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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VON BARTHA

von Bartha is a pioneering gallery for contemporary and Modern art in Basel and Copenhagen. Established in 1970, it is one of the longest-running galleries of its kind. It is a home for artists and art lovers, and a place to explore 20th- and 21st-century art luminaries. Led by Stefan von Bartha and Hester Koper, the gallery empowers the voices of its visionary artists through its compelling program of exhibitions, events, publications, public commissions, and online presence.

von Bartha was founded by Margareta and Miklos von Bartha, whose expertise and strategic vision remain an integral part of the gallery's DNA. With the support of Hungarian-Swiss art collector and dealer Carl László and being a constant at Art Basel's premier art fairs since its inception, the gallery is recognized for discovering and building the careers of highly influential international artists.

von Bartha champions artists who carry on the modern tradition into the present, embrace imaginative expressions, and engage in critical discourses. The roster spans a diverse range of mediums, generations, and backgrounds. The family-run gallery boasts an international lineup featuring contemporary artists including **Marina Adams, Olaf Breuning, Athene Galiciadis, Landon Metz, Felipe Mujica, Sarah Oppenheimer, Ursula Reuter Christiansen, Francisco Sierra, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, Superflex, Claudia Wieser**, and others, while supporting

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the further development of the practices of its steadfast artists such as **Christian Andersson, Andrew Bick, Anna Dickinson, Terry Haggerty, Imi Knoebel, Bob & Roberta Smith**, to name a few. The gallery's impact extends to placing significant artworks in private collections and cultural institutions, and realizing substantial public commissions. It continues to oversee the careers and estates of artists and movements such as **Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Hungarian Avant-Garde, Arte Madi / Arte Concreto, Olle Baertling, Marianne Eigenheer, Barry Flanagan, Fritz Glarner, Camille Graeser, Yves Laloy, Aurélie Nemours**, and **Gerhard von Graevenitz**.

von Bartha is situated in Basel, famous for its world-class public institutions and private collections, on the tri-national border between France, Germany, and Switzerland. The 700-square-meter exhibition space is housed in a former garage reimagined by Swiss architects Lukas Voellmy and Chasper Schmidlin. The second gallery, located in Copenhagen, Scandinavia's epicenter of design and gastronomy, occupies a historic lighthouse in the vibrant neighborhood of the Carlsberg City District. Both architecturally unique locations serve as iconic landmarks for the culturally inquisitive and their programs hold significant positions within the global art calendar.

For more information, press images, artists' interviews, von Bartha insights, and stories, visit [vonbartha.com/stories](https://vonbartha.com/stories).

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## DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

### STEFAN VON BARTHA

Stefan von Bartha (b. 1981) is the **Director and owner of von Bartha**. He is, with his wife Hester Koper, bringing the gallery into a new era with its dynamic art program at its two locations in Basel and Copenhagen, alongside its dedicated online presence. He became Director of the gallery in 2008 and has been responsible for keeping the DNA of one of the longest-running galleries while pushing it into the future. Now in its second generation, his vision for von Bartha is to be a space for inspiration and dialogue that values art for its critical and cultural importance.

As the son of Margareta and Miklos von Bartha, he grew up in a home that also functioned as the gallery. Here, he was surrounded by creatives who had come to define the landscape of 20th- and 21st-century art.

At the age of 18, he curated his first exhibition at the gallery with a loan of 800 Swiss francs from his parents. The exhibition consisted of 420 vintage space toys, of which he sold 419. With a passion for rarities, he established the vintage boutique Designago selling rare design collectibles. His private collection includes objects from the Swiss manufacturer Mewa, vases from the Danish glass factory Holmegaard, and a collection of children's chairs. Stefan's passion and expertise are also expressed through his private art collection, including significant works by Miriam Cahn, Los Carpinteros, Julian Charrière, Nathalie du Pasquier, Helmut Federle, Hulda Guzman, Renée Levi, Verena Loewensberg, Richard Paul Lohse, Enzo Mari, Sirous Namazi, Remy Zaugg and artists represented by von Bartha.

He studied Modern and Contemporary Art at Christie's in New York and has worked at Galerie Nordenhake in Berlin and Sotheby's in Zurich. He is on the board of Friends of Liste Art Fair, Enter Art Fair, and the Friends of the Swiss Institute. He is, together with Hester Koper, Friends and Patrons of Fondation Beyeler, Kunsthalle Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel, and Philaneo—a fund for Art. He lives in Basel and Copenhagen.

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## HESTER KOPER

Hester Koper (b. 1989) is the **Senior Director of von Bartha**. She is, with her husband Stefan von Bartha, bringing von Bartha into a new era with its dynamic art program at their two locations in Basel and Copenhagen, alongside its dedicated online presence. Since joining the gallery in 2013, Hester has been responsible for the development of the gallery's communication channels, liaison with artists, and spearheaded special projects with institutions and collectors. She is the editorial director of the gallery's online magazine "Stories," which offers exclusive behind-the-scenes content on its artists and their processes.

She is the co-founder of WITA (Women Interacting Through Art), an initiative in Scandinavia that provides a platform for leading women and non-binary individuals to come together, enjoy a diverse and engaging program through art, and share and learn from each other's experiences. She is also a member of the Basel-based women's collective Avalon, which empowers individuals to connect and co-create at immersive events.

Born in Zurich with Dutch citizenship, she grew up in Germany and Switzerland. She studied History and Archaeology at the University of Basel and holds an MA in Design + Art Education from FHNW Academy of Art and Design in Basel. She previously worked as Head of Administration and Communication for Liste Art Fair in Basel and remains part of their beneficial circle. She is, together with Stefan von Bartha, Friends and Patrons of Fondation Beyeler, Kunsthalle Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel, and Philaneo—a Fund for Art. She lives in Basel and Copenhagen.

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## MAMIE BETH CARY

Mamie Beth Cary (b. 1988) is the **Director of von Bartha in Copenhagen**, and has since 2021 overseen the gallery's artistic programming. As the first international gallery to open in the Scandinavian city, she is responsible for the gallery's dedicated engagement with the local and international art community, which has resulted in exhibitions, events, tours, and special commissions. Located in the 75 m<sup>2</sup> historic lighthouse in the vibrant neighborhood of the Carlsberg City District, she has transformed the gallery space into a creative hub for contemporary art.

Together with Hester Koper and Caroline Bøge, Mamie is the co-founder of WITA (Women Interacting Through Art), an initiative in Scandinavia that provides a platform for leading women and non-binary individuals to come together, enjoy a diverse and engaging program through art, and share and learn from each other's experiences.

Born in London, she holds a combined honors degree in History of Art and English Literature from the University of York. After graduating, she worked for artists, galleries, publications, and art fairs, including Frieze, Damien Hirst, Isaac Julien, and Ryan Gander. She moved to Copenhagen in 2016, taking up the role as Head of Artistic Programming at Chart Art Fair and Director of the gallery Andersen's Contemporary. She lives with her husband and daughter in Vesterbro.

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## QUOTES FROM THE PRESENT AND THE PAST

**Stefan von Bartha  
about the gallery's  
mission:**

“Art is an ever-evolving landscape, fueled by exploration and constant evolution. I believe in fostering curiosity, creating transparency, and encouraging engagement within our vibrant art community. Built on more than half a century devoted to the arts, von Bartha was established by my parents’ interests in graphic design, their collaboration with collector and gallerist Carl László, and their reverence for concrete art. Today, we honor their legacy as we embark on a new chapter, steering von Bartha into an exciting new era.”

**Hester Koper  
about von Bartha's  
transformation over  
the last decade:**

“Over the past decade, von Bartha has transformed significantly. At the heart of all our decision-making lies a commitment to learning and open discussion, guided by principles of social responsibility and inclusivity. Through this, we establish a vital program featuring compelling contemporary artists in conversation with modernist perspectives, capturing the essence of our past while looking toward the future.”

**Stefan von Bartha  
about architecture  
and re-imagining  
space:**

“The vision was to find a different and unique space, compared to all the other commercial galleries in Switzerland. The space at Kannenfeldplatz, for which we worked with the architects Lukas Voellmy and Chasper Schmidlin, allowed us to build a gallery that would meet this vision. It is the ideal space and stage for various forms of art. And vice versa, artists’ work frequently re-stages the architecture of the 700-square-meter exhibition space. Yet it is not just individual shows that reconfigure the gallery. Kannenfeldplatz has become the starting point of a never-ending story of changing spaces. In many ways, since opening Kannenfeldplatz in 2007, this space has shaped part of our identity and also greatly impacted the ways that we programmed the space in S-chanf in the Engadin Alps from 2006 to 2022 or our second gallery in Copenhagen at Kridttårnet in Carlsberg Byen since 2021.”

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**Mamie Beth Cary  
about von Bartha's  
undertakings in  
Copenhagen:**

"Ever since we agreed to establish the first international gallery in Denmark and located ourselves inside a folly lighthouse in the Carlsberg City District, our motivation has been clear: to explore the developing market within Denmark and the immense opportunities that we can see exist throughout the wider Nordic region. It is exciting to be part of von Bartha's ventures in Copenhagen, which are a testament to our gallery's ongoing vision and curiosity."

**Margareta von  
Bartha about the  
beginnings and  
influential peers:**

"Why start an art gallery? We enjoyed the best and most rigorous training as graphic designers at the Schule für Gestaltung in Basel under the influence of our teacher Armin Hofmann, a luminary in this field. What we learned under his tutelage has had a lifelong impact on how we evaluate art and design. We were driven by our interest in new discoveries and less-known artists and movements. In 1970, the year we founded the gallery, Basel itself also underwent a groundbreaking rejuvenation: Art Basel. This brilliant idea by Ernst Beyeler, Trudel Bruckner, and Balz Hilt put Basel on the map. From the beginning, at the age of twenty-four and twenty-five, we worked at the fair in partnership with Carl László. It was not until 1978 that we were invited to join the fair for the first time as von Bartha."

**Miklos von Bartha  
about William S.  
Burroughs and  
50 years of von  
Bartha:**

"My first visit to New York was very important to me. I made the acquaintance of William S. Burroughs. In the early 70s, people like Mick Jagger, Andy Warhol, Lou Reed, or Allen Ginsberg would hang out in his "bunker." When Burroughs read his book *Naked Lunch* in 1979 at the gallery, he executed an avant-garde performance with us. Initially, about fifty people were present, but gradually the space emptied. In the end, aside from the author himself, only Brion Gysin, Carl László, Margareta, and I, along with the legendary Jacotte Goldschmid-Rothschild von Graffenried remained. Steadfast, we stayed until the very end. Today, Margareta and I look back on more than fifty years of activity filled with gratitude. I am especially thankful that our children Niklas and Stefan have both chosen to be art dealers as their profession. Of course, this is a failure insofar that we sought to make ordinary citizens out of them. From a very early age, they were spoiled with visits to artists of the caliber of Olle Baertling, Aurélie Nemours, Christian Berg, Yves Laloy, and countless others. For a child, an artist's studio often exudes something mysterious, fairy-tale-like."

**Carl László, in  
1980, about Basel  
and von Bartha  
gallery:**

"It is both gratifying and speaks well for the legacy of the hospitality of the city of Basel that, as has been the case for centuries, foreign nationals who have found their new home here can count on being recognized on their merits. The glittering first ten years of von Bartha are only the beginning, and I truly believe that the gallery will, in the future, continue to do the work of an avant-garde gallery, without hesitating to take risks."

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## HIGHLIGHTS OVER SIX DECADES



Margareta and Miklos von Bartha, 1989, amongst some of their favorite artworks



Yves Laloy's "a mon ami breton" from 1958

### 1960s

The Swedish Margareta Lönn and Hungarian Miklos von Bartha meet while studying graphic design under the direction of legendary Swiss graphic designer Armin Hofmann at Schule für Gestaltung in Basel.

### 1970

Margareta and Miklos von Bartha establish "MINIMAX" gallery at Schützenmattstrasse 26 in Basel with the support of Hungarian-Swiss art collector, gallerist, and publisher Carl Laszlo. The three share a close friendship, and from 1970 to 1978, Margareta and Miklos support Carl Laszlo with his annual Art Basel booth.

### 1971

The gallery's inaugural group exhibition is followed by a show dedicated to Italian artist Enzo Cacciola, a key figure in the analytical painting movement. Succeeding shows include Swedish sculptor Christian Berg, Italian sculptor, designer, and graphic artist Marcello Morandini, and German constructivist Thilo Maatsch.

### 1972

von Bartha opens an exhibition with Yves Laloy, a member of the "surrealist circle" around André Breton, who discovered the French painter and included Laloy in his book *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*. Today, the iconic work, *a mon ami breton*, 1958, is part of von Bartha's private collection.

### 1976

The exhibition *Hungarian Avantgarde* is breaking new grounds with Lajos Kassák, László Perí, István Beöthy, Sándor Bortnyik, József Csáky, Lajos d' Ebnet, Alfred Forbát, Anton Prinner, and Béla Kádár. It included very rare works by crossdresser Anton Prinner, born as Anna Prinner: only around 30 works from this period are known to exist.

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Olle Baertling, Stockholm, 1951



Brion Gysin, a "Dreamachine", and William Burroughs at von Bartha gallery



Konrad Klapheck's "Art Amour Liberté" from 1964

## 1978

"MINIMAX" becomes "von Bartha." The gallery shows at Art Basel for the first time under the new name. Exhibitions include established artists such as Camille Graeser, as well as rising stars like Imi Knoebel and Gerhard von Graevenitz. Carl László later stated: "The glittering first ten years of von Bartha are only the beginning," and he will be proven right.

## 1978

The exhibition with Swedish artist Olle Baertling's work at Austrasse 126 is accompanied by the publication *Baertling - Creator of open form*. Together with Lars Erik Falk and Eric H. Olson, Baertling is one of the most outstanding positions of constructivism in Scandinavia.

## 1979

The legendary beatnik William S. Burroughs reads *Naked Lunch* at the gallery in front of the enigmatic *Dreamachine* that he had developed with his friend Brion Gysin. The original display is a small lamp and a painted piece of paper spinning with 33 1/3 rpm on a turntable, that Miklos von Bartha, together with the artists and a plastic technologist updates to the four versions we know today.

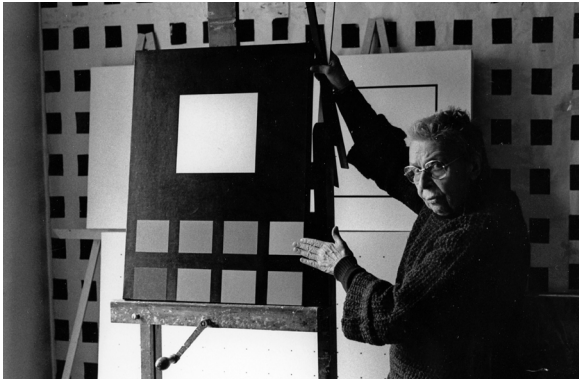
## 1980s

Margareta and Miklos von Bartha acquire the painting, *Art Amour Liberté*, 1964, by Konrad Klapheck from André Breton's private collection. It is a fundamental piece in their private collection and the title is a credo for the gallery's vision and mission in general.

## 1989

Encouraged by Carmelo Arden Quin, Miklos von Bartha travels to Buenos Aires and learns about two radical Argentinian art movements of the 1940s and 1950s, the Arte Concreto Invención and Arte Madí, which are both influenced by the Zürcher Schule der Konkreten around Max Bill, Camille Graeser, Verena Loewensberg, and Richard Paul Lohse. Miklos purchases 180 artworks directly from the artists' studios. The works contribute to the gallery's international breakthrough with acquisitions by MoMA, Centre Pompidou, and the Guggenheim Museum.

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Aurelié Nemours in her Paris atelier

### 1990s

Miklos von Bartha meets painter Aurelié Nemours in her Paris atelier. The work of the legendary French constructivist is featured in the gallery's program until today.

### 1993

The *Arte Concreto Invención* exhibition is the first of its kind in Europe, and von Bartha's publication *Arte Concreto Invención Arte Madi*, published in 1994, is today referred to as the "bible" of concrete art from South America.



Miklos and Stefan von Bartha at Art Basel in 1995

### 1999

At the age of 18, Stefan von Bartha curates his first exhibition at the gallery with a loan of 800 Swiss francs from his parents. The exhibition consists of 420 vintage space toys, of which he sells 419.

### 2006

From 2006 to 2022, von Bartha holds a second outpost, located in S-chanf in the Engadin Alps; the white cube space, in the site of a former barn of an old patrician house, is used for focused projects and site-specific installations.

### 2008

Under the direction of Stefan von Bartha, the gallery opens a 700-sqm exhibition space at Kannenfeldplatz 6, formerly a car wash and repair garage with an exterior petrol pump station, that is still in use today.



A mural by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon for von Bartha's office front at Kannenfeldplatz in Basel

### 2009

Launch of *Quarterly Report*, initiated by Margareta von Bartha—a magazine with articles, commissioned essays, and art insights. The printed format later changes to the online format *von Bartha Stories*, available at [vonbartha.com/stories](http://vonbartha.com/stories).

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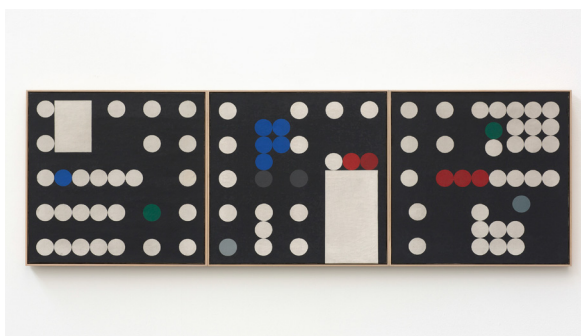
Sarah Oppenheimer's popular installation  
at Art Basel's Unlimited in 2009

**2009**

A work by Sarah Oppenheimer that can be experienced from inside is shown at Art Basel's Unlimited—creating an optical illusion of different levels that intrigue many visitors. It is the US-American's first large scale installation in Europe.

**2013**

Sophie Taeuber-Arp's triptych *Untitled* from 1933 receives great attention at von Bartha's Art Basel booth. (The work was recently exhibited at Kunstmuseum Basel, TATE modern, and MoMA as a part of the retrospective *Sophie Taeuber – Arp: Living Abstraction.*)



Sophie Taeuber-Arp's triptych  
"Untitled" from 1933

**2018**

von Bartha launches *The Imaginary Collection*, an ongoing series of temporary exhibitions, curated by independent collectors and presented in domestic spaces. The inaugural exhibition took place in Mike Meiré's home in Cologne, followed by editions in Zurich, Copenhagen, and Berlin.

**2020**

von Bartha celebrates its 50th-anniversary with the publication *Est. 1950* and the exhibition *The Backward Glance can be a Glimpse into the Future*, showcasing the gallery's past and future, bringing together 44 Modern and Contemporary artists from László Moholy-Nagy to Claudia Wieser.



Imi Knoebel's colorful installation  
with stained glass for Volkshaus Basel's  
so-called "Imi Bar."

**2021**

First drinks are served at Imi Bar, the most beautiful bar in Basel with specially designed glass windows by German artist Imi Knoebel, with whom the gallery works closely since 2000.

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von Bartha's gallery in Copenhagen is located in a unique building with a lighthouse in the Carlsberg area.

## 2021

von Bartha opens a second outpost in Copenhagen at Kridttårnet in Carlsberg Byen. The building was part of the gate that granted access to the brewery and was built in 1883. The art program is solely focusing on the present with solo shows in the first years by artists such as Claudia Wieser, Landon Metz, Andrew Bick, Marina Adams, Bob & Roberta Smith, Athene Galiciadis, Francisco Sierra, Ursula Reuter Christiansen, and more.

## 2022

Inauguration of WITA (Women Interacting Through Art) in Copenhagen: WITA brings together women from varying backgrounds to engage in art appreciation and discuss topical issues.



Barbara "Bobbie" Stauffacher Solomon's installation „WELCOME“ in St. Moritz

## 2022

The Municipality of St. Moritz unveils a new large-scale graphic installation, *WELCOME*, by American artist Barbara "Bobbie" Stauffacher Solomon on the shores of Lake St. Moritz, initiated by Serpentine Galleries, realized with the support of von Bartha.

## 2023

von Bartha signs German-Danish artist Ursula Reuter Christiansen and presents her work in three chapters with gallery shows in Basel and Copenhagen and a major presentation of her unique *Leporello* at Art Basel's Unlimited.



Claudia Wieser's monumental installation at Jardin des Tuileries in Paris

## 2023

Claudia Wieser creates a monumental sculpture, *But round my chair the children run*, 2023, which is part of *La Cinquième Saison* by Paris+ par Art Basel, a group exhibition at Jardin des Tuileries produced in collaboration with the Musée du Louvre.

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