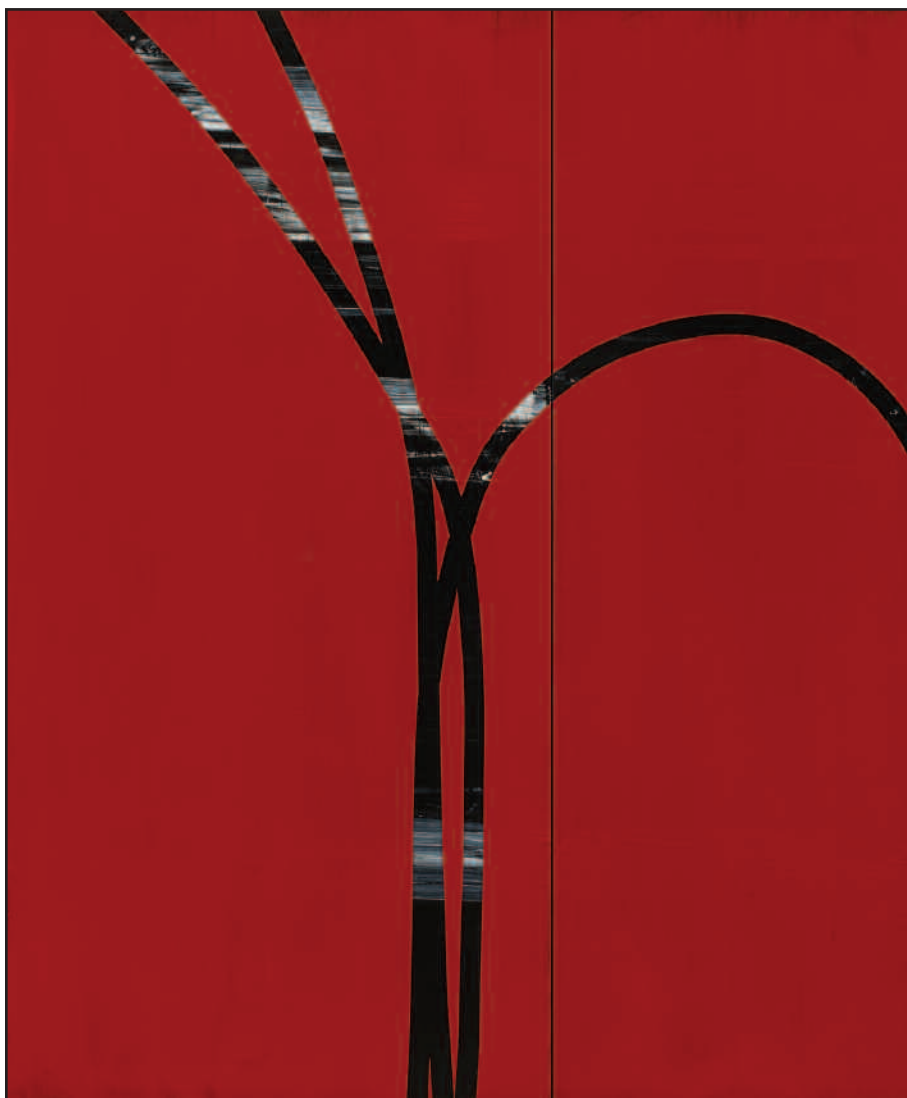


AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED SWISS ARTIST
IN THE SCHOOL OF MINIMAL ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

STEPHAN SPICHER



Eternal Line 2, lacquer on aluminum, 59" x 49"

“WHAT COUNTS FOR ME, IS THAT WITH THE LINE I DRAW,
I simultaneously create space to experience spatial distance towards the next
line. In permanently having an eye on the background, I define the line with
regard to the gaps in between or anti-spaces, which it brings about.
And sometimes these are more important than the line itself.”

STEPHAN SPICHER

STEPHAN SPICHER WAS BORN in Basel, Switzerland, in 1950 and lived in the southern Italian part of the country. He studied under the Italian painter Peppe Assenza, analyzing Goethe's color concept. Stephan Spicher's first group exhibition took place in the '70s, followed by both national and international solo exhibitions in 1981.

His series of Walls of Ash (Aeschenwaende) emerged in the late '80s. It was then that he combined ash with acrylic and synthetic resin – organic matter meeting non-organic. The artist compares the process on the surface of his paintings with the geological process of the earth's history. His works are a permanent metamorphosis embracing a higher, spiritual concept of mental and immaterial force behind the geological – physical – chemical history of the earth.

Since 1996, the Eternal Line has dominated Stephan Spicher's work as a creative core element. The Line has contrary characteristics – stability, order and orientation on one side, and energy, movement and change on the other. In order to visualize this relationship, he chooses a special channel, which is not analytical but is mythical – poetic. If one side of Stephan Spicher's art is reduction to pure abstraction, the other is the sensation of the natural. Stephan Spicher's work invites one to experience the duality of human existence.



Writing in *Eternal Line on Canvas and Aluminum* (Matamerabook 2005), art critic Jean Couteau notes, "Stephan Spicher's artistic endeavor, while appearing minimalist on the outside, carries an altogether different message, made evident by the artist's emphasis on linear expression.

"Stephan Spicher is dealing with 'the line per se' – the simple *line* with its symbolic connotation as the eternal essence of things, and not the line as an instrument that is descriptive of reality. By doing so he puts conventional minimalism on its head. Gone is the *material* geometric reductionism. In its place is a spiritual kind of minimalism – a spiritual, albeit non- religious message.

"Stephan Spicher's spiritual minimalism does not come out of the blue. Spiritualism virtually disappeared from Western modern art during the 20th century. Spicher uses a tool provided by modernism – the minimalist line – to explore the question of the infinite. He raises the question of Meaning and Being. Through this spiritual, minimalist reinterpretation of the notion of the line, Stephan Spicher has placed himself at the forefront of a new trend in Western Contemporary art: Spiritual Abstraction."

Jean Couteau is a multilingual writer, art critic and columnist who teaches at the Indonesian Institute of Arts. A world-renowned contributor to journals of art, he also writes extensively on French and Balinese culture. Reprinted by permission.



Blossom 10, 2006, 59"x24.75", lacquer and gold leaf on aluminum



Blossom 11, 2006, 59"x24.75", lacquer and gold leaf on aluminum

HONORS AND EXHIBITIONS

Honored by the Pro Arte Foundation, Switzerland 1984
 City of Basel 1984, 1986
 Pictorial compositions, Japan 1986
 Christoph Merian Foundation, Indonesia 1992
 Crossing the Lines, Museum of Cultures, Basel, Switzerland 2000

Group exhibit with Richard Serra and others, Galerie Ernst Beyeler, Basel, Switzerland 2006
 Solo exhibit, Ludwig Museum, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia 2007
 Solo and collaborative exhibit with Enryu Kano, Tokyo, Japan 2007

