



**MILANO**  
**GALLERIA 10 A.M. ART**  
**FROM 2 MARCH TO 28 APRIL 2023**  
**“REDISCOVERING HELGA PHILIPP. OP ART IN AUSTRIA”**  
**Curated by Paolo Bolpagni**

From 2 March to 28 April 2023, the 10 A.M. ART gallery at Corso San Gottardo 5 in Milan, is staging a retrospective exhibition curated by Paolo Bolpagni dedicated to great Viennese artist Helga Philipp (1939-2002). A protagonist of Op Art and the abstract-concrete neo-avant-gardes in Europe, Philipp created output of the highest quality and intelligence. This exhibition is a veritable, dutiful and perhaps even surprising discovery for Italy. According to the curator’s introductory text:

*This extraordinary painter played a pivotal role on the Austrian art scene from the 1960s, one that extended to other European countries, even if she remained virtually unknown on the Italian side of the Alps. It is as if some kind of dividing line were drawn across the “New Tendency” sphere, radiating outwards from the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti in Zagreb, uniting artists from the entire continent, gathering together ties and collectives of “kineticists” active in many countries: on one hand, Italians and French (Gruppo N, Gruppo T, Gruppo 63, GRAV etc.), often interrelating; on the other, numerous experiences in the Austro-German world, in some of which Helga Philipp was an exponent or protagonist. Certainly, the language barrier had an impact, but perhaps more subtly, what differed was the underlying approach, determined in part by differing historical roots. Italy experienced a second wave of Futurism and Milan/Como Abstractionism in the 1930s; France, Abstraction-Création and the concretists, whereas in Germany the legacy of the Bauhaus and later the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm had an impact, as in Austria did the great early twentieth-century teachings of geometrical linearism at the Wiener Werkstätte, followed by key figures like Franz Cižek. Helga Philipp thus continued from illustrious precedents. If certain outcomes of her art do not appear so distant – to cite a couple of examples – from Alberto Biasi’s or Dadamaino’s, moreover dating back to the same years, one may perceive in her work a more “Constructivist” spirit so to speak, with a particularly Viennese “applicative” focus (not forgetting her youthful education at the Akademie für angewandte Kunst). Naturally, she had an essential interest in analyzing perceptual mechanisms, approached by stimulating distortions, reversibility, modularity and interference-related effects. She experimented in paintings, kinetic objects, and silkscreen works, progressing to the classic technique of graphite drawings on paper or cardboard deployed for spatial cadencing and severe “negative-positive” effect, going so far as to cancel out the assumptions of traditional compositional syntax by deactivating one of its essential elements: the distinction between figure and background. Around this time, Helga Philipp worked on the ambiguity between fullness and emptiness, using geometric shapes embedded in one another to prompt reflections on the relativity of perception. It was the observer who, noting the works’ optical instability, to the extent they desired, established a mode of interpretation – even of directionality – with them. In 1963, with apodictic dryness and eschewing capital letters, the artist proclaimed “existence of the image through the viewer. existence of the viewer through the image. movement in space in the image. movement in space and of the viewer through the image. movement of the image through the viewer and space. change of the image through the change of light. change of the image through the change of the viewer.” Those words remained valid throughout Helga Philipp’s entire limpid, consequential artistic career. Her presuppositions never changed; what did change was the medium, progressively evolving without prejudice to her analytical aptitude and experimental curiosity, from her 1960s Objekt to her Grafik and Druckgrafik centred on curved lines and circular modules, right through to her large oils on canvas –*

*monochromes, or calibrated on non-colours and grey tones – and on into the final phase of her career when, once again, the title of the work (often Malerei, painting) significantly coincided with the technique.*

*Without ever being a pure researcher, without projecting herself into speculations divorced from reality, in her return to degree zero of the visual lexicon, Helga Philipp explored mankind's modes of ocular perception and brain functioning systems. All the while, she retained her loving care for the various materials she used, derived from studying the applied arts, and the complicit gaze of the teacher; teaching was, for her, not a parallel and collateral activity, it was a way of being and understanding her task as a visuality worker.*

*This wide selection of Helga Philipp's works – from the 1960s to the 1990s – offers an Italian audience the chance to discover a woman who tirelessly promoted exchange, relationships and dialogue. Bringing back to life an extremely lively period, the exhibition enables us to become acquainted with an undoubted protagonist on the European scene during the latter half of the 20th century.*

### **“REDISCOVERING HELGA PHILIPP. OP ART IN AUSTRIA”**

**Milan, Galleria 10 A.M. ART (Corso San Gottardo, 5)  
2 March - 28 April 2023**

**Opening: Thursday 2 March 2023 at 5 p.m.**

**Opening hours: from Tuesday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and from 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
On other days by appointment only**

**Free entry**

**Information: tel. + 39 02.92889164; [info@10amart.it](mailto:info@10amart.it); [www.10amart.it](http://www.10amart.it)**