



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

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 sketchbooks 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

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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.

296 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

Accompanying events and outreach 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

Press images

berlinischegalerie.de/en/press-release/brigitte-meier-denninghoff

Tickets

bg.berlin/en/tickets

Social media

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Admission 12€, concessions 7 €
Every 1st Wed of the month
7 € for everyone
Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm
Tue closed