



Photograph of the Artist and Early Fundulators, Chateau de Ravenel, 1963  
Photo by Bernard Taurelle.

**Tom Wasmuth:  
50 Years of the Undulating Fundament 1963–2013**

Galerie 1 & 2

Galerie & Edition Marlene Frei, Zürich

8. Juni bis 20. Juli 2013

**Ausstellungseröffnung:** Samstag, 8. Juni 2013, 14 bis 17 Uhr

Wir laden Sie und Ihre Freunde herzlich ein.

We cordially invite you and your friends to the opening on Saturday, June 8, 2013, 2 to 5 pm.

**Open House Weekend before Art Basel:** Sa/Su, June 8/9, 2013, 11 am to 5 pm.

Verein Die Zürcher Galerien: [www.dzg.ch](http://www.dzg.ch)

**Apéro mit Tom Wasmuth:** Freitag, 5. Juli 2013, 17 bis 20 Uhr

**Ausstellungsdauer:** 8. Juni bis 20. Juli 2013

Liebe Kunstfreunde

Der amerikanische Künstler und Bluesmusiker Tom Wasmuth ist ein geschätzter Zeichner, Maler, Autor und Songwriter, ein begnadetes Multitalent.

In unserer Ausstellung werden erstmalig Arbeiten in verschiedenen Techniken und Formaten aus Tom Wasmuths Werkzyklus *Undulating Fundament* zu sehen sein. Dieser Kosmos an Bildfindungen ist in den letzten fünf Jahrzehnten entstanden. Mehr dazu erfahren Sie in Tom Wasmuths aufschlussreichem Interview auf den Seiten 6-7. Die komplette Interviewfassung finden Sie auf unserer Homepage:

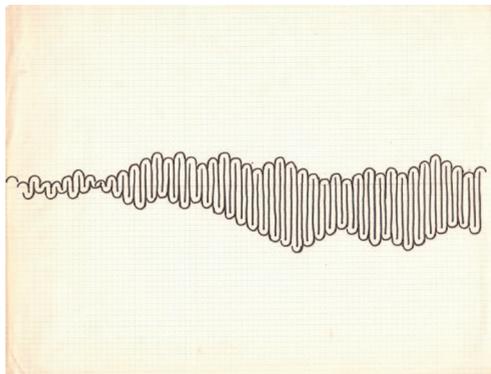
[www.marlenefrei.com](http://www.marlenefrei.com)

Tom Wasmuth installiert im unteren Stock der Galerie sein Atelier, um angefangene Arbeiten zu vollenden und neue zu erschaffen. Wir laden Sie herzlich ein, sich auch diesen Raum mit älteren, neuen und entstehenden Werken anzuschauen.

Tom Wasmuth, 1941 in Dayton, Ohio geboren, lebt heute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Nach seinem Abschluss in Englischer Literatur und einem Studium bei Friedel Dzubas, Robert Rauschenberg und Frank Stella, bereiste er während mehr als drei Jahrzehnten Amerika und Europa und verbrachte jeweils längere Zeit in New York, Reykjavik, Amsterdam, London, Paris, Ravenel, Wien, Warschau und Zürich. Mit seinem *Tom Bodean Trio* und als Gitarrist und Sänger in anderen Formationen tritt er seit mehr als zehn Jahren vorwiegend in Albuquerque und Santa Fee auf. Von 1995 bis 2002 erschienen die Publikationen *Selected Works Volumes 1-10*, eine Co-Produktion von Heinz Baumann und der Edition Marlene Frei. 2002 war diese Edition neben vielen anderen Werken in Tom Wasmuths vielbeachteter Ausstellung *Worlds in a Box* in der Graphischen Sammlung der ETH Zürich zu sehen.

Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Besuche!

Marlene Frei



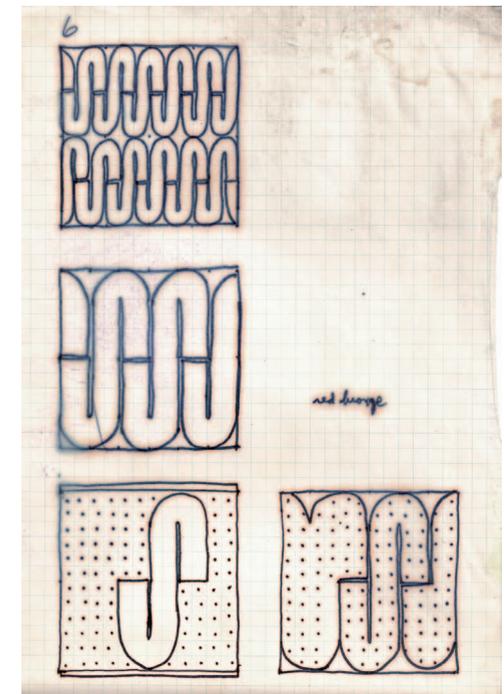
**Coin-Flip Single Track Undulator**, 1967

Ink on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm



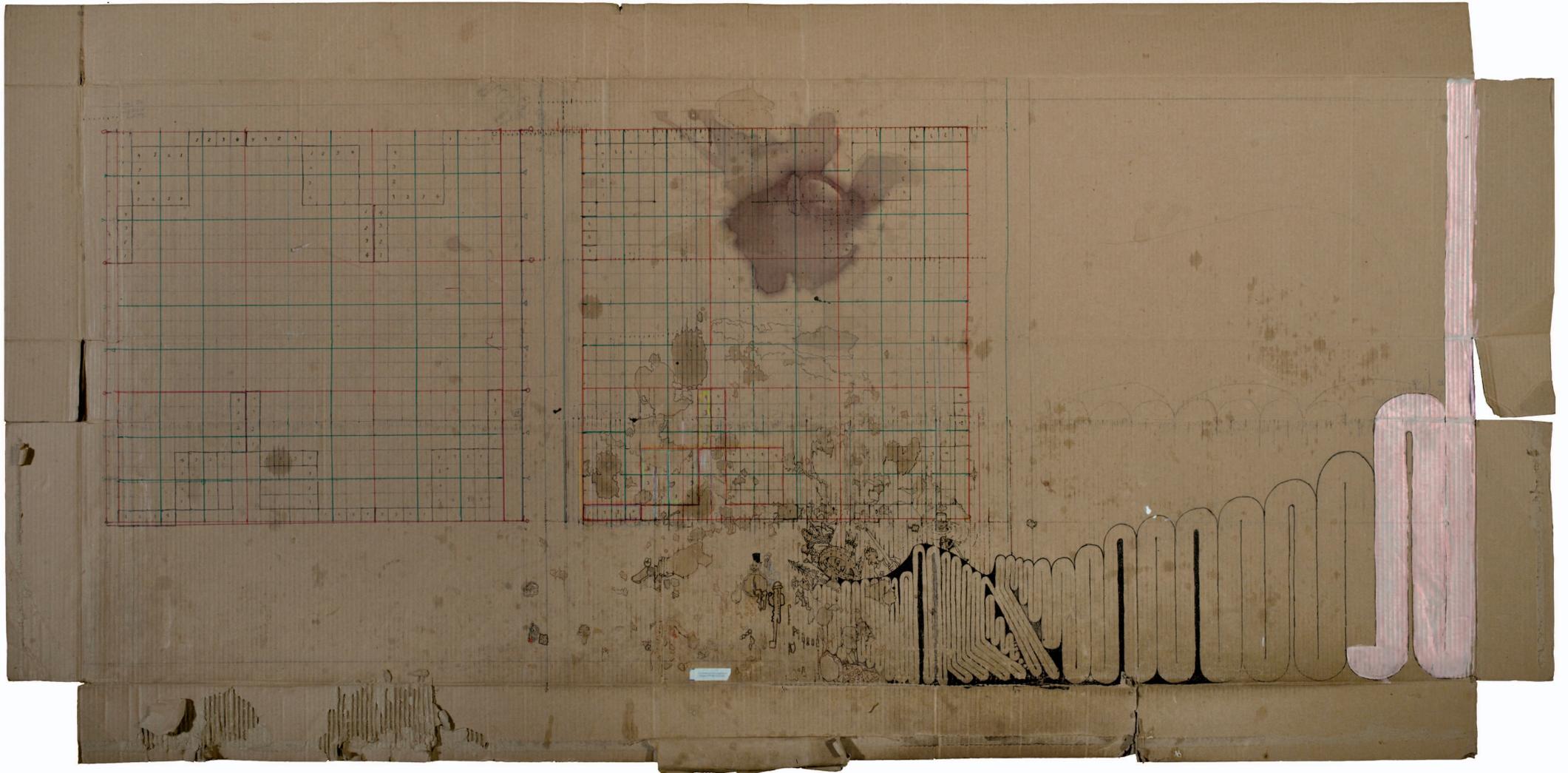
**Blue Ganesh Undulator** (for Eunice), 1967

Acrylic on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm



**Undulator Template Options** (for Wall Drawings), 1969

Ink on paper, 29,7 × 21 cm



**Ieri, Oggi e Domani (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow),** Wide Load Fundulator Layout, in Progress, 2013  
Ink, pencil, fortune cookie text, red wine and salad oil on cardboard, 102 x 212 cm

Interview with Tom Wasmuth

This is a brief excerpt from a longer interview which can be found at the gallery website: [marlenefrei.com](http://marlenefrei.com)

## Fifty Years of the Undulating Fundament

### The Birth of the Undulating Fundament

#### Which came first the Gyrotater works or the Fundulators?

The Fundulators appeared first.

#### And when and how did that come about?

Well, that was I think New Year's Eve 1963 at the Chateau de Ravenel in Picardie, France. I was 22 years old. Most of the other Chateau tenants were gone somewhere for the Christmas holidays, and I was in my room and had just loaded up my coal stove on a snowy evening and had laid out a note book and some brushes and black india ink on a table, and I sat down to see what I could come up with, and in so doing I was kind of wondering what would be the simplest pathway for a brush to cover the whole page with a brushed pathway of black ink (focusing on the swath or the trail that the brush leaves behind), starting at the upper left hand corner and proceeding down the left edge of the page. Well you come to the bottom of the page and it makes sense to turn around and go up the other way right next to the path you have just made, or at least it made sense to me.

Well, the outcome of that evening was that back and forth pathway that came to be called The Undulating Fundament or The Fundamental Undulation of the Undulating Fundament or The Fundulator for short.

#### Was there any doubt in your mind about this being a profound discovery?

Oh, definitely, and there still can be. At the time though I was quite ecstatic looking at the result and then really got into it and made a lot more Fundulators immediately, filling up the notebook. I decided to step outside to see what they looked like from a distance through the French chateau windows and once outside was shocked to find that the whole room was full of a green fog of coal smoke from the coal stove which I had not realized was backing up. So the whole thing could have been due to oxygen deprivation and the inhalation of toxic fumes.

#### Or could it have been merely a replay of some Frank Stella stripe imagery picked up in your subconscious from the time you spent in his class at Dartmouth?

Oh, ouch! But then, of course, certainly. I make no claims to originality here and I was mightily impressed by Stella's work. The first Stella I ever saw was visible through a window on a wall in an architect's office on eighth street in New York on the Lower East Side and I used to pass it walking across town, not knowing it was a Stella. I decided to stay for summer school after I graduated when I found out he would be teaching there and after I found out the picture in the architects office was from him. This is rather strange because before I collided with Frank I was officially opposed to abstract art.

#### But what was it that changed your mind, and is not this abstract work a complete contradiction to the work you are already known for?

Well, I was struck by the incredible impact of his work, which was the result of such simple processes and working methods, though it did not rely strongly on reference to specific outside or external phenomena – naked ladies, flowers, advertising imagery, historical events, autobiographical events. He sort of proved the case for abstraction by showing us he could make heavy stuff without all the baggage of meaning and comforting references.

A Stella painting of that era was some wood with canvas stretched on it in a shape that matched the pattern painted on it. It is what it is and that's all.

Again, in a world of phantasmagoric beliefs and illusory, handed down, untested truths, one clear, coherent, simple statement is likely going to find wide spread acceptance among the open minded.

Then too, being a fledgling musician at the time (I had been a jazz drummer in college), I did recognize the value of music with words but also music without words and in fact as a great admirer of Bach, I actually preferred his instrumental music to the Cantatas, so I related to abstraction as a form of frozen instrumental music – *that* I could relate to...

Does making referential imagery preclude making abstract imagery? Are they two warring camps, one or the other of which must be chosen? This is probably the case for some, but personally I'm not a strict believer in one over the other. I find it interesting to make vocal music and instrumental music. Not only interesting but also enjoyable.

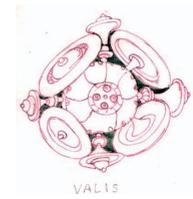
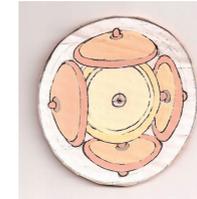
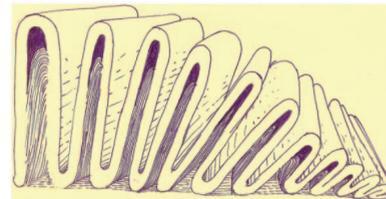
Another thing was that when I arrived in France I had not yet heard of or seen Barnett Newman's abstractions and when I made that notebook of the first Fundulators I had just seen my first Newmans in an art magazine I bought in Paris which again sort of underlined that the fundamental act of painting with a brush without any refinements or bells and whistles or even the fundamental act of drawing with say a pen, is to lay down a path with that brush or line with a pen and again in musical terms that is sort of like one clear note from a trumpet, so I guess I wanted to begin at the beginning and the fact that others had started at that one note kind of thing did not deter me in the interest of not repeating what had already been done, in the interest of being the first on the planet earth to do something. I was actually willing to follow in the footsteps of those who were ahead of me and getting good results.

#### Would it be a step too far to wonder if perhaps your rather more casual attitude towards abstraction was encouraged by your experiences with Dieter Roth?

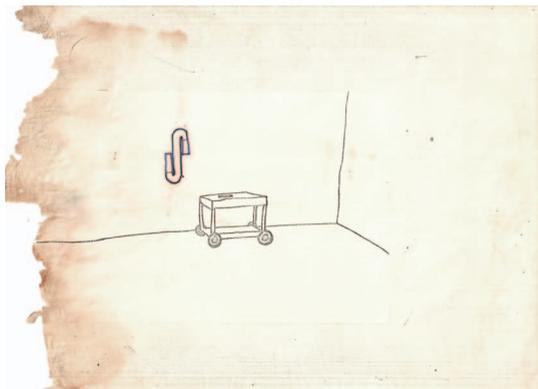
When I arrived in Europe in '77, I bounced from one safe house to another and in each new house there seemed to be Dieter Roth pictures on the walls, Dieter Roth books in the library and sometimes Dieter Roth jewelry on the ladies' hands. I soon got the idea that he was at the center of a certain community. When we finally did meet again in Zurich I found that he and I had shared a certain feeling of constriction under the restrictions of constructivism. He had taught at Yale when Albers was there, and I believe this was an influence he had had some work to process.

I remember Dieter and I spent an afternoon in a sort of institute in honor of a certain Swiss hard edge, geometric abstractionist, and I made the remark that one of his paintings looked like a refrigerator teetering on the edge of a cliff and I'm not so sure that the art critic who was hosting us found this remark so amusing.

I would say that Dieter's work in general was an *encouragement* to following the spontaneous inclinations of one's own inner voice, and, as a person, he was incredibly encouraging to many other artists, myself included.



(1) Leaning Fundulator 2005, ink on card; (2) Alartralan Jaune (Alarm Clock Trapset Lantern Gyrotater), 2009, guache and pencil on paper on cardboard; (3) Valis, 2004, ink on paper.



**Undulator Template and Cart** (for Wall Drawings), circa 1969

Ink and pencil on paper, 21 × 29,7 cm



Photograph of **Single Track Undulator Shifting from Green to Brownish Orange**, 1969

Acrylic on raw unstretched canvas, circa 1524 × 3048 cm

**Weitere Werke:** [www.marlenefrei.com](http://www.marlenefrei.com)

**Galerie & Edition Marlene Frei**

Zwinglistr. 36 (Hof) CH-8004 Zürich

[marlenefrei@bluewin.ch](mailto:marlenefrei@bluewin.ch)

Tel. +41 (0)44 291 20 43 Fax +41 (0)44 291 20 62

Geöffnet Di-Fr 12.00-18.30, Sa 12.00-16.00 Uhr