly acts upon the present,” he once wrote, “but with one foot firmly planted in the future. Experience, on the other hand, does the contrary: you are in the present, but with one foot in the past. In other words, I prefer the position of perception. All of my work is the progeny of the question. I am a specialist in asking questions, some without answers.”

In the monumental diptych *Wasserfall I and II* (1997), a dense array of variously slanted nails articulates the cascading rapids of its subject. Here **Günther Uecker** references the Rhine Falls, a well-known landmark outside of St. Moritz that is geographically notable for a large stone bisecting the waterfall. Demonstrating his description of the nail as “fragile and poetically sustainable in their visual perception,” *Wasserfall I and II* constitutes a highly personal yet elegantly abstract homage to the natural beauty of Europe. Uecker has long conceived of his nail paintings as metaphorical sites for the exploration of themes both existential and personal. Accordingly, *Wasserfall I and II* is an eminently ethical meditation on the themes of human violence, ecological fragility, and the incessant passage of time.

To create the diptych, Uecker stretched canvases over thick pieces of wood, intuitively painting each surface with swathes of opaque, white paint evocative of the mists and sprays of water found at the base of the falls. Undulating patterns of nails—a material the artist has employed since the late 1950s—were then hammered into the support in forms suggestive of an eternally flowing river. Uecker often works in white monochrome, allowing the light of the room to suggest an ever-shifting form that appears to materialize and dissolve as one moves about the work. The artist was drawn to the Rhine Falls for its prehistoric origins and symbolic power: wending through the Engadin valley of the Swiss Alps, the Rhine is perhaps the most notable geologic feature of northern Europe, and the falls into which it flows are the largest on the continent. Accordingly, Uecker conceives the Rhine as an intensely charged symbol, one representative of the uncontrollable forces of both history and nature. Thus, the waterway's culmination in the falls referenced in *Wasserfall I and II*, Uecker posits,

is perhaps the ultimate representation of contemporary humanity's chronological origins, with the flow of the river constituting an ancient force of life that extends from Europe's earliest human eras through the present day. By turns intensely physical and transcendently profound, *Wasserfall I and II* is exemplary of Uecker's singular ability to coalesce the visceral with the philosophical.

Lévy Gorvy's dedication to sculpture is celebrated in Booth F9 with *L'Ouragane* (1948–49), a bronze by **Germaine Richier**, whose relentless investigation into organic processes of growth and decay resulted in an oeuvre known for its raw surfaces, open armatures, and dynamic compositions. The pock-marked skin and inflated figure of *L'Ouragane* (Hurricane Woman) evokes suffering and survival. The feminine complement to her figure *L'Orage* (Storm Man), this sculpture has been interpreted as a response to the violence of World War II, but also to a transformational 1935 trip Richier took to see the ruins of Pompeii.

In *Hand Pair* (1996), **Bruce Nauman** offers up the central tool of his artistic production: his hands. This silicon bronze sculpture is one of two produced as proofs for those seen in his 1996 installation *Fifteen Pairs of Hands*, and the sculpture *Untitled (Hand Circle)*. The artist cast his left and right hands to the wrist, welding the resulting bronzes together so they reach in opposite directions. The left hand makes a circle between thumb and index finger while the right extends its pointer, which is severed at the tip. In *Untitled (Hand Circle)*, this hand pair is joined with four others in a daisy chain ring, creating an irreverent sexual symbol—the insertion of the index finger into a hole. Removed from this context, the sculpture in Booth F9 attests to the expressive potential and productive ambiguity of nonverbal communication.



BRUCE NAUMAN. *Hand Pair*, 1996. Silicon bronze, Hand pair: 4 1/2 x 15 3/8 x 5 1/2 inches; Fingertip: 5/8 x 2 x 3/4 inches. © 2019 Bruce Nauman / Artists Rights Society (ARS). Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York. Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography.

**Alexander Calder's** *Untitled* (1943) exemplifies the exuberance of the artist's signature "mobiles," which he began to construct in the early 1930s. Suspended from the ceiling or placed directly on the floor, Calder's mobiles and stabiles broke with the Western sculptural tradition, trading solidity, stasis, and permanence for lightness, contingency, and chance. *Untitled* features abstract forms cut from sheet metal, which was in short supply during the war years, painted in black, yellow, and red. These shapes respond to breezes and drafts—their spontaneous movements reflect the ephemerality and unpredictability of nature.

### About Lévy Gorvy

Lévy Gorvy is committed to approaching every art fair booth with the same curatorial rigor granted to our acclaimed exhibitions, publications, and special events. The gallery is unique in its organization of art fair booths, consistently bringing together rare and extraordinary works that cohere as a united presentation both formally and conceptually, often according to a specific art historical theme. Founded by Dominique Lévy and Brett Gorvy, the gallery cultivates a program devoted to innovation and connoisseurship in the fields of modern, postwar, and contemporary art. The gallery fosters continued dedication to the living artists and artists' estates that it represents and produces ongoing art historical research and original scholarship, publishing monographs, artist books, and other key publications in addition to exhibition catalogues. Lévy Gorvy maintains gallery spaces at 909 Madison Avenue in New York, in Mayfair, London, and in Central, Hong Kong. Our Zürich office, Lévy Gorvy with Rumbler, offers bespoke private advisory services to collectors and institutions around the globe.

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