

GOTTFRIED BECHTOLD

3 bis 2 D

Opening: March 19, 2025, 7pm

Duration: March 20 – May 16, 2025

With his fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Krinzinger in Vienna, *3 bis 2 D* (3 to 2 D), Gottfried Bechtold pays homage to the genealogy of his renowned Porsche works. The Porsche as a subject began making an appearance in his oeuvre over 50 years ago when Bechtold presented his first *Betonporsche* (concrete Porsche) at the Galerie Krinzinger in Bregenz in 1971. The sports car is an exact cast of his own 911 model. Since then, the Porsche has become a recurring motif in the artist's work.

A series of photographs from 1971 documents the working process at the time, where casting molds were taken directly from the original to create an object — a Porsche made of concrete. A recurring phenomenon in Bechtold's creation of art is the aestheticization of everyday objects — in this case the automobile.

The artist's ongoing engagement with the automobile is closely linked to his fascination with its inherent paradox: Invented to enhance mobility and the efficiency of transportation, today the car represents the chaos that results in accidents, traffic jams, and ecological problems. Bechtold addresses this ambiguity in his sculptural works, such as *crashporsche* (2001) — a heavily demolished vehicle.

The Porsche brand especially is seen as the epitome of lightness, speed and dynamism—qualities that Bechtold subverts with his concrete sculptures, turning them into their opposites: heaviness, lethargy and immobility. This tension between speed brought to a halt and form preserved for eternity is further heightened in his Porsche works wrapped in protective covers.

Simultaneously, Bechtold explores the principles of sculpture. In the concrete group *Rebirth* (1996), the creative process itself is addressed, as the vehicles are still partially connected to their casting molds—a reference to the artistic process of creation. The choice of materials also reflects this interplay. In addition to concrete, Bechtold uses plaster, porcelain, or bronze, exploring the relationship between materiality, form, and their effect.

With the *Panamera sculpture* (2009–2012), his last major Porsche project, Bechtold questions the classical characteristics of sculpture as a site-specific, immovable object. A small bronze cast, *Untitled (Panamera)* (2013), in the exhibition, shows a prototype of the car. With this project, Bechtold created a hybrid artifact between sculpture and functional object—a vehicle with sculptural applications, or a sculpture powered by up to 500 HP. Furthermore, Bechtold explores the theme of video-assisted operation in modern automobiles, deliberately casting the sculpture's significant visible parts of the sculpture in bronze, a classic sculptor's material.

In a recent series of small-format paintings from 2020/2021, Bechtold turns from three-dimensional work to two-dimensional. His passion for painting only developed later in his artistic career and is influenced by his fascination for colors. He was particularly interested in painting animals. This enthusiasm he translates by combining animal portraits with expressive color compositions in a conceptual way. This results in pairs of

images that allow for both animal depictions and abstract works, through exactly the same shades and amount of paint. With his double-images, Bechtold addresses the parallels between animals and humans, encouraging viewers to reflect on the ambiguity of the depictions.

Gottfried Bechtold, born in Bregenz in 1947, lives and works in Hörbranz, Vorarlberg in Austria. In his work, Bechtold deals with the expansion of art as a concept, especially in the form of sculpture. Bechtold initially experimented with different media such as photography, film and video, influenced by the art of post-minimalism, Land Art and conceptual art. In the exploratory and experimental character of his works, the question of the sculptural form in regard to its real time and space is essential. At the same time, his concern lies with isolating his artistic endeavor not solely as a model of thinking, but in order to make it as understandable as possible for a diverse audience. Thus he continuously strives for reciprocity with reality, people, everyday processes, universal physical laws and the crucial factors of his work; time and space. That manifests in his actions, sculptures, films, objects and textual works by assigning the receptive lead to the observer.

Gottfried Bechtold completed an apprenticeship as a stonemason and spent a considerable amount of time in Great Britain, the USA and Canada. In 1973/74 he was a Visiting Artist at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Canada and later Visiting Professor at the Cornell University in Ithaca, USA and the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz, Austria.

Important solo exhibitions have taken place at the Neue Galerie Graz Joanneum (1993), the Kunsthalle Wien (1996), the Kunsthaus Bregenz (2003, 2006), the Lentos Kunstmuseum in Linz (2016), the Neuer Kunstverein Wien (2022) and Magazin 4, in Bregenz (2022), among others. In 2023, the sculpture "Mitten durchs Herz" was installed at its new exhibition location, in front of the Zwentendorf nuclear power plant. The collaboration between Galerie Krinzinger and the artist goes back to the 1970s, when Bechtold exhibited several times in the gallery's rooms in Bregenz, Innsbruck and Vienna.