

Landmark Exhibitions Issue**Unconcealment****Lynda Morris**

'Unconcealment' is the English translation of *Entborgenheit*, a term used by Martin Heidegger. He wrote about art as a form of disclosing, of the artist's ability to come closer to meanings buried underneath the words appropriated by mythology, religions, empires, science and politics. He wrote about art as a means of 'enabling what is to be'.¹

'Unconcealment' can be applied on two different levels to Sophie Richard's research on conceptual art of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Firstly, it refers to the way in which conceptualism encouraged the analysis of structures and meanings. Conceptual artists took the formal language of documents and images, and turned them in upon themselves, in what I described at the time as 'self-referential ideas'.² Secondly, Richard has disclosed the network behind conceptual art during the first decade of the movement. The business of conceptual art, or more precisely the accrual of value, is discussed as one of the layers of meaning buried within the work.

Richard's Ph.D Thesis *International Network of Conceptual Artists: Dealer Galleries, Temporary Exhibitions and Museum Collections (Europe 1967–1977)*, was presented at Norwich School of Art and Design, an Associate College of Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, in September 2006.³ Sadly, Richard died seven weeks after giving birth to her daughter Lucie, in November 2007, before she had time to prepare her thesis for publication. For me, her death was a personal and professional tragedy. I was her supervisor for the four years of her research, and as a participant in some of the events of the conceptual network, I had handed over my knowledge of this period to her. This is how I came to edit her thesis and prepare it for publication.

Although Richard's first language was Luxembourgish, she worked with me in English on this thesis.⁴ She also spoke French, German and Flemish/Dutch. This enabled her to undertake documentary research in museums and archives across Europe. Her data centred on the triangle between the Rhineland cities of Düsseldorf and Cologne, Amsterdam, Brussels and Ghent. Ten of the cities prominent in early exhibitions of conceptual art are in this triangle. Cities rather than countries were key to the development of the conceptual network in the first decade.

The methodology that I handed on to Richard was to work initially, and at length, on primary documents of the period, especially art magazines, taking as much notice of the adverts as the editorials. She consulted my archives in Norwich regularly. She received a research grant from the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds and also worked at the Tate Archive, the Casino in Luxembourg and the Anton and Annick Herbert archive in Ghent. A grant from the Goethe Institute enabled her to consult archives in Germany, including that of Konrad Fischer, the key dealer of conceptual art. She also sought out existing recorded interviews with the leading figures. She defined the groups of artists, dealers and exhibitions for her study so that she could begin the construction of the databases, which are published in the appendices of her book *Unconcealed: The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967–1977: Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections*, published in 2009. Her data concentrates on public collections and those private collections that have been accessioned in recent years by museums. She chose not to collect data on sales to other private collections during this period. The data therefore focuses on the relationship between the artists, dealers and public collections. She was unable for financial reasons to continue her research in the US.



Fig.1

Konrad Fischer, Benjamin Buchloh and Anny de Decker at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels 1975
 Photograph © Jacques Charlier, courtesy Galerie Nadja Vilenne, Liège

Half of the artists in Richard's databases are from the US and half from Europe. Conceptual art was the first post-1945 art movement to treat American and European artists equally. We discussed the extent to which recent US books on conceptual art had altered this balance. Richard was at the conference for the Tate exhibition *Open Systems* in 2005 when I questioned Alexander Alberro about the omission of Seth Siegelaub's July/August 1970 issue of *Studio International* from his 2003 book *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*.⁵ Richard took up this argument on subsequent occasions and in the introduction and conclusion of her book. She grasped the bias in perspectives constructed twenty or thirty years after the events in recently published and academic histories. Richard was then equipped to interview the key figures of the movement. She transcribed her own interviews, remembering W.H. Auden's idea that you understand more by writing out texts rather than by reading or listening.

Richard devised the databases at an early stage of her research although she continued to add to them throughout. She requested access to accession files and information on purchases from museums and information in exhibition archives, persistently overcoming the reluctance of museums to release this information. As a result of EU Freedom of Information Legislation, The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and Tate, London, allowed her access to their accession files and the prices they paid for works. Other European museums gave information regarding the dealers from whom a work was purchased. The Stedelijk and Tate prices enable readers to estimate the prices being paid for other works. Richard's databases can be compared with the prices quoted by Willi and Linde Bongard's *Kunstkompass* chart of the top one hundred contemporary artists, some of which are reprinted in the appendices of her book.⁶

Prices have been kept in their original currencies in the databases because of the difficulty of establishing actual exchange rates on sales that often took public museums twelve or more months to complete in a period of economic turbulence. I have prepared an additional chart of the exchange rate fluctuations between the pound, the dollar and the deutschmark during the period 1967–77. Sterling floated between 1969 and 1971, bringing to an end the Bretton Woods System of pegged exchange rates. Currencies further fluctuated in the early 1970s with inflation. The instability increased with the escalation of the Vietnam War and the oil crisis resulting from OPEC price increases after two Arab-Israeli wars, terrorism and the riots of alienated youth. The pound was decimalised in 1969: 240 pence in a pound meant that each new penny was worth 2.4 old pence and was considered to have caused inflation and undermined the pound. In the late 1970s, an Exchange Rate Mechanism – the ERM – was introduced in Europe (table 1).⁷

	\$1 = DMarks	\$1 = £ decimal pence	£1 = DMarks
1967	4.01		11.22
1968	3.98		9.63
1969	3.66		8.83
1970	3.65		
1971	3.48	0.4166	8.35
1972	3.19	0.3846	8.29
1973	2.65	0.4348	6.09
1974	2.58	0.4545	5.68

1975	2.46	0.4348	5.65
1976	2.52	0.4166	6.04
1977	2.32	0.6250	3.71
1978	2.00		
1979	1.83		

Table 1

The £ floated between 1969 and 1971 bringing to an end the Bretton Woods System of pegged exchange rates. Currencies further fluctuated in the early 1970s with runaway inflation. The instability was increased because of financial pressure of the escalation of the Vietnam War and oil crisis resulting from steep OPEC price increases in the wake of two Arab Israeli wars. The pound was decimalised in 1969. With 240 old pence to the pound, each new penny was worth 2.4 old pence. This was further considered to have caused inflation and undermined the value of the pound.

In the late 1970s an Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) was introduced in Europe.

Figures from R.L. Bidwell, *Currency Conversion Tables: 100 Years of Change*

Richard chose not to illustrate her thesis, but I started to develop with her the idea of an exhibition to mark the eventual publication of the thesis. This exhibition was to bring together three artists whose work addressed the internal contradictions of radical conceptual art: [André Cadere](#), who colonised other people's exhibitions with his 'round bar of wood'; Ian Wilson, whose *Conversations* were a psychoanalysis of his audience; and Jacques Charlier. For Richard's book, I worked with Charlier to select forty of his 600-plus *Vernissage des Expositions* photographs from 1974–75, made for his exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, alongside On Kawara. Charlier's catalogue for his exhibition was of the photographs taken at its vernissage. It is an extraordinary photographic record of the heyday of the 'network of conceptual art'.

My introduction to Richard's book is based on an analysis of the databases that she created for her thesis. The use of databases is appropriate to a study of conceptualism, because the revelation of information through data was one of the ways in which conceptualism defined itself. Future users of Richard's databases will be able to consider the extent to which economic factors have influenced the direction of recent art that is usually viewed as aesthetically independent.

Conceptual art in the first decade was a true avant-garde. This period was marked by a corresponding emergence of a new generation of young dealers who developed innovative means of distribution, and they frequently worked as curators of exhibitions in public galleries and museums. An analysis of Richard's data suggests that there was a correlation between these exhibitions curated by dealers and the subsequent purchase of the artists' work by museums. The questions raised by Richard's data are for the public sector to analyse. Private-sector dealers of radical contemporary art are there to sell their artists' work, and there is no conflict in that. This was less of an ethical dilemma then, when the environment was less commercial.

The databases concentrate on fourteen dealer galleries. My introduction discusses the most dramatic story, that of Konrad Fischer. He started his career as an artist and then opened a space in Düsseldorf, selling to museums in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. In the mid to late 1960s, young Germans were on a mission to work with US artists. Germany was the front line of the Cold War and NATO was its protection. In an interview with Jorge Jappe, Fischer said: 'When I was an artist everything was so far away; Warhol, Lichtenstein and all those were great unattainable men. But when you know them, you can have a beer with them and get rid of your inferiority complex. I insist that the artist has to be there when I show his work, ... Palermo and Richter ... two of the German artists who have exhibited with me, have now been to New York, and they felt at home there because they had already met artists like Andre and LeWitt over here'.⁸

In a chart compiled to introduce the interview with Jappe, Fischer listed his record of 'firsts' (table 2). Fischer did not explain in the *Studio International* interview the relationship between his 'firsts' and his network. His strategy was to gain a small percentage from sales to galleries across Europe. This enabled him to have the time to co-curate museum shows to increase his artists' reputation. The best interests of his artists were served by enabling sales from galleries in different cities, from which he gained only a small commission. This also explains Fischer's ability to co-curate museum shows. He thought the job of the dealer was to do the work for museum curators in order to show his artists. This was more important than individual sales. Richard's research demonstrates that this business concept underpins the early success of conceptualism in Europe and was at the heart of its development in the first decade. What Richard's databases reveal is the increasingly central role economics plays in recent art history.

EXHIBITIONS AT KONRAD FISCHER GALLERY, DÜSSELDORF*First one-man shows:*

Darboven, Sandback, Long, Fulton, McLean, Gilbert & George Ruthenbeck

First European one-man shows:

Andre, Artschwager, LeWitt, Nauman, Ryman, Smithson, Weiner, Huebler, Wilson

First German one-man shows:

Dibbets, Rinke, Buren, Merz, Law Other exhibitions: Bechers, Palermo, Polke, Richter, Rückriem, Sladden, Panamarenko

One-man shows in museums arranged by Konrad Fischer:

Andre, Darboven (Museum Mönchengladbach); Long, Sandback, LeWitt, Dibbets (Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld); Palermo (Museum Wuppertal Studio)

*Collective exhibitions arranged by Konrad Fischer:**Prospect 68* and *Prospect 69*, Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf; Konzeption/Conception, Städtisches Museum, Leverkusen, October 1969

Table 2

I have made an additional list of the defining mixed exhibitions of conceptual art in both public galleries and museums and in dealer galleries (table 3). I have highlighted those exhibitions that were organised by what I have called ‘dealer curators’. It shows that more than fifty per cent of the defining exhibitions of conceptual art in public galleries, museums and dealer galleries were organised by ‘dealer curators’. Half of that fifty per cent were organised by Fischer. This reinforces the correlation between a dealer curating exhibitions and sales made to public collections.

DEFINING GROUP EXHIBITIONS OF CONCEPTUAL ART IN EUROPE, 1967–77 (AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS BEYOND EUROPE THAT INCLUDE EUROPEAN ARTISTS)

YEAR	TITLE	LOCATION	CURATOR(S)
1966	<i>Primary Structures</i>	Jewish Museum, New York	Kynaston McShine
1967	<i>Serielle Formationen</i>	Studio Gallery Frankfurt am Main	Paul Maenz, Peter Roehr
1967	<i>Dies alles Herzchen wird einmal dir gehören, 19.45–21:55</i>	Galerie Dorothea Loehr Frankfurt	Paul Maenz
1967	First Kunstmarkt	Kunsthalle and Kunstverein, Cologne every year to 1974 then Messe	initiated by Hein Stünke, Rudolf Zwirner
1967	<i>Arte Povera – Im Spazio</i>	Galeria La Beresca, Genoa	Germano Celant
1968	<i>documenta 4</i>	Kassel	Director: Arnold Bode; Curator (Painting): Jan Leering
1968	<i>Minimal Art</i>	Gemeentemuseum, The Hague	Enno Develing, John Weber
1968	<i>Prospect 68</i>	Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf	Konrad Fischer, Hans Strelow
1969	<i>Number 7</i>	Paula Cooper Gallery, New York	Lucy R. Lippard
1969	<i>Earth Art</i>	Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University Ithaca	Willoughby Sharp
1969	<i>Ecologic Art</i>	John Gibson Gallery, New York	John Gibson

1969	<i>One Month</i>	Publication/calendar	Seth Siegelaub
1969	<i>Op Losse Schroeven</i>	Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam	Wim Beeren Also shown at Folkwang Museum, Essen (under the title <i>Verborgene Structuren</i>)
1969	<i>When Attitudes Become Form</i>	Kunsthalle Bern; Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London	Harald Szeeman, Paul Wember (Krefeld), Charles Harrison(London)
1969	<i>Place and Process</i>	The Edmonton Art Gallery, Alberta	Wiloughby Sharp, Evander Schley
1969	<i>Art by Telephone</i>	Museum Contemporary Art, Chicago	Jan van der Marck
1969	<i>A 379089</i>	Antwerp Institute	Founded by: Geert Bekaert, James Lee Byers, Marcel Broodthaers, Jef Cornelis, Herman Daled, Anny De Decker, Isi Fizman, Bernd Lohaus, Hubert Peeters; Artistic Co-ordinator: Kasper König
1969	<i>July–August–September 1969</i>	Exhibition took place simultaneously at eleven locations around the world	Seth Siegelaub
1969	557,087	Seattle Art Musuem; Also shown at Vancouver Art Gallery (under the title <i>955,000</i>) and Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos aires (as <i>3,549,000</i>)	Lucy R. Lippard
1969	<i>Prospect 69</i>	Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf	Konrad Fischer, Hans Strelow
1969	Land Art	Films broadcast on SFB, 15 April 1969, in Germany	Gerry Schum
1969	<i>Konzeption/Conception</i> Städtisches Museum, Leverkausen	Konrad Fischer, Rolf Wedewer	
1969	<i>Plane und Projekte als Kunst</i>	Kunsthalle, Bern	Felix Zdenek; Concept: Harald Szeeman
1970	<i>Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects</i>	New York Cultural Center	Donald Karshan
1970	<i>18 Paris IV.70</i>	rue Mouffetard, Paris	Michel Claura
1970	<i>Conceptual Art, Arte povera, Land art</i>	Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin	Germano Celant
1970	First Basel Art Fair		
1970	<i>projectsproposalsvision</i>	Midland Group, Nottingham	Tim Threlfall

1970	<i>Studio International</i> , July/August, vol.180 no.924	London. Also published as a book.	David Antin, Germano Celant, Michel Claura, Charles Harrison, Lucy R. Lippard, Seth Siegelaub, Hans Strelow
1970	<i>Idea Structures: Survey '70</i>	Camden Arts Centre, London	Charles Harrison
1970	<i>Information</i>	Museum of Modern Art, New York	Kynaston McShine
1970	<i>Wall Show</i>	Lisson Gallery, London	Nicholas Logsdail
1971	<i>Formulation</i>	Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover	Konrad Fischer, Gian Enzo Sperone
1971	<i>6th Guggenheim International Exhibition 1971</i>	Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York	Diane Waldman
1971	<i>Das Konzept ist die Form</i>	Westfälischen Kunstverein, Münster	Klaus Honnef, Paul Maenz, Konrad Fischer
1971	<i>Sonsbeek 71</i>	Sonsbeek Park, Arnhem	Wim Beerens (Chair) Geert van Beijeren
1971	<i>Prospect 71: Projection</i>	Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf	Konrad Fischer, Hans Strelow
1971	<i>In Another Moment</i>	Gallery SKG, Belgrade	Braco and Nena Dimitrijevic
1971	Kölner Kunstmarkt	Kunsthalle and Kunstverein, Cologne	
1971	IKI/Internationale Kunst- und Informationsmesse	Belgisches Haus und Volkshochschule, Cologne	
1971	<i>Roadshow XI</i>	Bienal de São Paulo	John Dunbar
1971	<i>Actualite d'un Bilan</i>	Yvon Lambert, Paris	Michel Claura , Yvon Lambert
1972	<i>'Konzept' – Kunst</i>	Kunstmuseum, Basel	Konrad Fischer
1972	<i>De Europa</i>	John Weber Gallery, New York	Konrad Fischer, Gian Enzo Sperone
1972	36th Biennale di Venezia	Esposizione Internazionale d'Art, Venice	
1972</	<i>documenta 5</i>	Museum Fridericianum, Kassel	General Secretary Harald Szeeman
1972	<i>Conceptual Art 'Idee+ Idee/Licht</i>		Konrad Fischer Klaus Honnef
1972	<i>The New Art</i> Hayward Gallery, London	Ann Seymore; Assistant Nicholas Serota	
1972	<i>Book as Artwork 1960–1972</i>	Nigel Greenwood Inc, London	Germano Celant, Lynda Morris

1973	<i>Deurle 11/7/73</i>	Museum Dhont-Dhaenens, Deurle, Brussels	Anny De Decker, Paul Maenz, Fernand Spillemaeckers
1973	<i>Contemporanea</i> Parking of the Villa Borghese, Rome	Achille Bonito Oliva	
1973	<i>Prospect 73, Malers, Painters, Peintres</i>	Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf	Konrad Fischer, Hans Strelow
1973	<i>16 Place Vendôme</i>	private apartment, Paris. Also shown at Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach; Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld and Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (ICC), Antwerp	Michel Claura, René Denizot
1974	various exhibitions 1973–4	Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels	Yves Gevaert
1974	<i>Project 74, Kunst bleibt Kunst</i>	Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Kunsthalle, Cologne	Paul Maenz
1976	<i>Prospect/Retrospect Europa 1946–1976</i>	Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf	Konrad Fischer, Hans Strelow
1977	<i>Skulptur Ausstellung in Münster</i>	Citywide, Münster	Klaus Bussmann, Kasper König
1977	<i>documenta 6</i>	Museum Fridericianum Kassel	Manfred Schneckenburger

Table 3

Dealer curator exhibitions are shown in blue.

Those curated by Konrad Fischer are shown in red.

I discussed with Richard an example, from my own experience, of Fischer's central, but concealed role. I worked at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London as the touring exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, organised by Harald Szeemann, was installed there in 1969.⁹ It was the experience of working with artists rather than objects that I have sought to pass onto future generations with the *EASTinternational* exhibitions in Norwich. Many of the artists in *When Attitudes Become Form* had been in Fischer's *Prospect 68* in Düsseldorf. A letter to Fischer from Charles Harrison, the curator of the ICA showing, thanks him for his assistance in the preparation of *When Attitudes Become Form* for the ICA and asks for instructions on how to install the work of a number of artists.¹⁰ Szeemann was busy organising *Happenings and Fluxus* for the Kunsthalle and Kunstverein in Cologne and he only arrived in London in time to make the opening speech. Harrison was also busy, teaching at St Martins and working at *Studio International* during the installation. The person who had his coat off, rolled up his sleeves and worked with the artists and the installation teams until Harrison arrived in the afternoon was Fischer.

Hans Strelow defended Fischer's role as a dealer-curator. Together, they curated the Düsseldorf series of *Prospect* exhibitions in 1968, 1969, 1971, 1973 and 1976. In an interview with Brigitte Kölle, Strelow said: 'We had 20,000 marks at our disposal for the first exhibition ... Konrad and I prepared the show for months, without being paid a fee ... Konrad and I compiled a list of artists we thought should take part in the exhibition and then sent the list to the jury ... We organised the exhibition in a public institution and we felt obliged to objectivity. Therefore, commerce played no part whatsoever'.¹¹

In spring 1969, Fischer went to New York to prepare the *Prospect 69* exhibition for the Kunsthalle and Kunstverein in Düsseldorf. He made a good impression. A letter dated 7 May 1969, quoted by Richard, from Marilyn Fischbach to Fischer concerning Robert Ryman suggests: 'You could be the central European gallery connection ... and you could distribute the work in Europe ... The commission could be 25 per cent to you, which leaves little to us, actually only 15 per cent'.¹² However, an agreement was not reached. In the autumn, Ryman had exhibitions with the European dealers Heiner Friedrich, Françoise Lambert, Yvon Lambert, Franz Dalem and Gian Enzo Sperone. This shows the development of a network for US artists across Europe, linked

to Düsseldorf. Richard's databases show fewer sales for Ryman than for [LeWitt](#) and [Nauman](#): their prices averaged \$3–4,000, while Ryman's averaged \$15–16,000. The Italian collector Giuseppe Panza bought seventeen works by Ryman between 1971 and 1974, probably spending well over \$250,000 at early 1970s prices.

Fischer's influence in the US can also be illustrated by another example. In November 1969, the curator Diane Waldman wrote to Fischer that she was planning a research trip to see younger German artists for a Guggenheim exhibition in New York. Waldman lists [Joseph Beuys](#), Reiner Ruthenbeck, [Bernd and Hilla Becher](#), [Jörg Immendorff](#), [Klaus Rinke](#), [Gerhard Richter](#) and [Sigmar Polke](#). Her *Guggenheim International* opened in February 1971 and included eleven of the artists on Fischer's *Studio International* list of 'Firsts'. None of the artists on her original list survived her consultation with Fischer.

An important exhibition curated by Fischer, with Klaus Honnef, was section 17 of *documenta 5*, *Idee+Idee/Licht* of 1972. It was a small section of the show, but as Honnef discussed with Richard in an interview in 2005:

My feeling was that I could still learn a few things and I opted to work with Fischer ... It was a very intense collaboration. I worked very intensively with him on exhibitions in Münster, and he cooperated with me very closely on the book [*Concept Art*, London, 1971] ... For Harald Szeemann it wasn't his favourite section ... he thought it was a bit too cerebral ... Of course the specialists, the insiders, thought that our section – that big room with the Circle by Richard Long in the middle, and Darboven and Sol LeWitt opposite, and also Agnes Martin – was the Cathedral of *documenta*, along with Richard Serra, who was in the next room ... Fischer was very meticulous about the budget. We only had a little B&B on the outskirts.

Johannes Cladders discussed the issues around the dealer-curator with Brigitte Kölle:

BK: Wasn't it a bit disreputable that Konrad, as a gallery owner, conceived a section of the *documenta* and also displayed artists from his own gallery?

JC: Konrad was appointed a chaperone, Klaus Honnef ... [laughs] I'm not aware that anyone objected ... Of course he was interested in selling ... But selling was not his main intention.¹³

Richard's meticulous research shows us that because he was a dealer, Fischer's role has been concealed behind 'the objectivity of curators' like Szeemann, Honnef and Cladders.

I have also made a comparative chart from Richard's data on dealer sales to museums between 1967 and 1980 (table 4). This shows, at least from the data available to Richard, that Fischer controlled a quarter of all sales to public collections of conceptualism in Europe in the first decade. However, I would argue that Fischer was building on the model of [Marcel Duchamp](#)'s role as an artist/dealer/curator.

SUMMARY DATA ON DEALER SALES

giving numerical and percentage totals

DEALER	ARTIST	SALE	TOTAL SALES	MARKET SHARE %
ACE	Bruce Nauman	2	2	0.57
AFA	Carl Andre Douglas Huebler	4 0.5	4.5	1.29
Art & Project	Hanne Darboven Jan Dibbets	3 15	29	8.29

	Gilbert & George	2.5		
	Joseph Kosuth	0.5		
	Sol LeWitt	5		
	Richard Long	1		
	Mario Merz	1		
	Lawrence Weiner	1		
Artist Direct Sales	Carl Andre	3	34	9.71
	Marcel Broodthaers	2.5		
	Daniel Buren	3		
	Hanne Darboven	2		
	Jan Dibbets	3		
	Douglas Huebler	1		
	Sol LeWitt	7		
	Richard Long	8		
	Bruce Nauman	2		
	Robert Ryman	0.5		
	Lawrence Weiner	2		
Artist Gift	Marcel Broodthaers	3	33	9.43
	Hanne Darboven	8		
	Gilbert & George	12		
	Sol LeWitt	12		
Richard Bellamy	Bruce Nauman	3	3	0.86
Galerie Bernier	Mario Merz	1	1	0.28
Bruno Bischofberger	Bruce Nauman	1	1	0.28
René Bloch	Carl Andre	1	1	0.28
Galerie Borgmann	Marcel Broodthaers	1	1	0.28
Galerie Isy Brachot	Marcel Broodthaers	1	1	0.28
Eugnie Butler	Bruce Nauman	1	1	0.28
Leo Castelli	Jan Dibbets	1	18	5.13
	Douglas Huebler	0.5		
	Joseph Kosuth	0.5		
	Bruce Nauman	15		
	Lawrence Weiner	1		
Castelli/Sonnabend Tapes & Films Inc.	Bruce Nauman	6	7	2.00
	Lawrence Weiner	1		
Galerie Durand- Desert	Hanne Darboven	1	1	>0.28
Konrad Fischer	Carl Andre	16	95.5	27.23
	Hanne Darboven	7		
	Jan Dibbets	6		
	Gilbert & George	1		

	Douglas Huebler Sol LeWitt Richard Long Mario Merz Bruce Nauman Robert Ryman Lawrence Weiner	2 17 11 2 22 8.5 3		
Heiner Friedrich	Carl Andre Marcel Broodthaers Bruce Nauman Robert Ryman	3 3 3 2 2	11	3.14
Nigel Greenwood	Marcel Broodthaers Gilbert & George Joseph Kosuth	1 4 0.5 0	5.5	1.57
Galerie Felix Handschin	Marcel Broodthaers Mario Merz	1 1 0	2	0.57
Françoise Lambert	Richard Long Robert Ryman	1 1	2	0.57
Yvon Lambert	Jan Dibbets Robert Ryman Lawrence Weiner	1 3 3	7	2.00
Lisson Gallery	Sol LeWitt Richard Long	2 4	6	1.71
Paul Maenz	Joseph Kosuth	2	2	0.57
MTL	Joseph Kosuth	0.5	0.5	0.14
Rolf Preisig	Jan Dibbets Douglas Huebler Sol LeWitt Robert Ryman Lawrence Weiner	1 1 1 1 1	5	1.43
Public Galleries: Kunstmuseum Bern/ Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach/ Kunstmuseum Basel MoMA Oxford	Richard Long Marcel Broodthaers	1 2 1 2	6	1.71
Rolf Ricke	Bruce Nauman	2	2	0.57
Alfred Schmela	Carl Andre	4	4	1.14
Videogalerie Schum/ Projektion Ursula Wevers	Gilbert & George Mario Merz	0.5 1	1.5	0.43

Galerie Seriaal	Marcel Broodthaers Daniel Buren	1 1	2	0.57
Ileana Sonnabend	Gilbert & George Mario Merz Bruce Nauman	1 1 5	7	2.00
Sotheby's	Bruce Nauman	1	1	0.28
Gian Enzo Sperone	Carl Andre Jan Dibbets Douglas Huebler Joseph Kosuth Richard Long Bruce Nauman Robert Ryman Lawrence Weiner	2 3 2 1 3 1 3 2	17	4.86
Sperone-Westwater-Fischer	Carl Andre	4	4	1.14
Galerie Stampa	Marcel Broodthaers	1	1	0.28
Michael Werner	Marcel Broodthaers	1	1	0.28
John Weber	Carl Andre Jan Dibbets Sol LeWitt Richard Long Robert Ryman	7 1 1 2 7	18	5.14
Wide White Space	Carl Andre Marcel Broodthaers Daniel Buren	3 2.5 3	8.5	2.43
Rudolf Zwirner	Hanne Darboven Sol LeWitt	2 1	3	0.86

Table 4

Note: This data is based only on the number of sales to public museum collections and not on the value of those sales. Other sales in this period to private collections and museums outside Europe are not included.

An exchange of letters between Fischer and Sol LeWitt in November 1967, reproduced in the first chapter of Richard's book, reveals the percentage arrangements not only between artist and dealer but also to other dealers across various European cities. The US artists were passed around the European galleries in a franchise arrangement. On 22 November 1967 Fischer writes [with curious mathematics]: 'The Percentage: 50 per cent for the artist, 50 per cent for the gallery, 30 per cent for the other gallery and 50 per cent for you ... when the show is taken to another place. I think there should be 20 per cent for my gallery'.¹⁴ However, this only applied to the works shown by Konrad Fischer.

In Brigitte Kölle's book *Okey Dokey Konrad Fischer*, Bruce Nauman discusses the relationship between American and European galleries: 'Carl [Andre] and Sol [LeWitt] both had shows in the States but nobody bought anything. They were much more accepted in Europe ... Konrad still sold more work in Europe than was sold in the US. Prices were very low. I think the fact my dealers – Dick Bellamy and Leo Castelli – had my work in New York gave me a lot of credibility.'¹⁵

There are differences between US and European perceptions of the development of conceptual art, influenced by diverging cultural agendas. There are also significant differences in the order in which work was seen on either side of the Atlantic between 1968 and 1973. Anti-American demonstrations at the Venice Biennale and *documenta* in 1968 asked: ‘What else remains for the artists of a nation which wages such a criminal war as that in Vietnam but to produce minimal art?’ Europe continued to show American minimal sculpture, especially those sculptors whose critical and theoretical writings blended into radical language-based and documentary photographic and video conceptualism. Minimal painting was not shown a great deal in Europe until after 1973.¹⁶ The American understanding of the development of formalist minimalism into conceptualism was therefore different to the European understanding of a combination of Fluxus and Pop developing into a theoretical, political conceptualism.

When *Prospect 73*, subtitled *Malers Painters Peintres*, opened in Düsseldorf in 1973, it shocked those of us who had thought of Prospect as an idealistic and progressive force for radical conceptualism. A survey of painting over the previous fifteen years, it included the European premiere of Emile de Antonio’s film *Painters Painting, The New York Art Scene 1940–1970* (1972), which reinforced the idea of a continuous development from American abstraction to Pop to minimalism.¹⁷ This was the first time I heard the term ‘conceptual painting’ used. *Prospect 73* focused attention not only on Robert Ryman, [Brice Marden](#), Dorothea Rockburne and [Agnes Martin](#), but also on the painters with whom Fischer had studied at the Düsseldorf Akademie in the early 1960s: Gerhard Richter with his new minimalist colour-chart paintings and Sigmar Polke with his large-scale montage paintings.

The prices quoted in Richard’s databases give us this clear example of commercial interests controlling the direction of contemporary art. It could be argued that Fischer had developed radical conceptual art in Europe with *Prospect* in 1968, 1969 and 1971, but had then betrayed it with a return to minimal painting in 1973. In mitigation, Fischer appears to have used the profits from the sales of works by US minimalist painters to develop the careers of his European artists.¹⁸

I worked for Nigel Greenwood from July 1971 to May 1974 and I saw Fischer frequently in London and at art fairs and openings across Europe and New York throughout the 1970s. I met him again in 1993, when he came to Norwich to select the third *east* exhibition for me. This gave me the opportunity to ask him about the difference between my memories of conceptualism and recent published accounts. As a result of those conversations, I began to trust my memories. However, I knew that my knowledge of Fischer’s role would not be accepted as an objective record. The years spent working with research students like Moseley and Richard since Fischer’s death in 1996 have meant that my account has been thoroughly examined and verified by the facts; ‘unconcealed’ by a new generation of art historians in archives, documents and interviews.

I will finish by summarising the points I have made as a result of my analysis of Richard’s databases. There is a correlation between a dealer curating mixed exhibitions in public spaces and their sales to public collections in the period between 1967 and 1977 shown by a comparison of the two aggregate databases created for my introduction. This suggests museums thought as much about the dealer they were buying from, as the work they were acquiring. Museums believed artists made their best work for dealers who also curated exhibitions for public spaces. Richard has collected significant evidence that ‘dealer curators’ represented the private galleries that museums acquired the most works from in the period 1967 to 1977.

The early success of conceptual art was based on the co-ordination of European tours for US artists. Galleries shared expenses and also in some cases shared the commission on sales. This idea appears to have been developed by Konrad Fischer in Düsseldorf with Heiner Friedrich in Munich and John Weber at Dwan Gallery in New York. The sales of work by US artists allowed European dealers to support the careers of less established European artists. European artists were included in mixed museum exhibitions of conceptual art co-curated by dealers. Dealers were able to arrange exhibitions for their less established European artists in the European network created for US artists. Finally, the funds European dealers acquired from sales of US artists to European museums enabled them to support the careers of younger European artists.

Sophie Richard’s unconcealing of the economic-critical history of conceptual art is a new step in the research of this important period. I am sure that Richard’s study will inspire future generations of curators and art historians and inform the development of professional standards in museums and public galleries, as they delve deeper into the history of conceptual art.

Notes

1. *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, London 1978.
2. For example in Lynda Morris, 'Douglas Huebler', *Studio International*, April 1973, p.198 and 'Art et Language Lynda Morris annotated by Art & Language', *Art Press*, March 1974.
3. Norwich School of Art and Design became Norwich University College of the Arts in 2009.
4. Prior to undertaking this thesis, Richard had completed an MPhil thesis, *Harald Szeemann et les expositions d'art contemporain* at L'Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne in 2000.
5. Richard also took part in the conference *New Research into Conceptualism in Europe* at the Norwich Gallery in February 2005.
6. For example, between 1972 and 1976 Richard Long rose from 74 to 41 in the *Kunstkompass*.
7. I remember that by 1976 a loaf of bread in Germany cost £3. In London it cost less than 50p.
8. *Studio International*, February 1971.
9. I had started work at the ICA in July 1969, after studying Fine Art at Canterbury College of Art, where I had attended two short courses run by Terry Atkinson of Art & Language.
10. Konrad Fischer Archive, Düsseldorf. Letter dated 22 July 1969.
11. *Okey Dokey Konrad Fischer*, ed. Brigitte Kölle, Cologne 2007. Richard met Kölle in Düsseldorf, but she died before Kölle's important book appeared in early 2008.
12. Konrad Fischer Archive, Düsseldorf.
13. Kölle 2007.
14. Konrad Fischer Archive, Düsseldorf.
15. Kölle 2007.
16. I organised the first two exhibitions of US minimalism in Britain: *Strata*, Royal College of Art, London, 14 January–1 February 1974 and the related small Agnes Martin exhibition at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 23 February–17 March 1974.
17. *Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene, 1940–1970* (dir. Emile de Antonio, 197, 116 min, USA). I actually carried the film in my luggage from New York to Prospect in Düsseldorf.
18. David Tremlett mentioned that when the Tate Gallery bought his Spring Recordings from Fischer in Düsseldorf, after it had been shown at *documenta 5*, the latter did not take his dealer percentage. Lynda Morris in conversation with David Tremlett, Autumn 2008.

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I am very grateful to Ridinghouse for its permission to allow this essay, which is closely based on my introduction to Sophie Richard's book, *Unconcealed: The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967–1977. Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections* (ed. Lynda Morris, London 2009), to be republished here. The text also formed the basis for the paper I gave at the conference *Landmark Exhibitions: Contemporary Art Shows Since 1968*, a collaboration between Tate Modern and Jan van Eyck Academie with the Royal College of Art and The London Consortium, in October 2008. Other papers relating to the conference can be found in [issue 12](#) of *Tate Papers*.

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