

FRIDERICIANVM



Kassel, May 21, 2026

PRESS KIT

PETER FISCHLI

May 23 – September 13, 2026

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documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH

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PRESS RELEASE

PETER FISCHLI

May 23 – September 13, 2026

Opening: Friday, May 22, 2026, 7 pm

Press preview: Thursday, May 21, 2026, 11.30 am

Fridericianum, Kassel

Flashing lights, mirrors, and loose power cords: With their vertical supports, horizontal arms, and luminaires, Peter Fischli's kinetic sculptures are reminiscent of urban traffic lights or stage elements. Fashioned out of simple materials and coated in layers of gray paint they hint at urban surfaces and reveal an enigmatic rhythm of light and sound in the exhibition space. Their alternating signals follow no fixed logic. Instead the sculptures develop their own sequences in white, orange, or yellow tones.

Some objects feature reflective panels or stained glass, while others display dangling cables. At times, the structures resemble gallows or bare trees. They can be read as abstract compositions, diagram-like figures, or psychogram-like symbols. These sometimes unsettling constructions reference systems of order, perception, and transcendence, yet defy clear interpretation.

In his practice, Fischli explores the aesthetics of the everyday and the functionalities of systems of meaning. His sculptures examine how signs, symbols, and infrastructures of the globalized world vie for attention, circulate, organize our movements, and influence our perception and emotions.

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The artist was born in Zurich in 1952 where he still lives to this day. He rose to prominence through his four-decade long collaboration with the late David Weiss (1946–2012) as part of the influential artist duo Fischli/Weiss. The duo took part in documenta in 1987 and 1997, was represented on numerous occasions at the Venice Biennale (1988, 1995, 2003, 2011, and 2013) and was awarded the Golden Lion (2003).

For a decade now, Fischli has shaped his own extraordinary, independent artistic practice, which has been showcased in numerous exhibitions, including at Kunsthaus Bregenz (2020), at By Art Matters in Hangzhou (2024), at LUMA Arles (2025), at Pinacoteca Agnelli in Turin (2026), and at the Robert Walser Center in Bern (2026). The Fridericianum is presenting the artist's first institutional solo exhibition in Germany.

Andreas Hoffmann, Managing Director documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH:

“The presentation of Peter Fischli’s fascinating work at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel brings things full circle: Fischli returns as a solo artist to the very place where the work of the artist duo Fischli/Weiss first gained widespread international attention in 1987 at documenta 8. It therefore fills me with great joy that this exhibition also forms a bridge to documenta’s history and at the same time clearly demonstrates: The Kassel art show has always been a visionary source of inspiration and—I am convinced—it will remain so in the future.”

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Timon Gremmels, Hessian Minister of Higher Education, Research and the Arts:

“Through his solo work, Peter Fischli has established a firm place for himself in the international art scene. His works combine wit and humor with a keen eye for detail. The fact that his first institutional solo exhibition in Germany is being held at the Fridericianum once again demonstrates the special radiance of the Kunsthalle. From here, cultural impulses emerge that resonate throughout Europe, establishing Kassel and Hesse as significant art hubs far beyond the scope of the documenta exhibitions.”

Moritz Wessler, Director Fridericianum:

“In 1987, my parents took me—I was six years old at the time—to documenta. At some point, I got lost. After searching for hours, I was finally found in the Fridericianum in front of the film *Der Lauf der Dinge* by Fischli/Weiss—a masterpiece of hissing, rattling, and sparkling chain reactions that still captivates me to this day. Experiences like this have certainly shaped my curiosity and fascination with art. Thanks to these early experiences, I’ve been able to discover Peter Fischli’s brilliant solo work for myself in recent years.”

The exhibition is held under the patronage of Her Excellency Livia Leu, Ambassador of Switzerland to Germany.

It is being generously supported by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

swiss arts council
prohelvetia

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EXHIBITION BIOGRAPHY

Peter Fischli

Born 1952 in Zurich, Switzerland

Lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland

Worked together with David Weiss from 1979 until his passing in 2012

EDUCATION

1975–1976 Academia di Belle Arti, Urbino, Italy

1976–1977 Academia di Belle Arti, Bologna, Italy

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2013–2019 Professorship for Visual Arts, Städelschule Frankfurt

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2026

Peter Fischli, Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany

Pista 500, Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin, Italy

Wir Ungestalten, Robert Walser Zentrum, Bern, Switzerland

2025

Peter Fischli: Adición, Sustracción, Multiplicación, Mexico City, Mexico

People Planet Profit, Luma Arles, Arles, France

Autumn on Everything, with Gili Tal, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Germany

2024

Tuesday Til Sunday, Art Matters, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

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2023

Peter Fischli: Ungestalten, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, Los Angeles, USA

2022

Peter Fischli: 12 Untitled Works, Galerie Buchholz, Cologne, Germany

2021

Peter Fischli, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Germany

Peter Fischli, Sprüth Magers, London, Mayfair, London, UK

Stop Painting, Fondazione Prada, Venice, Venice, Italy

2020

Peter Fischli, Weiss Falk, Basel, Switzerland

Peter Fischli, Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria

2019

More Cans, Some Bags & Boxes, House of Gaga, Mexico City, Mexico

2018

Cans, Bags & Boxes, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, USA

If Everything Is Sculpture Why Make Sculpture? Artist's Choice: Peter Fischli, MoMA Sculpture Garden, New York, USA

2017

Cans, Bags & Boxes, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, House of Gaga, Los Angeles, USA

Wade Guyton Peter Fischli David Weiss, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA



GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2025

Tokonoma Workshop, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles, USA

The Family Guns, Eric Hussenot, Paris, France

The Family Guns, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, USA

Turning Pages - Artists' Books of the Present, MAK, Vienna, Austria

Fictions of Display, MOCA, Los Angeles, USA

Legal Size, Gandt, New York, USA

Social Photography XI, Carriage Trade, New York, USA

Great Works, Zurich, Switzerland

Ringier Collection 1995 - 2025, Langen Foundation, Neuss, Switzerland

Medardo Rosso: Inventing Modern Sculpture, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland

2024

Bureau Bollito, Robert Walser-Zentrum, Bern, Switzerland

Summer Show, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, Switzerland

Shine On, Sadie Coles HQ, London, UK

2023

The 3-second rule of thumb, Federico Vavassori, Milan

We Smell Gas, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, USA

Out of the Box. 20 Years Schaulager, Schaulager, Basel

Transformations: Works From The Collection Of The Cooperative Mobilière, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, Switzerland

2022

Video at Large: Intimacy, Red Brick Art Museum, Chaoyang, China

Sunset: A Celebration of the Sinking Sun, Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen, Germany

Hippydrome, Frac Normandie, Caen

Substance - SUBSTANCES, Collegium, Arévalo

2021

Swiss Sculpture since 1945, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau, Switzerland

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2020

Ice and Fire, The Kitchen, New York, USA

Arrows, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich, Switzerland

THE SEWERS OF MARS, Reena Spaulings, New York, USA

Summer of Suspense, Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

The works of Peter Fischli and David Weiss have been presented in numerous international solo exhibitions since 1979. The artist duo participated in documenta in 1987 and 1997 and were represented at the Venice Biennale on several occasions (1988, 1995, 2003, 2011, and 2013), where they were awarded the Golden Lion in 2003. In 2016, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum dedicated a comprehensive retrospective to them.

CURATORIAL PRACTICE

2023 *Dan Graham: Is there Life After Breakfast?*, Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

2021 *Stop Painting!*, curated by Peter Fischli, Fondazione Prada, Venice

2018 *BACKCOVERS SUMMER FALL WINTER SPRING*, mit Hilar Stadler, Museum Bellpark, Kriens, Switzerland

2014 *Ferdinand Hodler / Jean-Frédéric Schnyder*, Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS (SELECTION)

Kunstmuseum Basel; Basel, Switzerland

Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa, California

天目里美术馆 BY ART MATTERS, Hangzhou

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California

Münchenstein, Schaulager, Switzerland

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EDUCATION AND EVENTS

Exhibition opening

Peter Fischli

Friday, May 22, 2026, 7 pm

On Friday, May 22, 2026, the Fridericianum opens the doors to the new exhibition by Swiss artist Peter Fischli. After the official part of the evening, everyone is invited to celebrate together—with snacks, drinks, and music by DJ Morning Mist.

Admission is free on the evening of the opening. No registration required.

Children's vernissage

Peter Fischli

Friday, May 22, 2026, 5.30–7 pm

The Fridericianum invites children and their accompanying adults to an exclusive exhibition opening ahead of the official festivities: Together with the art education team, the participants explore the new show by Swiss artist Peter Fischli. It takes its visitors on a journey into the familiar, only to make it seem completely unfamiliar again. They immerse themselves in a space filled with figures that resemble something as trivial as traffic lights, but at second glance develop an unusual life of their own through light and sound.

Ideal age: 6–12 years.

Admission is free.

No registration required; drop in and out at any time.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Workshop for adults

Rules, movement, and space—making invisible norms visible

Saturday, June 20, 2026, 3–5 pm

Inspired by the artworks of Peter Fischli, workshop participants explore how rules govern human behavior in public spaces and how they become embedded in the body and in movement. They create collages using photographs, physical traces, and a word of their own choosing to engage deeply with the works. In this way, visiting the exhibition becomes a performative act within the space—an active exchange between their bodies and Fischli's "living" sculptures. The exhibition space thus becomes a testing ground where it becomes clear just how significantly normative systems structure our everyday actions.

Target audience: Adults

Participation fee: 5 Euro

Registration via education@fridericianum.org

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Family day

From the city into the exhibition

Sunday, July 12, 2026, 11 am–1 pm

On family day, young and old alike explore the world of Swiss artist Peter Fischli together. His works feature shapes, stories, and traces from the urban environment. They evoke memories and spark mental games and chains of ideas. During a tour of Fischli's exhibition, the group analyzes how these everyday objects work in the exhibition. Afterward, they investigate the surroundings of the Fridericianum and set out to discover shapes and their influence on human behavior. Finally, in their own small exhibition, the participants experiment with what happens when objects are taken out of their everyday context and placed in an exhibition setting.

Target audience: Families; children aged 5 and up, accompanied by an adult

Participation fee: 5 Euro

Registration via education@fridericianum.org

Guided phone tour “Culture on call”: Peter Fischli

Saturday, July 25, 2026, 3–4 pm

As part of the exhibition by Swiss artist Peter Fischli, the Fridericianum is once again participating in the “Bei Anruf Kultur” program: Anyone interested is invited to join a guided tour of the exhibition via phone from their own home, during which the works on display are described and background stories about the exhibition's creation and the artist's work are shared.

This offer is aimed at anyone who is unable to visit the Kunsthalle or who simply prefers to discover art from the comfort of their sofa.

This is how it works: Participants receive their login credentials in advance and dial in from home via phone on the day of the event. The one-hour tour will be technically supervised by a moderator. The microphone function will be disabled during the tour, but the lines will be opened periodically for questions and discussion.

Registration via www.beianrufkultur.de or by phone at 040 209 404 36.

Participation is free of charge.

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REGULAR PROGRAMS

Studiowerkstatt

Every Saturday, 11 am–1 pm

Every Saturday, the Fridericianum Studiowerkstatt opens for small and tall visitors, aged five and upwards: Those interested are invited to get inspired by the exhibitions, work creatively together and make their own art.

Admission is free. No registration required. Drop in and out at any time. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Public guided tours

Every Wednesday, 5–6 pm & every Sunday, 3–4 pm

The art education team takes the visitors on a guided tour of the current Fridericianum exhibitions and projects. Information on the respective thematic focus can be found in the [event calender](#) on the Fridericianum website.

The costs for the tours are included in the entrance fee. No registration required.

Curator-led tours

Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 5 pm

Wednesday, August 5, 2026, 5 pm

Together with the curatorial team, the participants discover the current exhibitions and projects of the Fridericianum. Information on the respective thematic focus can be found in the [event calender](#) on the Fridericianum website.

Admission is free. No registration required.

F wie Feierabend

On the last Thursday of every month, 6.30–10 pm

On the last Thursday of every month, the Fridericianum invites you to art, drinks, and encounters.

The café stays open until 10 pm, the exhibition until 8 pm.

Admission is free. No registration required.

More events and details can be found on the [Fridericianum website](#).



LIST OF PRESS IMAGES AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

1.

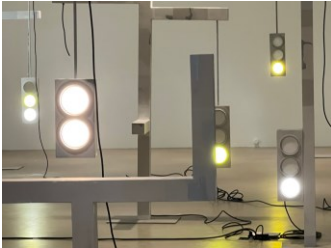


Peter Fischli, LUMA Arles, 2025

Photo: Joana Luz

© Victor & Simon

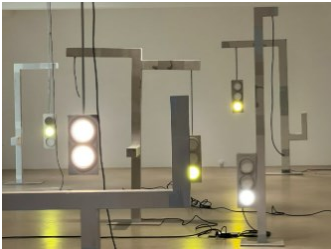
2.



Installation view, LUMA Arles, 2025

Photo: Peter Fischli

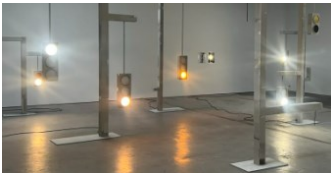
3.



Installation view, LUMA Arles, 2025

Photo: Peter Fischli

4.




Installation view, LUMA Arles, 2025


Photo: Peter Fischli


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5.  Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)
Photo: Andrea Rossetti
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6.  Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)
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7.  Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)
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8.  Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)
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9.  Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)
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10.



Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)

Photo: Andrea Rossetti

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11.



Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)

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12.



Peter Fischli (Installation view Fridericianum, Kassel, 2026)

Photo: Andrea Rossetti

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[Press images available for download](#)

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#fridericianum #peterfischli

OPENING HOURS

Tue–Sun & public holidays 11 am–6 pm & Thu 11 am–8 pm

ADMISSION

6 Euro, reduced 4 Euro

Free admission on Wednesdays

Free admission for children and under 18s

Groups (10 or more) 4 Euro p. p.

Free admission for students with Kulturticket

Students and trainees 2 Euro

Free admission for school groups (by prior appointment)

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FIGURE IN SUSPENSE

Bice Curiger

With the whole “anything goes” approach to art, have we forgotten what a sculpture actually is? When contemplating the realm of three-dimensional figuration, “a motif” appears in Peter Fischli’s sculptural landscape as an open suggestion. An allusion is, of course, nothing unusual in art: *Ceci n’est pas une pipe!* This is how it is “spelled out” in René Magritte’s painting of a pipe that cannot be filled with tobacco because it exists merely as a painting. But in Peter Fischli’s *Untitled Work*, the lights blink on and off just like they do in real life, as would be expected of these objects that regulate road traffic: although the flashing and lighting up occur only outside the bounds of any expected regularity.

What’s more, the artist does not want us to use the term “traffic lights”; he prefers “signals” instead. Yet art resolutely dwells in a sea of ambiguity, precisely because it stands in the public eye. Nevertheless: art *is* emblematic in its nuanced recognition—and its “signalling”?—of the signs of the times.

Furthermore, in this untitled ensemble of sculptures, there is no purely formal stylization at work that seeks to be read as *l’art pour l’art* and wishes only to be art—something standing in stark contrast to the utilitarian objects of our everyday lives.

Nor does any transfiguration take place here, as described in the aesthetic philosophy of Arthur C. Danto in his 1981 essay *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*¹. In this text, Warhol’s Brillo Box serves as the starting point for the assertion that it is no different from the box on sale at the supermarket and is only transformed into a relevant work of art through the discursive, theoretical discussion of the object.

The commonplace is also central to Peter Fischli, in that his “wild” objects, introduced into art, unexpectedly direct our perception towards those ever-present things that we repeatedly “see” yet block out in our daily lives, in a sort of gray area of consciousness.

¹ Of particular interest here is the distinction between the terms “transfiguration” and “transformation”. See Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, p. 168.

Yet Fischli's objects are characterized by a distinctly visible formal intent, built quite fundamentally on the circle and the rectangle: The binary system of dot and dash, which, from Morse code to the digital delusional world, also embodies the communicative structure of our modern world.

A liminal realm quickly emerges, branching out into many other liminal realms. The mimetic intention in realistic "representation" does indeed appear on the horizon, yet it is immediately suspended again, left floating: it can be experienced as *suspense*, like in the cinema. In an atmosphere of mounting tension. In anticipation of something that may or may not happen. The lights are not set to amber, green or red. But faced with this ambiguity, we realise that our readiness as art-passers-by to recognise conditioned signals in time and act reflexively is likewise suspended. And yet, paradoxically, it is clearly addressed. We are quickly seduced by the pulse of the variously alluring light sources with their white, amber and lemon-yellow round glass panes, and are suddenly dazzled every now and then, standing in the ray of light.

Light, whether cold or warm, glaring or subdued, is immaterial. And so too is the sound, with its delicate clic-clac of hidden switching systems. Are we actually experiencing sculpture here in the singular or the plural? Or even as a machine? An emerging autonomy crystallizes through the finely differentiated individual elements within the conglomerate. And its dimensions can be flexibly adapted to the exhibition space. Here at the Fridericianum, in an imposing formation of countless individual sculptures ranging from 180 to 320 centimetres in height, bathed in the daylight flooding through the windows.

In terms of material, these sculptures are not cast in a metal alloy, cement or polyester for instance. Fischli's work bears the supra-individual traces of visible craftsmanship. Its fragile materiality contrasts and clashes with the battle-hardened urban robustness of these very installations, which regulate traffic and are an expression of our symbiosis with those products spewed out daily by the industrial world and fed into global distribution channels.

Fischli's sculptures are endearing dummies that pretend to be real *objets trouvés*, with their air of a worn-out theme park.

Yet these by no means silent objects are imbued with friendly human energy. They are assembled and arranged through painstakingly considered processes, using precarious materials such as plywood, cardboard, stained glass, and a delicate chalk finish. The meticulous craftsmanship is more reminiscent of model-making than a sculptor's studio.

The pieces bear traces of the pleasure of making and building, and the joy of using one's hands to create something surprising, something "ordinarily extraordinary". Something that seems to come from another (neighboring) planet.

The dominant feature here is the orthogonal structure in rhythmic dissolution. As if it were following the gridlines of a Mondrian painting, elevating them into the three-dimensional and, at the same time, into the all-encompassing everyday. Is Constructivism—the fetish of the detached non-figurative, of rational abstraction—suddenly returning here to the sphere of exhaust-laden air? Similarly, an ambiguity can be discerned in the branches and intersections of the arms and supports. They could just as easily be trees, arms or gallows: Mondrian also painted trees before his grids became entirely "non-representational". The pictorial asserts itself in Fischli's work, as if emerging through the mist like an *afterimage*, a refrain entering the field of vision. Between robotics and nature. And suddenly "snow" even appears on an arm, which is—or was?—connected internally to a synchronized, hidden central control system.

Because all visible electrical cables are severed, and yet lights keep turning on, again and again, insistently and meaningfully. Like satellites flashing in the night's sky, detached from our everyday world. So distant and yet so familiar: our civilized night is ever punctuated by flashes, rays and gleaming lights; just ask the animal kingdom.

The severed, dangling cables appear melancholic, yet they are also dance-like, elegant extensions of the cuboid shapes. Their delicate lightness of form brings a sense of drawing into play, in the form of curls or snaking lines. Taken on their own, the light boxes also radiate beauty in their well-considered form and finely calibrated variability, precisely because any possible former utility may have evaporated.

The vague image of these prosaic technical installations, omnipresent across the globe and regulating traffic flows, is employed as a strategic misdirection and simulation. Fischli's ensembles are vaguely reminiscent of the *trompe l'œil* objects of everyday life, carved and painted in polyurethane, created by the duo Peter Fischli and David Weiss in the 1990s. While the principle of seemingly random accumulation prevailed there, in Fischli's *Untitled Work*, however, a concise formal compositional intent is at work, which—albeit half-seriously—draws on Constructivist principles in an updated spelling out of art and the world.

In one of his first solo exhibitions in 2020, Peter Fischli presented an ensemble at Kunsthaus Bregenz that stood in contrast to precisely those works, yet also referred to them: *Cans, Bags and Boxes*, 2017–2019. Their three-dimensional form was likewise based on the elementary circle and rectangle and was finely handcrafted, as were their pedestals. These appeared at times turned upside down, thereby bringing the hollow form into play, which protectively enveloped the tin-like object as a further surprise, much like a gift box.

In Peter Fischli's work, form and shape approach the function of camouflage: this camouflage appears, in its meaning, as a state that dissolves before the eyes.

Fittingly, Fischli calls his photographic works in the exhibition "Ungestalten" (literally *non-designs* or *non-shapes* while also echoing the German term *Gestalt* meaning shape, structure, figure). These are black-and-white photographs – edited images – which he took in nocturnal public outdoor spaces of ephemeral spray-painted graffiti made from shaving foam. In the images—some of which are collaged together in fragments or presented as negative prints—promising sources of light suddenly appear as black, radiant stars. The interplay of the abstract foam forms, the beauty of the composition, the sensuality of the imitated silver gelatine prints—all conjure up an intensely atmospheric mood.

Has the time come to recall the Bauhaus? This is not unreasonable, given that the verb "to design" (*gestalten*) played a dominant role there. In the sense of "design" as the way the world should be redesigned for everyone through a functional and aesthetic interpenetration.

"Non-designs" or "non-shapes", however, are of an in-between nature. Like Duchamp's "Infra mince", or the anti-form of Conceptual Art, or foam as the French "Informe", according to Georges Bataille or Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois, which sought to undermine the fixed form (of Modernism) and its logic.

Fischli displays gentle transformative power, rather than the idealized "transfiguration" espoused by Danto, both of which take their starting point in the most unassuming of the commonplace². Is his transformation a symbol of a breakthrough into expanded, old-yet-new worlds of the imagination? Light penetrates objects stripped of function—as a sign of transition, of transgression. Everything is in limbo, hopeful—or perhaps not?

² In theology, these two distinct yet often interrelated terms describe processes of transformation in relation to the divine working upon humankind and upon Jesus Christ.

The verticals with outstretched arms are also rapidly reminiscent of Salvador Dalí's phase of "Nuclear Mysticism". In this phase he painted Christian motifs with formal clarity, like the *Nuclear Cross* of 1952, based on cube and circle forms, which he also called "hypercubist bodies". As a macabre reminder of the enduring objects of humanity in a dehumanized world? The light of the Enlightenment is irradiated!

The light of the living still seems to shine out as a fluid. Just like stellar luminosity. And in the spirit of Robert Filiou³ whom Peter Fischli held in high regard, we might say: art is what makes life more interesting than art.

³ See the color lithograph with collage by Robert Filiou from 1984, *art is what makes life more interesting than art*, published by Griffelkunst Hamburg.