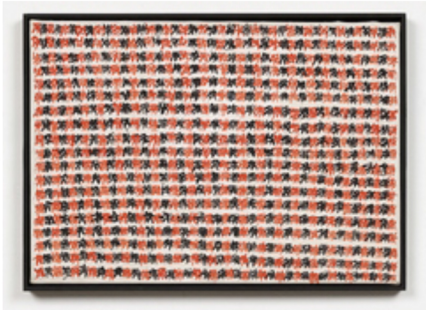


ARTFORUM

Rolf-Gunter Dienst

GALERIE MAX HETZLER | GOETHESTRASSE
Goethestrasse 2/3
November 21–January 9

Little known outside of Germany, Rolf-Gunter Dienst has had a prolific career, not only as a painter but also as a publisher and an editor, in addition to being considered one of the most important German art critics of the past century. From 1992 until his retirement in 2008, he was a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg. This expansive exhibition focuses on Dienst's early gouaches and oil paintings, most of which are on paper, that are largely composed of calligraphic squiggles and marks arranged in horizontal lines as an asemic writing. An untitled gouache on paper work from 1963 restricts itself to a navy, almost Yves Klein–ian blue; the lines are dense and stabbing, chaotically intersecting in a confused mess of six rows. Another untitled work next to it from the same year expands the palette to red and pink; the signage here is even sharper, star-like in its formal enunciation of something approaching exactitude.



Rolf-Gunter Dienst, *Momentetagebuch 11. Juli 1962, 1962*, oil on canvas, 20 x 28 x 1".

In these early works, Dienst proved himself to be most successful when hewing to a single color, perhaps two, and keeping the naked white background exposed. Among the six oil paintings included, *Momentetagebuch 11. Juli 1962, 1962*, is the painting I kept returning to: Dashed off in red and black, the marks here resemble the cursive script of traditional Chinese characters but are really just bare gesturality, lovely in their asemicity.

— Travis Jeppesen