

Born in Rathenow/Mark Brandenburg, 1944.
Now living in Berlin.

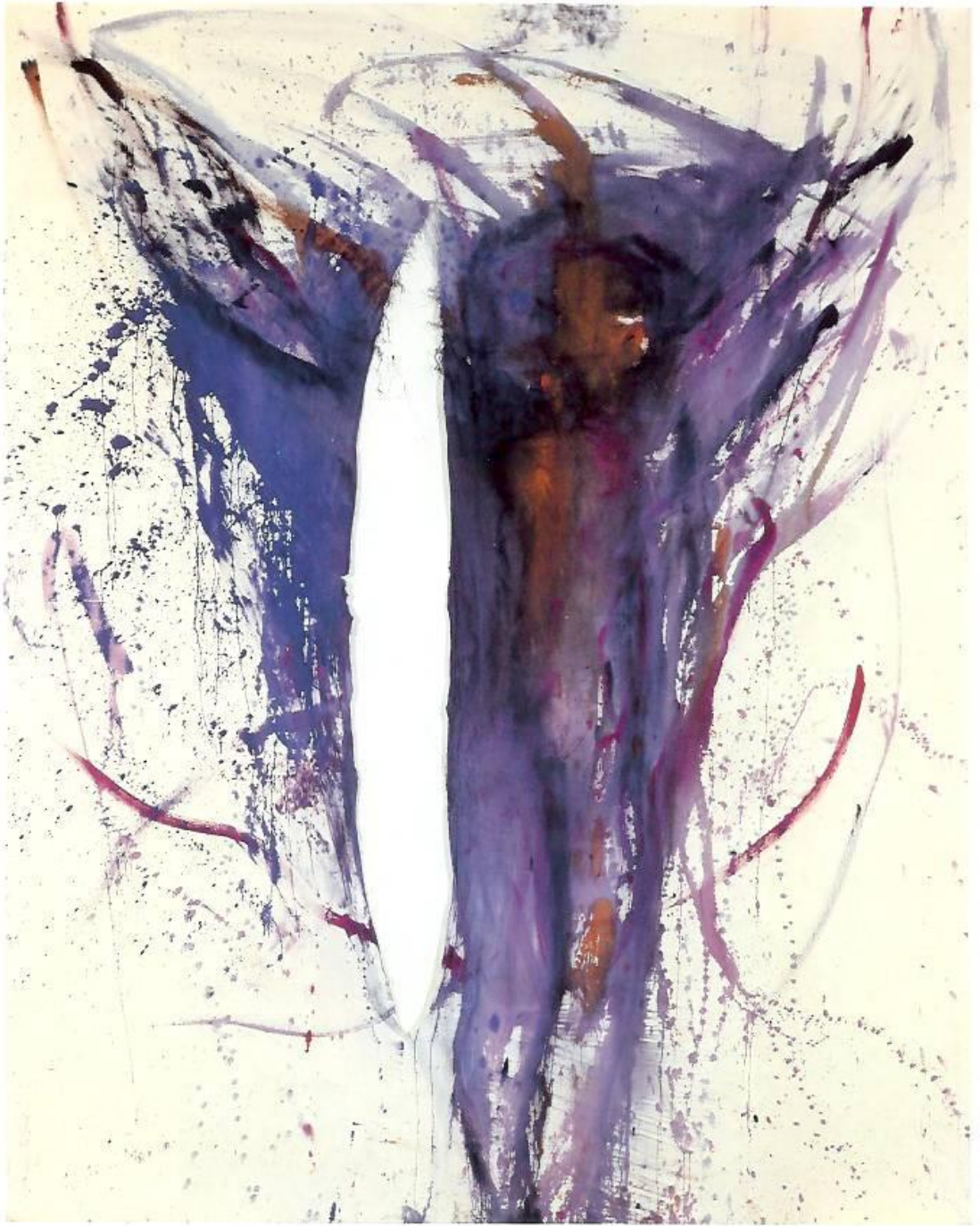
Barbara Heinisch

In 1969 Barbara Heinisch studied at the Academy of Art in Düsseldorf under Joseph Beuys; then in 1973 at The College of Fine Arts in Berlin.

Since 1977 she has been doing action paintings. She paints directly on the body of a nude model, who is situated behind the muslin surface; the painter is partly responsible for directing the model's movements. Each phase of the action is recorded in the form of photo documentation. After the painting has been completed, the model frees himself or herself by cutting through the canvas and stepping out of the picture, thus reminding us of a birth sequence. The interplay of model and artist, who are both creatively involved in the process, is of utmost importance to Barbara Heinisch. She understands her art as being in contradiction to purely abstract painting. The artists who have provided her with most inspiration are Joseph Beuys, Paul Cézanne and Arnulf Rainer.

She described her feelings when she is working: "My feelings depend on what I see and how I translate what I see into color; that is why they are so very different. The less I feel, the more constructively I paint; and the more I feel, the more deeply psychological it becomes." (Interview with Carsta Zeller Mayer, Berlin, 1978.)

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Action Painting
with the Singer,
Mark Eins
and the experimental
rock-group
DINA Testbild Berlin,
Easter



My work – my painting – should be presented like a celebration at which others can (should) take part. Take part, that is, not as passive consumers but as active participants who create the celebration with me and have their say in arranging in what way and for how long it will take place.

I want to set my strength, the strength that is apparent in my work, against the general decline of society.

For me, art should be directed away from the lonely, onanistic joys of the artist and towards all those who are willing and open enough to accept and give back. Art is, then, not just "art" in the old sense but a medium through which positive forces can bring about change in the ossified structures of society.

It's no use carrying on pointing out and complaining about the present situation.

I do not want to take people's breath away.

A form must be found which encourages reflection. Rather like the way jazz musicians play together, people should be able to find each other in large or small constellations. Everybody should act according to his inclinations and then there would be no wars any more.

This is why I must treat the other person as a subject, with due consideration and seriousness.

Painter and model are each as active as the other – the model is no longer a mere object.

I cannot act arbitrarily any more; that would involve a process of deformation in order to get nearer the truth. It is my own inner potential, as regards the action, which guides me towards the "moment of truth". I do not place myself above what is represented any more because I am directly involved, like the model.

I have to admit that neither can I distance myself from what is represented, as I used to do. And so my work has become part of me, perhaps the most important part of me.

Painting does not come from art, it comes from love. . .

Barbara Heinisch
Notes from My Diary, Berlin, July '77

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Action Painting
with the Actor
Andreas Vitásek,
Paris

