

# BG

Press Kit  
Berlin, 4.9.25



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Munich 1957, Photo: © Eva-Maria Tilse

# **Brigitte Meier-** **Denninghoff**

**Sculptures and Drawings  
1946–1970**

**5.9.25–3.8.26**

**BERLINISCHE  
GALERIE  
MUSEUM OF  
MODERN ART**



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Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, München 1957, Photo: © Eva-Maria Tlase

## Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff

**Sculptures and Drawings  
1946–1970**

**5.9.25–3.8.26**

Press tour  
Thu 4.9.25, 10 am

Opening  
Thu 4.9.25, 7 pm

Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff (1923–2011) was one of the most successful women in post-war sculpture and a sought-after artist in the international arena. In the 1950s and 1960s her innovative works in metal were shown at documenta in Kassel and at the Biennale di Venezia. The young artist garnered major awards and appeared in seminal publications by art scholars. And yet today her name is hardly known. If anything, she is perceived as one half of the duo Matschinsky-Denninghoff, which she founded in 1970 together with her husband Martin Matschinsky (1921–2020). Their big metal sculptures are landmarks in the public space of many West German cities and also in Berlin, not least on the central island in Tauentzienstrasse, at the Freie Universität and outside the Berlinische Galerie.

After a gap of more than 50 years, the Berlinische Galerie is devoting a major solo exhibition to the early work of Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff. The show provides impressive evidence that this oeuvre needs to be reappraised. The sculptures which bore her signature until the duo was founded are honoured here once more as her independent contribution to modern art and exhibited under her own name. It seems almost inconceivable today but in 1970, when the couple announced that they would sign these sculptures jointly in future, they retrospectively declared themselves to be the joint authors of Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff's earlier work. Henceforth her sculptures were always displayed under the mark Matschinsky-Denninghoff. Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff vanished from art history.

The exhibition features about 20 sculptures and 40 drawings produced by Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff between the 1940s and the 1960s. The works selected trace the development of her individual style, which went on to inform the output of the artist duo. The entire documentary and artistic Matschinsky-Denninghoff estate was evaluated in preparing for this show. Apart from drawings and sculptures, this repository contains a wealth of unknown source material, including letters, diaries and notes by both artists; extracts from the sketch-books can be viewed at an interactive display point in the exhibition. Since 2021 the estate has been managed by a foundation, Stiftung Matschinsky-Denninghoff, under the roof of the Berlinische Galerie and in collaboration with VAN HAM Art Estate.

After growing up in Berlin, the artist was initially influenced by the British sculptor Henry Moore and the Franco-Russian sculptor and theorist Antoine Pevsner. She was the only woman and the

only sculptor among the founders of ZEN 49, a group of artists in post-war Germany who came together to promote non-representational art. At group exhibitions from 1950 she showed sculptures made of wood, metal and clay but also drawings. Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff's early sculptural work, like her substantial yet almost forgotten graphic output, was primarily inspired by landscape.

Soon afterwards, from the mid-1950s onwards, the artist forged her own unique style, creating distinctive metal sculptures by combining slender brass rods with tin to form complex structures which define the space rather than repelling it. These new sculptures, borrowing equally from nature and technology, open up to their surroundings and play with light and shadow. From 1963 she transposed this technique to larger formats and began using tubes of weather-resistant chromium-nickel steel to produce works for outdoor settings. From 1959 she was assisted in implementing these sculptures by her husband Martin Matschinsky. Later, flowing forms which can be interpreted as organic or gestural were made from brass rods and stainless steel tubes. Although she no longer signed sculptures individually after founding the duo Matschinsky-Denninghoff in 1970, the joint sculptural oeuvre is inconceivable without her creative input and the material and formal style which she had pioneered.

With this exhibition devoted to Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff the Berlinische Galerie is upholding the mission it took over in 2022 from Das Verborgene Museum here in the city. The Berlinische Galerie will continue to conduct research into the work of women artists who have been forgotten, ignored or marginalised and, by restoring their visibility, to grant them the recognition they deserve.

## **Exhibition catalogue**

A bilingual catalogue in German and English will be published by Wienand Verlag.

295 pages with 120 illustrations

Museum edition: 29,80€

ISBN: 978-3-940208-88-0

Book trade edition: 38,00 €

ISBN: 978-3-86832-835-6

## **Guided tours in English**

Guided tours in English take place every Saturday at 4:15 pm. No extra charge to ticket-holders. No advance booking required.

## **Group tours**

Tours can be booked in German, English and French. More Information: [museumsdienst.berlin](https://museumsdienst.berlin)

## **Press images**

[berlinischegalerie.de/en/press-release/brigitte-meier-denninghoff](https://berlinischegalerie.de/en/press-release/brigitte-meier-denninghoff)

## **Tickets**

[bg.berlin/en/tickets](https://bg.berlin/en/tickets)

## **Social media**

#BrigitteMeierDenninghoffBG

#BerlinischeGalerie



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Photography and Architecture  
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Admission 10€, concessions 6€  
Every 1st Wed of the month  
6€ for everyone  
Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm  
Tue closed

## Biography

### Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff

#### 1923

Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff is born in Berlin on 2 June 1923.

#### 1943–1945

Begins studying at the Staatliche Hochschule für bildende Künste in Berlin, where she is taught by the figurative sculptor Wilhelm Gerstel.

#### 1946

Moves to Munich. Studies for one year at the Akademie der bildenden Künste with sculptor Toni Stadler.

#### 1947–1948

The British consul and art critic John Anthony Thwaites becomes her mainstay of conversation. He introduces her to the sculptor Henry Moore, for whom she works as an assistant for two months in 1948.

#### 1949

Spends six months at the Paris studio of Antoine Pevsner, sculptor and art theorist, thanks to a bursary from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York.

#### 1950

First exhibition by ZEN 49 in Munich. Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff is the only woman and the only sculptor among the founding members. The group is committed to non-representational art.

#### 1951

First solo show at Galerie Schüler in Berlin.

#### 1953

Works as a set designer for the School Theatre in Darmstadt, where she meets actor Martin Matschinsky (1921–2020). They move to Munich together in 1954.

#### 1955

First brass and tin sculptures. Marriage to Martin Matschinsky.

#### 1957–1958

Runs the sculpture class at the Staatliche Werkakademie in Kassel.

#### 1959

Takes part in the II. documenta in Kassel.

Wins the prestigious Prix Bourdelle in Paris.

#### 1961

Moves to Paris with Martin Matschinsky, where they take over the home and studio of friends, the painter and printmaker Hans Hartung and his wife, painter Anna-Eva Bergman.

Exhibits at Galerie Günther Franke in Munich with painter Fritz Winter.

#### 1962

Exhibits at the XXXI. Biennale di Venezia in the main room of the German Pavilion.

#### 1963

Solo show at the Staempfli Gallery in New York.

Works in Berlin on the sculpture 'Scientia' for the Freie Universität in Berlin. The sculpture is first displayed at the World's Fair in New York.

#### 1964

Takes part in documenta III in Kassel.

#### 1965

Catalogues begin to mention Martin Matschinsky as her assistant.

#### 1967

Exhibition at the Kunstverein in Cologne together with sculptor Emil Cimiotti.

Participates in Expo 67 at Montreal in the Pavilion of the European Community.

#### 1970

The couple move from Paris to Berlin and found the artist duo Matschinsky-Denninghoff.

Henceforth they sign sculptural work jointly.

The Nationalgalerie in Berlin stages the duo's first exhibition.



## **1985**

The first retrospective “Matschinsky-Denninghoff: Sculptures and Drawings 1955–1985” tours Berlin, Saarbrücken and Nuremberg.

## **1987**

The sculpture Berlin is installed on the central island in Tauentzienstrasse.

## **1993**

Purchase of a property in Schönfeld, Saxony-Anhalt. The duo’s late work, as yet relatively unknown, is produced here.

## **2011**

Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff dies in Berlin on 11 April aged 87.

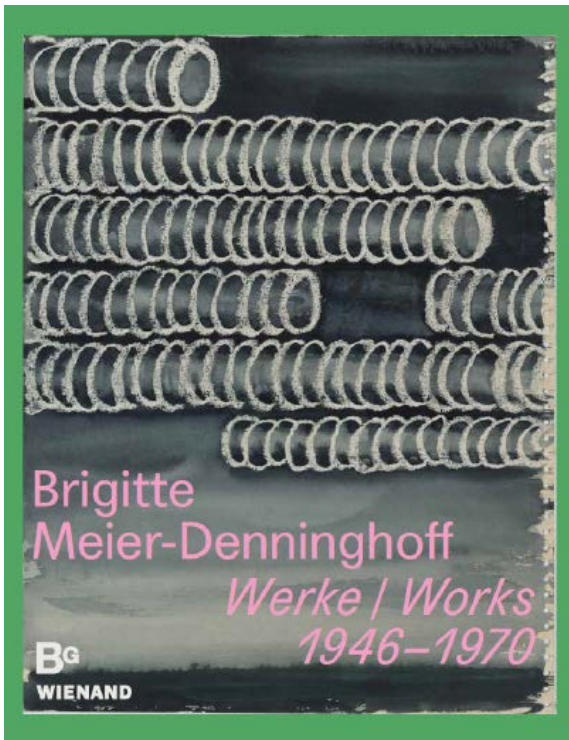
## Exhibition text

Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff (1923–2011), one of the most successful women in post-war sculpture, was not only sought after in Germany. In the 1950s and 1960s, her innovative metal sculptures went on show, for example, at the Kassel documenta, the Biennale di Venezia and the World's Fair in New York. The young artist garnered major awards, and seminal publications by art scholars featured her works.

Today she is perceived primarily as one half of the duo Matschinsky-Denninghoff, which she founded in 1970 with her husband Martin Matschinsky (1921–2020). The big metal sculptures made by the couple are still public space landmarks in many West German cities and in Berlin. When the duo was founded, the couple retrospectively declared themselves joint authors of the early sculptures by Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff. From this point on, her works were only exhibited under the shared name Matschinsky-Denninghoff. Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff vanished from art history.

For the first time, this exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie has included the artist's early work in a comprehensive solo show under her own name. After a gap of 50 years, the sculptures which bore her mark until the duo's foundation are being honoured again as her independent contribution to modern art. Preparations for the exhibition entailed an evaluation of the documentary and artistic Matschinsky-Denninghoff estate. Since 2021 it has been managed by a foundation, Stiftung Matschinsky-Denninghoff, under the roof of the Berlinische Galerie in collaboration with VAN HAM Art Estate.





## Exhibition catalogue

Published on the occasion  
of the exhibition  
"Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff. Sculptures and  
Drawings 1946-1970"  
(5.9.25-3.8.26)

### **Editors**

Thomas Köhler, Stefanie Heckmann,  
Guido Faßbender

### **Publisher**

Wienand

### **Authors**

Guido Faßbender, Johanna Haug, Stefanie  
Heckmann, Thomas Köhler, Dorothea Schöne,  
Ilka Voermann

### **Format**

22,2 × 28,5 cm

### **Pages**

295 pages

### **Languages**

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### **ISBN**

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## Press images



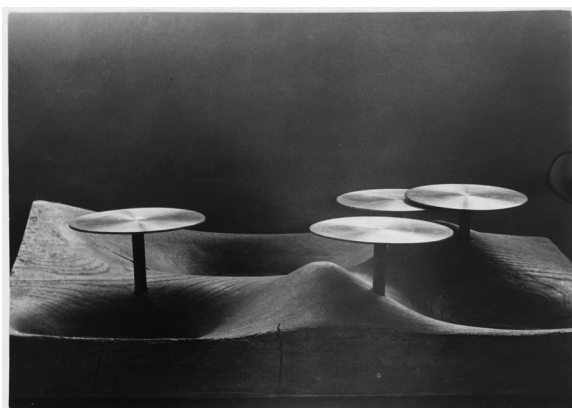
Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Munich 1957, photo: © Eva-Maria Tilse



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Lead Figure, 1949, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, photo: © Helga Fietz



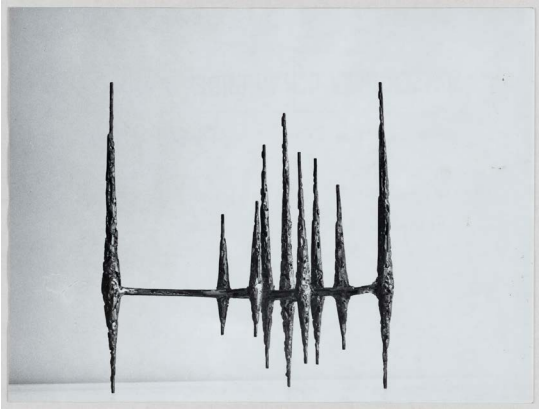
Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Untitled, 1951, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, repro: © Anja Elisabeth Witte



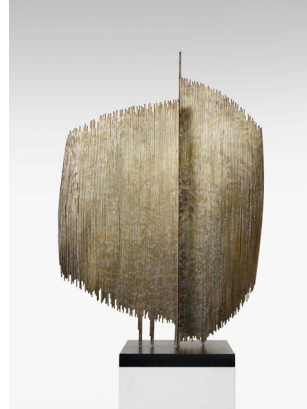
Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Relief, 1951, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, photo: © Helga Fietz



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Mountains, 1951, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, photo: © Roman März



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Spikes, 1955, photo: © Martin Matschinsky



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Leaf, 1960, photo: © Roman März



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Hall, 1969, photo: © Martin Matschinsky



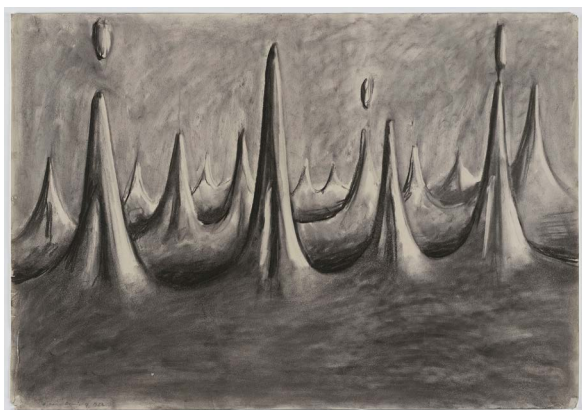
Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, 69/2 (Cube), 1969, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, photo: © Roman März



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Untitled, ca. 1948, © Stiftung Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, photo: © Anja Elisabeth Witte



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Untitled, ca. 1949, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, photo: © Anja Elisabeth Witte



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Untitled, ca. 1952, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, repro: © Anja Elisabeth Witte



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, 63/10, ca. 1963, © Foundation Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, repro: © Anja Elisabeth Witte



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, 1959, photo: © Martin Matschinsky



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff in her apartment in Darmstadt, 1954, photo: © Martin Matschinsky



Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Untitled, 1947-1960, © Stiftung Matschinsky-Denninghoff, Berlinische Galerie, repro: © Anja Elisabeth Witte



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