



**Press Release: Matti Kujasalo - A Retrospective 1971 – 2017**

**Opening: 4pm on Saturday 3rd June 2017**

Exhibition dates: 4th June – 29th October 2017

Matti Kujasalo is one of Finland's leading artists. In his geometrical abstract paintings, he combines concrete art and constructivism with hard-edge painting influences. He executes his paintings according to precalculated rules based on various ways of dividing up square grids. He makes his paintings by hand, using a painstaking technique involving overlapping masking tape. Once the tape is removed, the multiple layers of paint give the works a physicality that ultimately shows them to be 'living' paintings rather than just impersonal systems.

Kujasalo, born in Helsinki in 1946, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki (1964-68), where later he taught (1977-88) and was its rector (1983-88). In the late 1960s he travelled intensively, visiting the United States and encountering for the first time the work of Ad Reinhardt and Josef Albers, who would have a greater impact on him than the emerging Op art. Kujasalo came to major prominence in the 1970s with his debut on the international art scene, exhibiting at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm (1974), Young Talent Festival in New York (1975), Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1977), eventually representing Finland at the Venice Biennale (1980). Matti Kujasalo is represented in the collections of art museums such as the Albertina in Vienna, the Arithmeum in Bonn, the Forum Konkrete Kunst Museum in Erfurt and the Josef Albers Museum in Bottrop, as well as in numerous private collections in Finland, Scandinavia, other European countries and the United States.

Matti Kujasalo's exhibition at GASK presents the entire span of his almost fifty-year career, from its beginnings influenced by geometrical Modernism to his more recent (and latest) works. As well as presenting a selection of his finest paintings, it also features several of his spatial objects. The works are on loan from the artist and also from public collections (such as Pori Art Museum and Galerie Hoffmann in Friedberg).

The exhibition is designed as an introduction to a major figure of Finnish art of the past decades, though also as a conscious contribution to the discourse on the diverse scope of

concrete art since the 1960s. In the Czech context, for example, we see the historical focal point of this trend in the Concretists' Club co-founded by Eduard Ovčáček, whose solo exhibition is being held at GASK parallel to that of Matti Kujasalo. We can also, however, trace the work of key individual figures of this trend on the Czech scene such as Jan Kubíček, Zdeněk Sýkora and Vladislav Mirvald.

In connection with this, it is important to mention that, as part of Kujasalo's exhibition, we are planning a colloquium devoted to Jan Sekera, sometime director of the Benedikt Rejt Gallery in Louny and the Czech Museum of Fine Arts in Prague, and a leading theorist in the field of constructivist trends in the Czech and international context. The colloquium will be staged at GASK on the 26th October and is aimed at drawing attention to an artistic phenomenon that has been unjustly overlooked in recent years.

Exhibition curators: Petr Řehoř, Richard Drury (GASK)

The exhibition is taking place under the patronage of Daniel Herman, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, and H. E. Helena Tuuri, Ambassador of Finland in the Czech Republic.

The exhibition is being held as part of 'Finland 100', celebrating the centenary of Finland's independence.

GASK – Galerie Středočeského kraje, p. o.

Barborská 51 – 53, Kutná Hora

[www.gask.cz](http://www.gask.cz)

**Gallery hours:**

Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 6pm

**Tickets:**

adults CZK 80, families CZK 120, senior/handicapped/students (26 and under) 50% discount

**All exhibitions:**

adults CZK 200, families CZK 260, senior/handicapped/students (26 and under) 50% discount

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