

AUREL SCHEIBLER

Ernst Wilhelm Nay

Art Basel | Basel

Feature | Hall 2.0 booth C7

15 – 18 June 2017



Meteor, 1964
Oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm



Augen, 1963
Oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm

At Art Basel Feature 2017 Aurel Scheibler devotes his booth to the *Eye Paintings (Augenbilder)* by the German artist Ernst Wilhelm Nay (1902–1968). They date back to a short but pivotal period in his oeuvre of the years 1963 - 1964.

Nay painted this group of works at a high point of his career before his timely death in 1968. In 1964, at his third and last participation at documenta in Kassel, a group of six of his *Eye Paintings* was exhibited, furthermore an installation called *Three Pictures in Space (Drei Bilder im Raum)*. Three monumental 4 x 4 m paintings were shown hanging from the ceiling in order to create a new experience for the viewer to be participant of a universal existence of art and human consciousness. This installation – unusual at the time – kindled a torrid debate among critics.

The *Eye Paintings* denote a culmination in Nay's oeuvre. The motif of the eye takes up a primal theme that pervades his work from the very beginning. It combines 'looking' and 'being looked at' and, as an archetypal symbol, signifies magical and spellbinding powers and furthermore symbolizes light and spirituality.

In the mid-1960s the international public was experiencing grave disturbances and political upheavals, very much like today. These and first signs of a technical and scientific revolution as well as the progressive conquest of space were altering society's beliefs and conceptions. Aware of these developments Nay reflected on them in his *Eye Paintings*. The intense solemnness inherent in these works is still disturbing and yet uplifting today. It marks a high point of an art in which body, mind and the horizon of experience are brought into a sublime harmony.

The publication NAY 1964 focusing on this group of works, with an essay by John-Paul Stonard as well as selected statements from the artist's scripts, was published by Aurel Scheibler, Berlin and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne in 2016. ISBN 978-3-86335-967-6

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