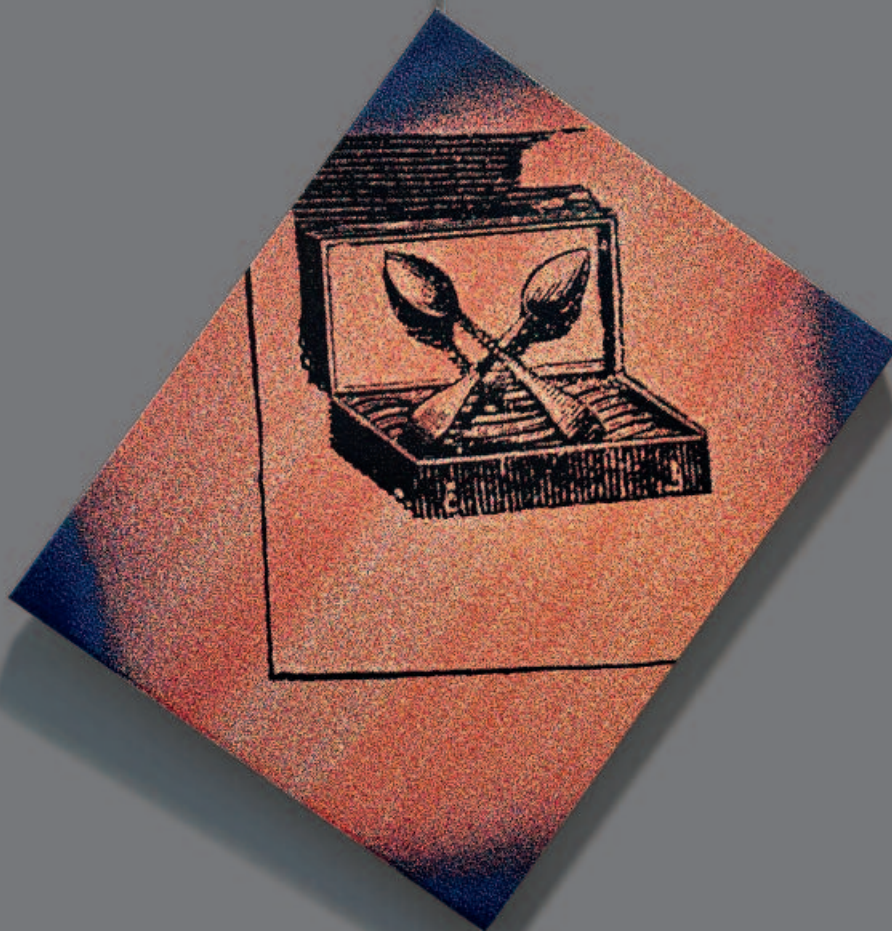


GERMAN  
**ANYBODY** ART  
**CAN DO** AFTER  
**EASY** 1970

(SIGMAR POLKE)



**GALERIE THOMAS**

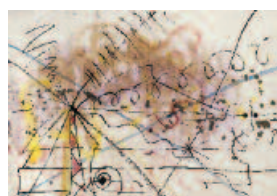
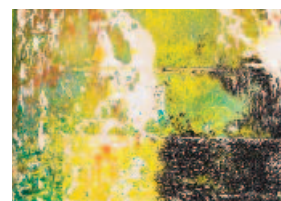
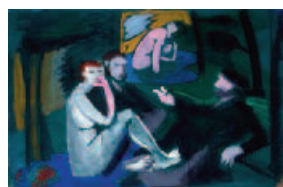
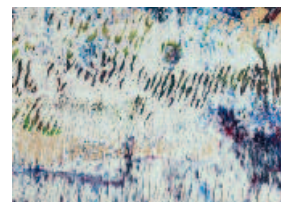
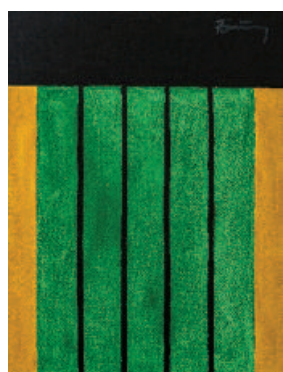
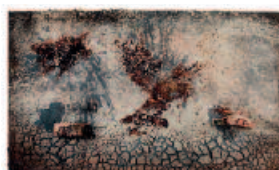
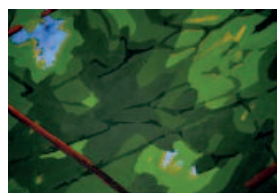
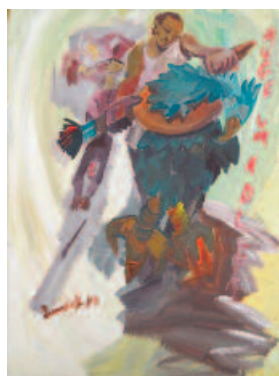
# GERMAN ART AFTER 1970

Art of the 20th Century received significant impulses from positions of German artists. Especially in painting, artistic currents such as Expressionism, Bauhaus, New Objectivity and Surrealism had a strong impact on the Avant-garde before and shortly after the Second World War. In Abstraction as well as in figurative art, these German movements influenced various artistic positions in Europe and in the US. Also after 1970, numerous German artists belonged – and remain – amongst the most acclaimed international positions in Modern Art. In a certainly subjective but cautiously selected display, Galerie Thomas presents – not the comprehensive overview of a far richer art history – but an accentuated display of distinctive representatives.

The exhibition, with partly large-sized works, features around 25 artists such as Anselm Kiefer, Jörg Immendorff, Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Georg Baselitz, A.R. Penck, Günther Förg, Katharina Grosse, Karl Horst Hödicke, Markus Lüpertz, Neo Rauch and Rosemarie Trockel.

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in alphabetical order





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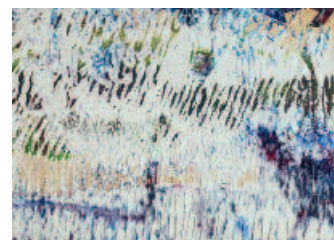
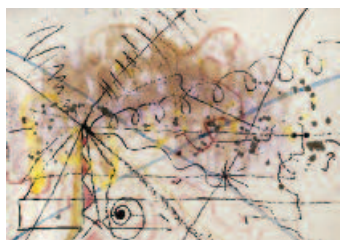
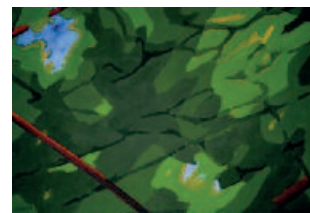
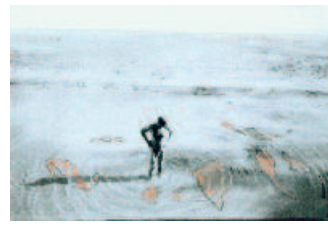
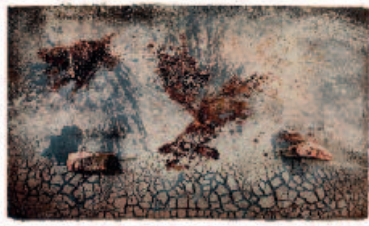
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# ANSELM KIEFER

Anselm Kiefer is one of the internationally most distinguished artists of our time. He is primarily known for his intensive exploration of German history. Hitler's architecture and German legends served him as motifs. Furthermore he explores a broad range of themes his paintings, installations and artist books, among them mythology and identity as well as alchemy, religion and Jewish mysticism. His works are sculpture and painting in one and the diversity of materials he uses seems to be boundless. They are symbols for movement and transience and the quest for the personal identity. Anselm Kiefer studied with Joseph Beuys. In 2008 he received the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade as the first representative of the fine arts. He participated in the documenta in Kassel three times, received the prize of the jury of the Venice Biennale in 1997 as well as the Goslar Award for Modern Art (Kaiserring) and the Praemium Imperiale.







## ANSELM KIEFER

Donaueschingen 1945 – lives in Frankreich

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### Der Universalien-Streit (The Nominalism versus Realism Debate)

shellac and emulsion on linen

2003

190 x 280 cm / 74 7/8 x 110 1/4 in.

#### Provenance

- Studio of the artist
- White Cube
- Private collection, London

Like a large historical tableau, Anselm Kiefer's 2003 work, entitled "Der Universalien-Streit" ("The Nominalism versus Realism Debate"), which also appears in the painting, presents a philosophical dispute as a panoramic diagram.

This debate, which goes back to antiquity and to Plato's theory of ideas, revolved around the question of whether ideas and concepts really existed, especially in the High Middle Ages. There were realists on one side and nominalists on the other. For the realists, the ideas and concepts actually existed and all things existing in the visible world depended on them to a certain extent, an image of the highest reality. The nominalists, however, understood ideas and concepts as abstractions of the mind, as names for things that exist individually and really as such alone. Of course, this is only a very brief, schematic description of the very complex philosophical discussion, which, among other things, was fundamental to the emergence of modern natural sciences and their possibilities of gaining knowledge.

In his large-format work, Kiefer stages the intellectual discussion of the Middle Ages as a real armed conflict with modern military equipment that takes place on the

desolate battlefield of a relieflike, impasto colour landscape and in which the tanks of the "realists" and the "nominalists" face each other.

But in Kiefer's work, the question of the nature of art and its purpose is always present. The possibility or the task for art to find an associative approach to unsolvable or paradoxical problems, just as myths also try to do when they seek to capture in metaphorical stories basic human experiences that are otherwise difficult to describe in rational words, that is Kiefer's theme, as he put it himself: "Art, mythology is another form of knowledge."

Anselm Kiefer summed up his personal universal dispute about the nature of art and its possibilities of describing the incomprehensible in these words:

"The whole of painting, but also literature and everything that has to do with it, is always just walking around something unspeakable, around a black hole or around a crater whose centre you can't enter. And whatever topics you take up, that always has the character of small stones at the foot of the crater - these are landmarks in a circle that hopefully closes ever tighter around the centre."









## ANSELM KIEFER

Donaueschingen 1945 – lives in Frankreich

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### Urd, Werdandi, Skuld

oil, shellac, sand and pigments on canvas

1979

332 x 185.5 cm / 130 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 73 in.

#### Provenance

- Galerie Michael Haas, Berlin
- Private collection, Europe (since 1999)

#### Auction History

- Sotheby's, London, December 10, 1997, lot 44
- Ketterer Kunst, Munich, October 1, 1999, lot 75

#### Exhibited

- Galerie Michael Haas, Berlin 1989. Zehn Jahre Galerie Michael Haas. P. 33 col. ill.
- Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki 2010. Islands Never Found. Ill.

"Urd, Werdandi, Skuld" by Anselm Kiefer specifies in its title the so-called Norns: ancient female beings determining destiny and also known as the "goddesses of fate". They go back to the Old Norse poem "Völuspá", which was written around 1000 AD and is considered the primary source of Norse mythology.

The names of the Norns translate to "Fate" (Urd), "That which is to become" (Werdandi) and "Guilt" or "That which shall be" (Skuld). They are personifications of the "past", the "present" and the "future" and inhabit the roots of "Yggdrasil" known as the immense, cosmic World Tree from where they control the fate of humans and gods.

In "Der Ring des Nibelungen", the last part of Richard Wagner's tetralogy "Götterdämmerung", these three

Norns play also the essential role in the evaluation and prediction of the fateful plot.

Kiefer lets his larger-than-life Norns appear as shadowy, spirit-like figures whose bodies and physiognomy are only hinted at. At their feet lies a white branch from the World Tree which – according to Nordic legend – Wotan had felled and split up.

The relief-like, rich painting by Kiefer underlines the power and violence of the goddesses of fate over the material world. At the same time, they represent a contrast to their immaterial appearances. Kiefer addresses the allegorical translation of all life thrown into uncertainty, an ultimately unexplainable present and future into diverse forms of myth.









## ANSELM KIEFER

Donaueschingen 1945 – lives in Frankreich

Etroits sont les vaisseaux



oil and mixed media on canvas

1998 - 2000

190 x 330 x 38 cm / 74 7/8 x 129 x 15 in.

### Provenance

- Studio of the artist
- Private collection, Rhineland (acquired directly from above)

The poetry collection "Amers" published in 1948 by the French Nobel Prize winner Saint-John Perse was referenced by Anselm Kiefer in numerous works of art and by applying diverse artistic techniques. In particular, the eponymous poem "Étroits sont les vaisseaux" ("Narrow are the vessels") often recurs in Kiefer's oeuvre, such as in this large-scale painting created between 1998 and 2000.

In powerful colour cascades, Kiefer lets a huge tidal wave break in on a water surface. From its centre an erratic metal shape rises. It appears as a ship's prow but in the end remains entirely enigmatic within its individually structured compartments.

Overwritten by date and time indications, the waves of color are scribbled above all upon with tally lists reminiscent of counting down days like on the wall of a prison

cell. Only upon closer inspection does it become apparent that below the floods of colour lies a large photograph. The overall depiction of which remains unrecognizable and only flashes through in smallest parts in a few places.

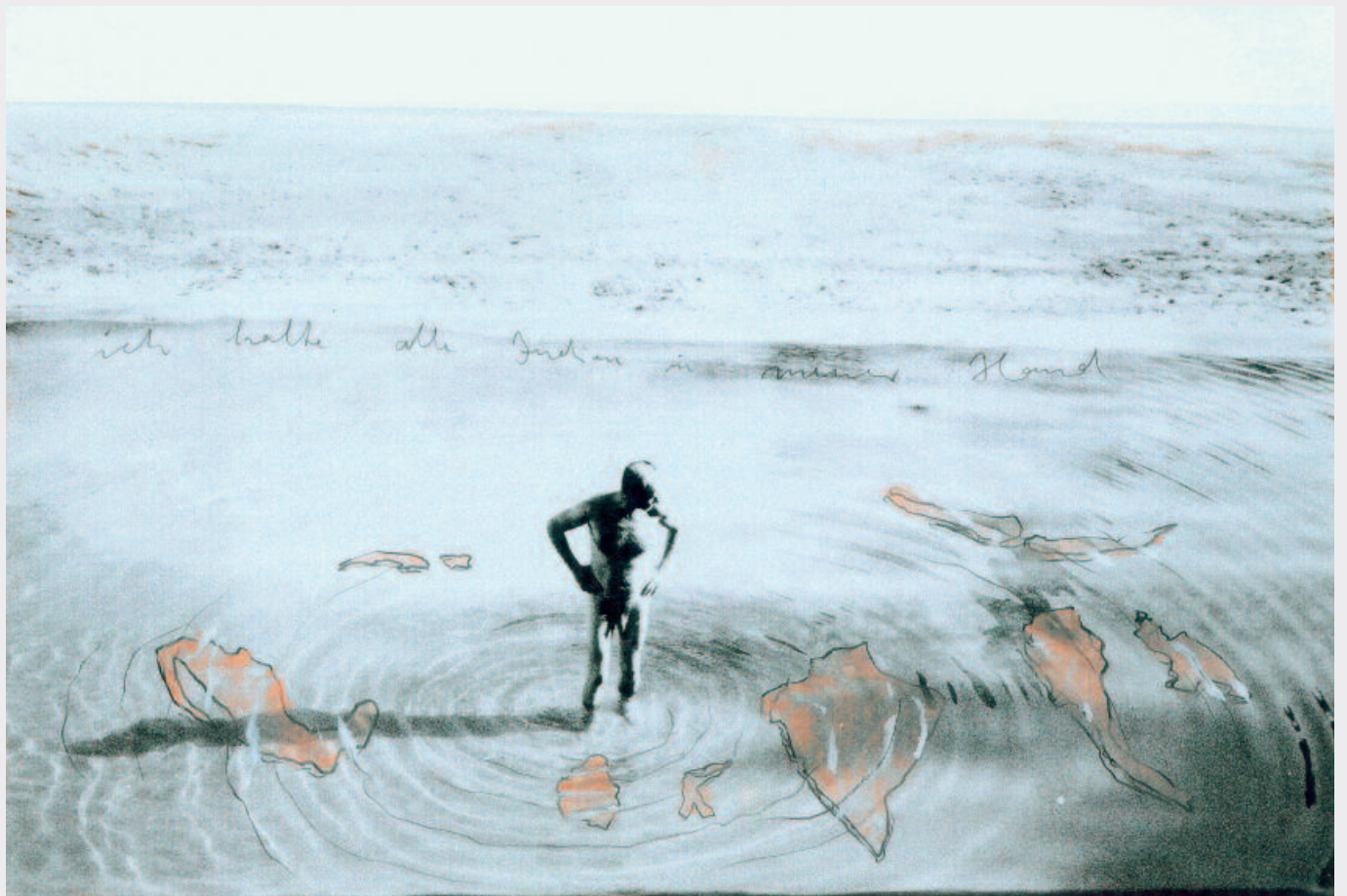
All these elements refer to recurrent motifs from the poem by Saint-John Perse. Metaphors of the sea and ships are associated with themes of love and war. Kiefer visualizes, on the one hand side, the torrential wave of war that has engulfed the world up to now and, on the other hand side, represents the power, the desire and passion of love that Saint-John Perse describes in his verses. Ultimately, the essence is about the indomitable force of time and fate that control our existence. Just as the narrow ship with the lovers in Saint-John Perse poem, Kiefer envisions in his work a metaphor for life:



*„Étroits sont les vaisseaux, étroite notre couche.  
Immense l'étendue des eaux, plus vaste notre empire  
Aux chambres closes du désir.”*

("Narrow are the vessels, narrow is our love bed.  
Boundless the waters, greater our empire  
In the locked rooms of desire.")





## ANSELM KIEFER

Donaueschingen 1945 – lives in Frankreich

Ich halte alle Indien in meiner Hand (I hold all the Indias in my hand)



gouache and pencil on photograph

1995

34.3 x 59 cm / 13 1/2 x 23 1/4 in.

inscribed 'Ich halte alle Indien in meiner Hand' in the centre of the image

### Provenance

- Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac
- Private collection, Germany

Since the Middle Ages it was believed that a descendant of one of the Three Magi, the Christian Priest-king John presided over a kingdom full of riches and inhabited by strange creatures. It was told that his territory extended over the "Three Indias" – referring to India Major (from Malabar to East Asia), to India Minor (from Malabar to Sind) and to India Tertia (the east coast of Africa including Ethiopia). At the time, this tripartite division conforms to the Muslim concept of Hind, Sind and Zanj with the latter specifically referring to the area around present-day coastal Tanzania.

According to tradition, the quote "I hold all the Indias in my hand" came from the Portuguese Vasco da Gama, who discovered the sea route to India. King Manuel bestowed him with the title "Almirante do Mar das Índias" (Admiral of the Sea of the Indias).

The standing figure in the present work by Anselm Kiefer is the artist himself. In the late 1980s, Kiefer travelled extensively for several years, devoting himself mainly to photography and writing. He later processed his impressions from these travels in this series of works.





## ANSELM KIEFER

Donaueschingen 1945 – lives in Frankreich

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### The Argonauts



lead

2014

19 x 23 x 5 cm / 7 1/2 x 9 x 2 in.

unique piece from a series of 90 unnumbered, different works

The edition of 90 unnumbered, different individual copies in various sizes and shapes was created for the Royal Academy of Arts in London, on the occasion of the Kiefer retrospective from September 27 to December 14, 2014.

With a certificate from the Royal Academy of Art, numbered 5774.

Provenance

- Private collection, USA

Kiefer's intense preoccupation with history and mythology is also reflected in the series of different airplane sculptures made of lead. The artist titled the series "The Argonauts" and thus refers to the famous Argonaut myth and the hero Jason. The protagonist, together with an illustrious group of heroes sets out with the transcendental speed ship "Argo" to bring back the "Golden Fleece" to Thessaly.

Kiefer has repeatedly and intensively reworked the widely ramified and fascinating myth of Jason in many of his works: "What apples were for Cézanne, the story

of the Argonauts is for me," Kiefer once said. Emphasizing the militant symbolism of the saga, Jason's ship in Kiefer's work becomes a warplane, another leitmotif in Kiefer's artistic output. The plane is made of heavy, archaic lead, the metal par excellence characteristic of Kiefer. This actually renders it incapable of flight, but it gains significance in the context of Kiefer's iconography of works and opens up new levels of interpretation that go beyond the saga of the Argonauts.



# ROSEMARIE TROCKEL



Rosemarie Trockel studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, where she has been a professor since 1998. Her oeuvre, which always includes a provocative, political or social statement, often criticizes the art business and traditional gender roles. Her versatile practice includes drawing, sculpture, photography, installation, objects, knitted pictures and videos. In the late 1980s Trockel's oeuvre was not only recognized in Germany, but also in the US, with exhibitions at the MoMA New York, in Chicago and in Boston. In 1997 she was invited to participate in documenta Kassel, in 1999 she was the first woman to be included in the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale. One of the many art prizes she received, was the renowned Kaiserring of the City of Goslar in 2011. Rosemarie Trockel is, nationally as well as internationally, one of the best known female German artists.





ROSEMARIE TROCKEL  
Schwerte 1951 – lives in Köln

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Untitled (Pompon)



wool, styrofoam, puppet  
1999  
diameter 185 cm / 72 7/8 in.

With a photo certificate from the artist.

Provenance

- Gallery Ileana Tounda, Athens
- Private collection, Athens

Exhibited

- Monika Sprüth Gallery, Milan; Ileana Tounda Gallery, Athens 1999/2000. Rosemarie Trockel, Pausa
- MAXXI – Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo, Rome; Museum Ludwig, Cologne 2006.  
Rosemarie Trockel – Post-Menopause. P. 200 ill.
- Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki 2014.  
The Desire for Freedom – Europe 1945-2000: Encounters between Shifting Boundaries. P. 241 col. ill.

1999 Rosemarie Trockel represented the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale, she created a voluptuous sculpture of a ball made of wool or "pompon" on which a sleeping baby lies upon. The exhibition was entitled "Pausa".

The surreal, almost fairy-tale-like scene is mysterious and unsettling. Although the "pompon" may be associated –

through its soft, homely materiality – with the harmlessness of a children's woollen bonnet, the monumental size and presence of the object alone shifts the peaceful impression into the uncanny. Despite all the momentary protection, the child sleeping on this soft, giant ball is in a deceptively secure situation, as the overall unstable position on the curved surface suggests.



Since the 1980s, Trockel addresses recurring themes of role models, female and male connotations and social conventions in her artistic work not only from a feminist point of view, but also from the point of view of a child or childhood in general. Her wool pictures, hotplate constellations, films and installations deal in an ironic, sometimes raw but never oblivious way. She questions gender roles and the social environment that an individual is assigned to through educationally induced ideas or clichéd concepts. Trockel highlights how social cohesion is associated with ordinary fate, as if a biologically predetermined rule of how an individual should live and what place he or she should occupy actually exists. She challenges through her art repeatedly in a subtle, hermetic or grotesque way that a fear of free self-determination can trigger a trauma – the baby sleeping on the “pom-pom” is a very impressive symbol for this dichotomy.

Sleep and the unconditional freedom of feeling and thinking whilst sleeping – of dreaming – are not without reason another, constant recurring and varying theme in

the oeuvre of the artist. The disruption of the otherwise inescapable is “paused” during sleep. Not surprisingly, Trockel later included this work in an exhibition, which again aroused a feministic-ironic debate on predetermined and power-oriented images of women – it was no coincidence naming this exhibition: “Menopause”.

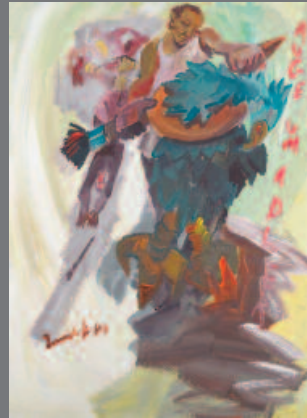




**KARL HORST  
HÖDICKE**



**JÖRG  
IMMENDORFF**







KARL HORST HÖDICKE  
Nuremberg 1938 – lives in Berlin

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Gefrühstückt wird im Freien



oil on canvas  
1979  
200 x 300 cm / 78 3/4 x 118 in.  
verso signed, dated and titled

Provenance

- Private collection, Berlin
- Galerie Thomas, Munich (2013)
- Private collection, France (acquired from the above in 2013)
- Private collection, Dusseldorf

Karl Horst Hödicke is known as one of the pioneers of the New Figuration, a group of painters from the 1960s who favoured figurative painting to the otherwise prevailing abstraction in post-war art. Their point of reference were not Bauhaus, Informel and American post-war modernism, but rather German Expressionism and 19th-century painting. Here, Hödicke, also in his position as an academy teacher, became a particular important link between the new figurative painting of the sixties and the so-called "Junge Wilde", who developed this artistic movement during the 1980s further and induced a more sassy, almost aggressive pop-cultural twist – among Hödicke's students, were for example Salomé and Helmut Middendorf.

In his paintings, Karl Horst Hödicke dealt intensively with German history, Symbolism and German post-war society – just as colleagues of his generation such as Jörg Immendorff, Markus Lüpertz or AR Penck did so.

Yet, direct reference to the great masters and role models of art history also play an important part in his canon of topics. "Gefrühstückt wird im Freien" is a paraphrase of the renowned painting "Le déjeuner sur l'herbe" by Edouard Manet, one of the most central figures at the beginning of modern painting. Besides, the art-historical significance from a painterly and iconographic point of view, the scandal triggered by Manet with this painting in French 19th century society is also a vital aspect why Hödicke, like many other modern and contemporary artists, choose to reference the iconic work.

Hödicke thus inscribes himself in a tradition that aims both to refer to as well as to challenge and overcome the Masters. Setting his representation in the same canvas size as Manet, Hödicke paints his version in a far more violent, expressive gesture and alienates the composition.







JÖRG IMMENDORFF  
Bleckede 1945 – 2007 Dusseldorf

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Auge um Adler (An Eye for an Eagle)

oil on canvas

1981

164 x 120 cm / 64 1/2 x 47 1/4 in.

signed and dated lower left, titled on the right side

Provenance

- Studio of the artist
- Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne
- Private collection (acquired from the above in 2004)
- Private collection (since 2020)

Auction History

- Christie's London: February 13, 2020, lot 190

Exhibited

- Zurich, Kunsthaus Zurich, Immendorff, 1983-1984, p. 170, no. 118, p. 146 ill.
- Warsaw, Muzeum Narodowe Warszawa, Immendorff, 1998, no. 25, p. 159 ill.

The apparently decapitated eagle, whose head, like that of Holofernes or John the Baptist in classical painting, is presented on a tray, which here seems to be a mirror; the male figure reminiscent of a worker and the painter falling next to him; plus the slogan-like titles in the picture: these are typical elements in the painting of Jörg Immendorff, who has dealt with German history and political agitation through his art since the late 1960s. In his work, the biblical saying of retribution "an eye for an eye" becomes an appeal or a warning related to the German heraldic animal, which the artist depicts oscillating between figuration and gestural painting. For Immendorff, art and painting in particular are not an end in themselves, but must serve a political attitude that does not justify them, but accompanies them. Until German reunification, alongside the classic artist alter ego of the monkey, the eagle was the recurring symbolic animal in his painting, which was understood as a contribution to social discussion.

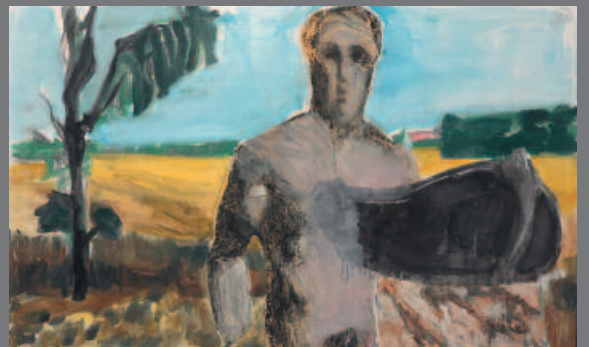
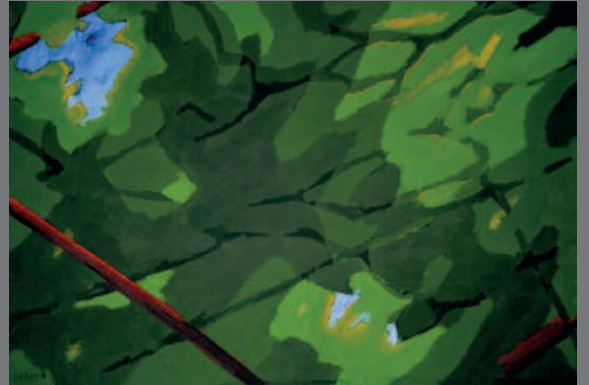
How important it was for Immendorff to claim that his art had socio-political relevance is shown not only in the well-known quote in which the painter demands that art should become a potato – i.e. a staple food for all social classes – but also in this statement: "Painting should not become hectic brushwork without position."

At the climax of Cold War, which was perceived particularly sensitively in divided Germany, and, in terms of art history, at the beginning of the triumph of neo-expressionist figurative painting by the "Junge Wilde", this painting from 1981 is an outstanding example of German painting of the 1980s and, moreover, a characteristic work by Jörg Immendorff, not only thematically, but also formally.

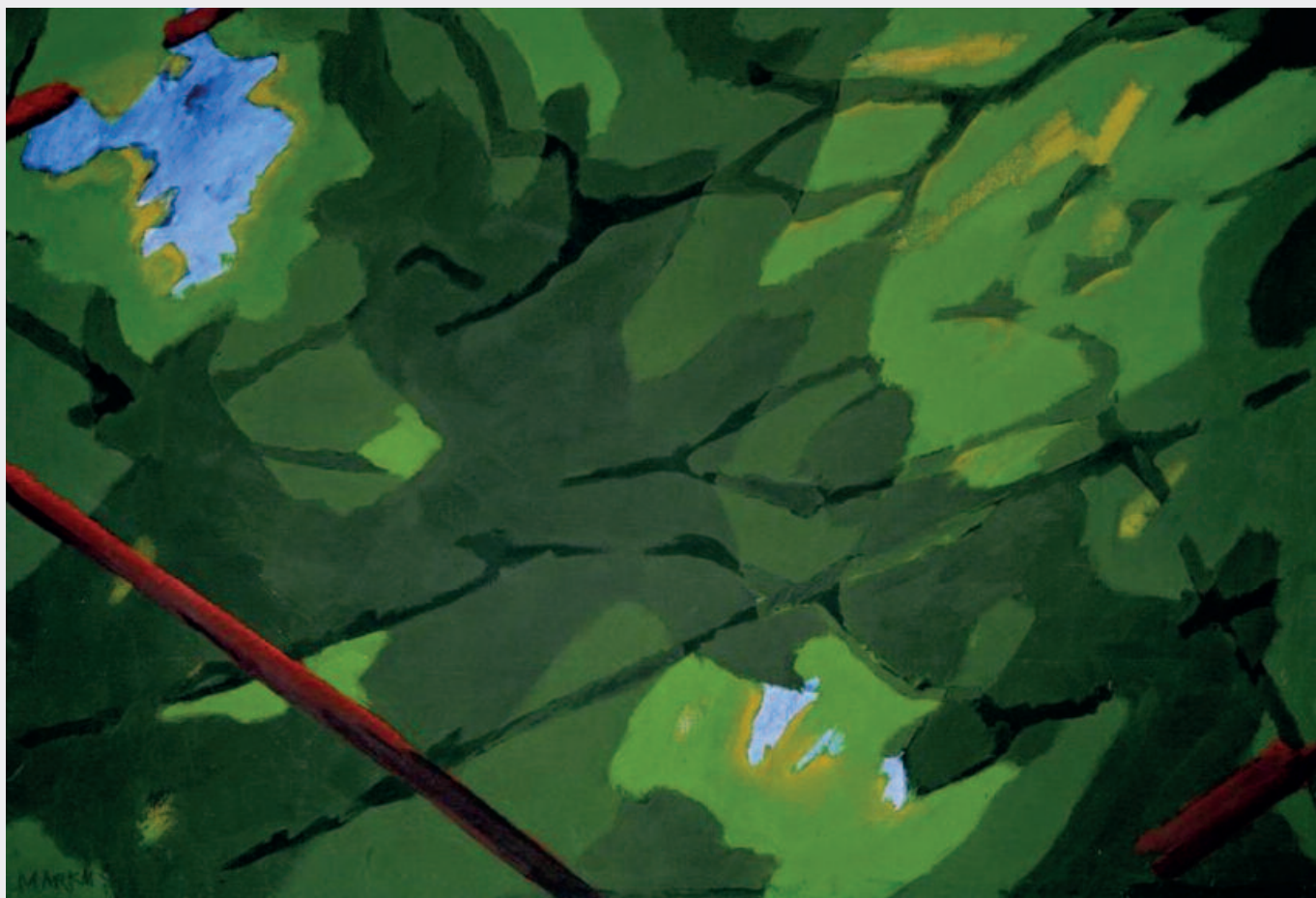




# MARKUS LÜPERTZ



Markus Lüpertz is one of the best known contemporary German artists; he is often classified as a 'Neo Expressionist'. After having studied at the Werkkunstschule in Krefeld, he went to Berlin in 1962 as a freelance artist, where he started so-called 'Dithyrambic Painting'. For him, this style of painting was a form, but also an expression of his artistic passion, as he wrote in his manifesto 'Art That Gets in the Way. Dithyrambic Manifesto' from 1966. In 1970, Lüpertz was awarded the Villa Romana prize, Florence. From 1976 to 1987, he was a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe. He created his first sculptures in 1981, and they soon occupied an important place in his oeuvre. Nevertheless, the versatile artist also made stained-glass windows for the cathedral in Nevers as well as opera stage settings and costumes, and authored poems en passant. In 1986, he accepted a chair at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, became its director in 1988 and ran it for twenty years. In 1990, he was awarded the Lovis Corinth Prize of the Künstlergilde Esslingen.





## MARKUS LÜPERTZ

Liberec/Böhmen 1941 – lives in Düsseldorf

### Laubdach (Foliage Tent)



acrylic on canvas

1970

201.5 x 295 cm / 79 3/8 x 116 1/8 in.

signed lower left 'Markus'

#### Provenance

- Galerie Rudolf Springer, Berlin
- Private collection, Germany (purchased in 1970 from the above)
- Private collection (since 1991)

From around 1964, Markus Lüpertz claimed the concept of dithyramb to typify his painting. As from 1970, the artist began his group of works centred on "German Motifs". For Lüpertz this included in particular ideologically and historically charged objects with a symbolic character, such as steel helmets, military caps and heads of crops as well as forests. In the sense of Lüpertz's "dithyrambic" technique, he deprived those symbols from their significance, emptied them of their expressiveness and replaced content-related affirmation with free painterly association. This approach was a new form of abstraction, as he himself made clear:

"Abstraction not in the sense of abstracting, but as the invention of a nonsensical object ... As a kind of UFO, an element stranded from another world. As a new, nonsensical, poetic object. That is how I understood abstraction at the time: as the incomprehensible."

Since Lüpertz was awarded the Villa Romana Prize, he lived for a longer period of time in Florence in 1970. That same year he painted "Laubdach" (Foliage Tent). The then still omnipresent fascist symbolism in everyday life and in Italian architecture may have stimulated Lüpertz

to reflect on his "German motifs" even more strongly than before. This also included the motif of forests, which already played an important role in the Arts at least ever since German Romanticism. The forest stands as a symbol for the Germanic, the Nordic, but also the uncanny and thus as a metaphor for the spiritual in art and literature.

"Laubdach" (Foliage Tent) depicts a dense tangle of leaves of one or more treetops: Here and there are a branch or a small glimpse of the blue-sky breaks through. Despite of the two-dimensional representation of a simple, almost banal subject, Lüpertz clearly invites further associations. These associations lie however entirely by the viewer. In terms of the upward facing perspective from below, one might think of Italian ceiling frescoes. Or else, as a comparison with the painting "Late Summer I – dithyrambic" (also from 1970) alludes to, camouflage comes to one's mind? A military camouflage net that Lüpertz stripped off its martial meaning and played down as a "foliage tent".







# MARKUS LÜPERTZ

Liberec/Böhmen 1941 – lives in Düsseldorf

## Artikel 3 (Grundgesetz-Zyklus) (Article 3 (Constitution Series))

oil and mixed media on canvas in original artist's frame  
2012  
126.5 x 207 cm / 49 5/6 x 81 1/2 in.  
monogrammed upper right

### Provenance

- MM Promotion, Cologne
- Private collection (acquired from the above in 2012)

### Exhibited

- PaulLoebe-Haus. Markus Lüpertz. Das Grundgesetz. Berlin 2014.

In 2012 Markus Lüpertz engaged himself artistically with the first 19 articles of the German Constitution, the so called "Grundrechte" (Fundamental Rights). He created 19 paintings, one for each article, as well as a bronze sculpture.

The sculpture portrays a male torso in shades of red. This figure recurs in all 19 paintings, like in the painting "Artikel 3 (Grundgesetz-Zyklus)" (Article 3 (Constitution Series)), too. Lüpertz refers here to the third fundamental right, the article, which proclaims and guarantees the equality of the people.

The motif of the male torso recurs repetitively in Lüpertz' works: a direct reference to Antiquity but also a symbol for both imperfection and vulnerability, a hieroglyph for

humankind, for humanity in general. For Lüpertz, Antiquity and the reception of it, is a kind of "Fundamental Right" of the Arts, a standard and a point of reference. Its interpretation by an artist provides the benchmark for his or hers own creative work but at the same time is also an erratic and iconic symbol for human kind.

In all variations of the Constitution Series, is the male figure set in an environment reminiscent of the landscape in Brandenburg that Lüpertz must have looked upon right from the window of his studio: fields, meadows, forests and a single tree represent the backdrop in which the torso figure is set in.

This constellation is also reminiscent of earlier Lüpertz compositions, for example, in the motif or the dithyrambic



paintings. Here, from the beginning of his careers as a painter, Lüpertz has been linking the romantic myth of the forest with reflections on a latent "German" symbolism. However, nature is never unspoiled. There is never no trace of an Arcadian, pristine landscape, but instead, fields and houses in the background, that account for as a landscape designed and cultivated by human beings. Culture and nature fall upon one another, just as they the ancient torso is artificially transcribed into a male figure

The last motif defining the painting cycle and this painting in particular the torso is always accompanied by a boat. A ship or a rowing boat, in the present painting the torso is even physically penetrated by it. This mysterious symbol in a waterless landscape allows for endless associations

of travel, departure, the active shaping of one's environment, of which however, Lüpertz leaves all entirely up to the viewer.

The artist develops a vocabulary for the representation of his theme, which he runs through in an expressive, intensely colourful but at the same time casual painting style involving glazing with thin paints.

In these metaphoric paintings, Lüpertz interprets the Fundamental Rights as a kind of ancient "idyll", an ideal state from which reality repeatedly threatens to deviate. Its fragility and instability mean a constant call to set out on the journey toward its approximate perfection.

# A.R. PENCK



A. R. Penck is the pen name of the artist Ralf Winkler and is his sly response to the dogmatic cultural policy of East Germany and the harassment he suffered as its former citizen, being an artist. At the same time, it points to a geomorphologist by the same name whom he holds in high esteem. In the early 1960s, strongly schematised figures reminiscent of prehistoric cave paintings appeared in his oeuvre. These archaic figures and symbolic signs henceforth became the characteristic feature of his bold and colourful pictorial and formal language which he also applied to his sculptures. In 1980, Penck was expatriated. He moved to West Germany and taught as a professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1989 to 2005. Penck exhibited his works at the documenta and the Venice Biennale several times.





A.R. PENCK

Dresden 1939 – 2017 Zurich

TTT mit A.Silva, Fränkie und A.R.Penck



acrylic on canvas

early 1990s

78 x 95 x 4 cm / 30 3/4 x 37 3/8 x 1 1/2 in.

signed lower left

Provenance

- Private collection, Germany

Auction History

- Lempertz Cologne, December 3, 1994, lot 769

The title, which appears cryptic at first glance, is easily deciphered through Penck's second artistic passion alongside painting: music. "TTT", re-formed as "The New TTT" in the 1990s, was a jazz band featuring A.R. Penck as drummer, who has performed in New York, among other places, since the 1970s and has recorded numerous records with different casts. The others mentioned in the title are Alan Silva, who played synthesizers, and Frank "Frankie" Wollny on guitar and bass. "TTT" stands for "Triple Trip Touch", and the band still exists after Penck's death in loose partnerships, sometimes with Markus Lüpertz as the "artistic" successor at the piano.

Using Penck's characteristic sign language, the painting apparently presents the three band members in full action, arranged in a circle around a central star or sun motif, which may also be read as the bass drum from Penck's drum kit. His "stick figures", which here as so often seem phallic like archaic fertility symbols, are grouped around the wheel-like centre with various gestures, giving the entire composition a rhythmic, circulating character.

Penck's interest in the musical patterns and improvisation of (free) jazz is combined with his painterly endeavours to find a crude visual language that is as de-individualised as possible, which can establish a zero level of figurative communication in recurring symbols, simple legibility and serial arrangement. Penck's rudimentary forms are not only a rejection of any kind of normative canon of forms, against which he opposed both in his then still socialist-realistic East German homeland, but also in the Western commercial world of the Federal Republic of Germany at that time. As much as Penck's figures may be a reaction to urban art in New York and European graffiti, they are above all an attempt to find a direct visual expression that is not subject to any external rules – an endeavour that Penck pursues in this work associatively linked to the free tonal patterns of jazz.







A.R. PENCK

Dresden 1939 – 2017 Zurich

Zufall-Freund oder Feind (Chance-Friend or Enemy)



acrylic on canvas

2001

80 x 100 cm / 31 1/2 x 39 1/3 in.

signed lower right

Provenance

- Studio of the artist
- Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne (2002)
- Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne
- Private collection, Italy (acquired from the above)
- Private collection, France (since 2022)

Exhibited

- Galerie Michael Werner. A.R. Penck. Neue Bilder. Cologne 2002
- Michael Werner Gallery. Recent paintings by A.R. Penck. New York 2002, No. 6 ill.

A male figure that seems to be falling or floating – actually depicted in a pictogram, as is typical of Penck – appears here against the background of a ghostly black silhouette reminiscent of the shape of an eagle. The two figures are surrounded by a row of falling dice that symbolize the coincidence mentioned in the title.

Of course, such a subject, in connection with the title that the artist gave the work, brings to mind a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, which was important for the development of modern literature and art: very early on, the typographic setting of "Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hasard" ("A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance") succeeded in combining image and text into an inseparable unit. Coincidence, random creative design should remain a working principle of modernism,

and improvisation is also a basis of the creative process for Penck. In view of the figure determined by chance, Penck seems to be capturing a cipher of fate, of people thrown into their fate. The eagle is also associated with a more contemporary social criticism for the eagle as a German heraldic animal is always a reference to Penck with his German-German biography, to his latent or manifest opposition to the ruling system. Here, too, the fate in which system the individual lives, is random and not good or bad per se.

Chance as an important intellectual principle of modernism and post-war modernism, be it intellectually in surrealism or structurally in gestural abstraction, two of Penck's important artistic reference points, remains ambivalent: his work can be just as fruitful as it is meaningless







# NEO RAUCH





NEO RAUCH  
Leipzig 1960 – lives in Leipzig

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Lamm

oil on canvas

2006

280 x 210 cm / 110 1/4 x 82 3/4 in.

signed and dated lower right

Provenienz

- Galerie Eigen + Art, Leipzig/Berlin
- Private collection, USA (since 2006)

As the most important representative of the so-called "New Leipzig School", Neo Rauch stands for a figurative painting that combines elements of history painting and surrealism. His bizarre, surprising and enigmatic pictorial inventions, which he composes in his typical realistic style reminiscent of poster art in colour and flow, have made him one of the most successful and most discussed contemporary painters.

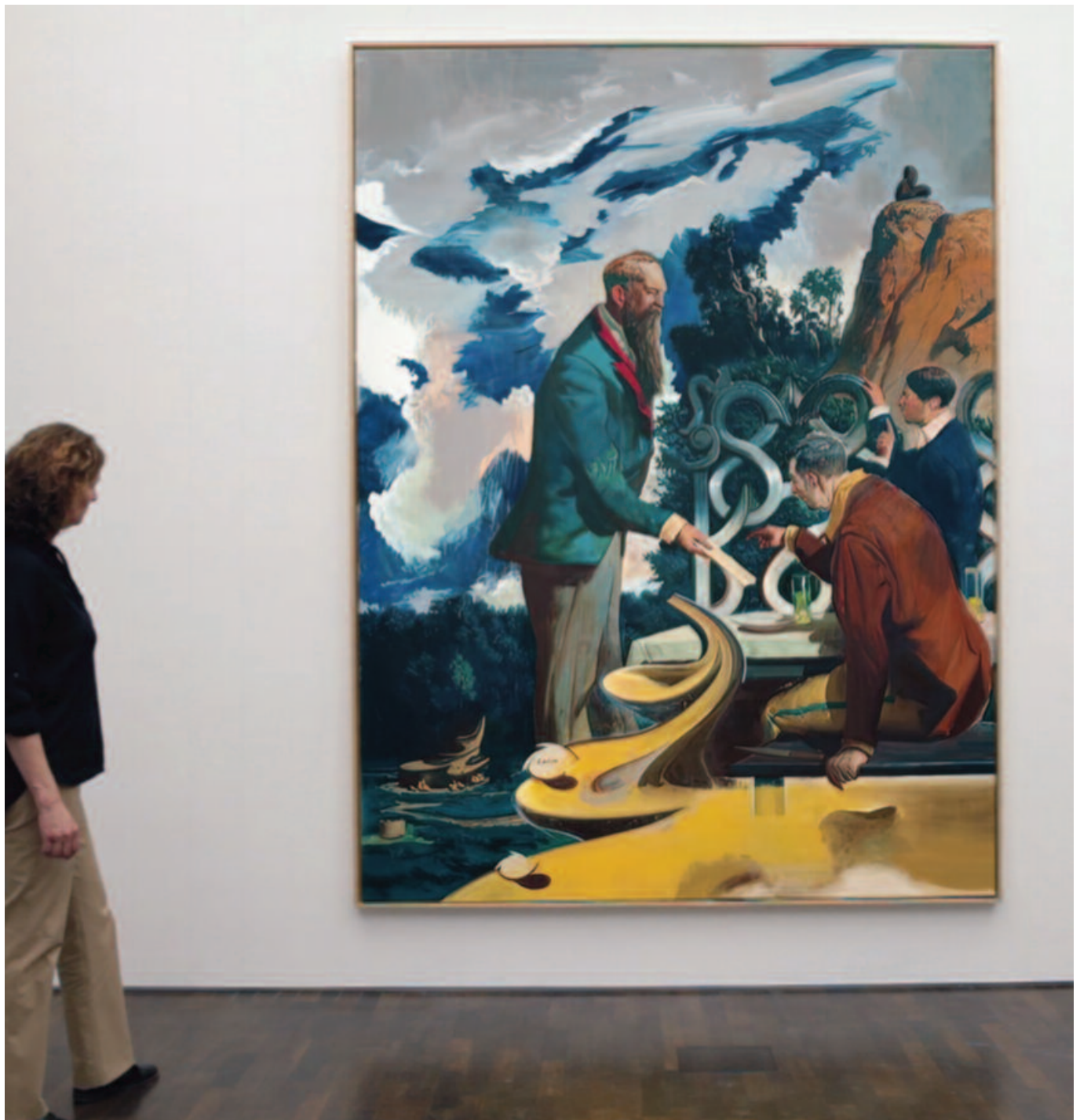
As typical for Neo Rauch, in "Lamm" ("Lamb") the iconography of his composition consists of several figures. In a strangely surreal environment that cannot be located in space and time, they have obviously come together for a significant meeting that largely defies interpretation. Gathered around a sparsely set table against a dramatic backdrop of clouds and mountains, the three men seem to be discussing over a slim book held by the standing

person. The nature of their relationship remains unclear. Bizarre, partially dissolving stone and architectural formations surround them and reinforce the impression of a dream face. According to his own statement, images of the unconscious and dreamed associations play an important role in Neo Rauch's paintings. The lamb, which gives the work its title, does not appear in the picture, but only as a small lettering in one of the enigmatic cartouches in the foreground.

The realistic painting style, which is typical of Rauch, evokes history painting or romantic painting from the 19th century. For the artist, the formal aspect of representation, the painterly itself, is the essential component of his work, as he put it in an interview:

"The how is the decisive question in painting anyway. The how triumphs over the what, otherwise the painting





is useless, otherwise it is pure 'journaille'. It is simply that the senses graze every square inch of the canvas and thereby nourish the psychic organism, the soul. That's all you can expect from art, if it's there. And if the nutrients one takes this way also carry information, so much the better. But it has to be in this order."

However, what is depicted, the enigmatic scene, challenges the viewer to infer a context of meaning and to reflect on the story Rauch's painting seems to tell. This allows the artist to explore dreams and free flights of thought, the hermetic of the world and the imagined metaphysical space behind it, or at least to make it perceptible.

As Neo Rauch sums up in two sentences:  
 "The canvas is basically a kind of parabolic antenna conducive to receiving transmissions from metaphysical space. (...) And if my paintings can contribute in that respect to the project of re-enchanting the world, then I will gladly call myself a romantic."



NEO RAUCH  
Leipzig 1960 – lives in Leipzig

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Die Fährte

oil on canvas  
2007  
250 x 200 cm / 98 x 79 in.  
signed and dated lower left

Provenance

- Galerie Eigen + Art, Leipzig/Berlin
- Private collection, USA (since 2008)

Exhibited

- Max Ernst Museum, Brühl 2007/2008. Neo Rauch – Para

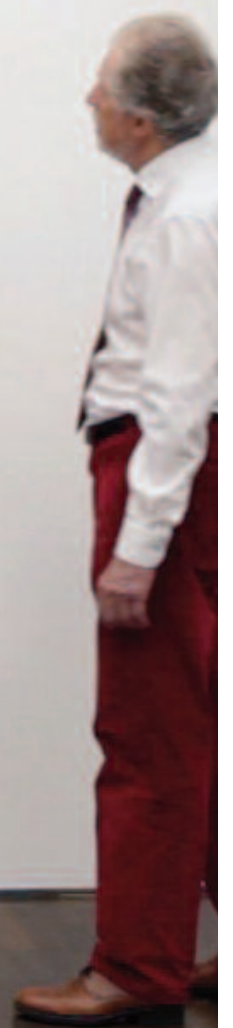
In the artistic heritage of Surrealism, Neo Rauch refers explicitly to the subconscious as a source for his pictorial inventions and allows room for coincidence as a compositional element. The collage-like technique, the deformations and disassociations of the figures and objects, their erratic purpose in the painting and their indistinct meaning are all typical elements of the surrealist aesthetic. An aesthetic of surprises that assembles what does not belong together, visualises the unexpected and freely associates dream images in order to open a door upon the subconscious.

The puzzle thus arising and the suspected meaning resulting from this for the viewer, however, remain unresolved over time in the face of an enigmatic iconography that cannot be interpreted.

It is precisely this, which make the artists' paintings so appealing: the works appear to depict a great deal and to unfold an unprecedented story, yet actually always remain inapprehensible in the real world. It is this view into the subconscious that only reveals itself in the pictorially manifested dream world of Neo Rauch. The painter himself commented on this intention as follows:

"I am obviously a narrator; I need the representational to approach the poetry of my dreams more closely. (...) I can now finally spell with these things. (...) I try to direct. I try to curb the things and deliberately stage the aspects of the subconscious. (...) That is what's beautiful about the principle of painting, that the upheavals in the soul, the undersea currents manifest themselves very directly, whether I want them to or not."







NEO RAUCH  
Leipzig 1960 – lives in Leipzig

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LAUT

oil on paper on wood

1993

4 panels, 330 x 327 cm / 130 x 128 3/4 in.

signed and dated center right

Provenance

- Galerie Eigen+Art, Leipzig/Berlin
- Private collection, USA

Between 1993 and 1995, Neo Rauch created nine large-format, round paintings, of which four are today found in museum collections. This work group also includes "LAUT" from 1993, one of the earliest works in which Rauch transferred the classic form of the tondo to the monumental format. The circle, consisting of four parts, shows two image fields and a text field with the eponymous word "LAUT" in capitals in the lower third. The two image fields show two figures, a kind of long table and objects that are difficult to identify. A cross or a plus sign is also repeated in both image fields. The figures in the right image field are wearing headphones, one of the few legible details, which seem to refer to the title. While the tables lend a sense of depth, the ceiling lamp in the scene to the right is highly reminiscent of Picasso's formulation in his painting "Guernica". The work on the whole seems like a collage; a feeling that is enhanced by the technique and materials – paper and wood. The representation has something of a woodcut print, resulting in the influence of German Expressionism on Rauch's painting becoming tangible in the overall show. The consecutive painting segments, in which the figures and the composition repeat in modified forms, almost result in the impression of a film sequence. The large field of text in turn can be associated with poster art, advertising banners or propaganda panels, which are in fact of significance for Neo Rauch's pictorial language.

1993 marks the year of Neo Rauch's artistic breakthrough, both with regard to his own work and his public perception. For the artist himself, tondi like "LAUT" are the first completely valid, recognised pieces in his body of work. Neo Rauch links the origination of the tondi and thus the beginning of his autonomous painting with the inspiration coming from a dream, a kind of subconscious revelation, and he himself presents this event in the manner of an artist anecdote:

"I dreamt that I was in a large hall with square walls, like a cube, but very large, very high, and there was a large mandala on the wall. The entire wall was covered and was black, and it was very structured. It was made of iron and there was a very small swastika in the middle – not the political swastika but the Buddhist symbol. I had never seen anything like this before. It definitely came from the collective unconscious. So I changed direction and painted the [first] large tondo, and that was the start."

And continuing:

"That was a reference to a concentration, to a finding oneself, a centring, to which I subjected myself, in that I subsequently produced these large, black tondi. They were something like an embracing of the material on the floor of the children's room, the playground, in the sense of an attempt to bring everything that is still in my hands,





is available, together; a circumnavigation of myself. I also began to look more closely once again at figuration and bring it to bear with the necessary love.

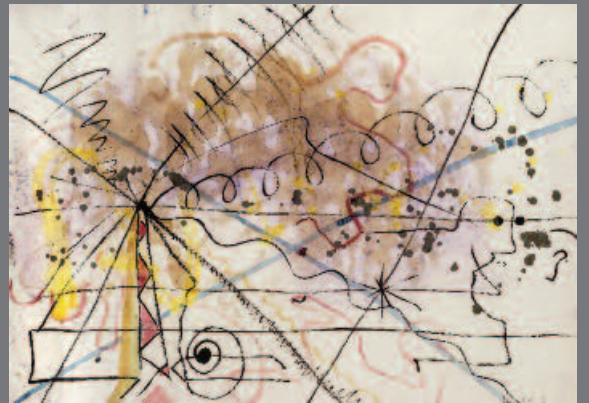
That Neo Rauch refers so explicitly to the subconscious as a source for pictorial inventions and allows room for coincidence as a compositional element is a clear reference to Surrealism. The collage-like technique, the deformations and disassociations of the figures and objects, the erratic task in the painting and the unclear purpose of which – all of these are typical elements of a surrealist aesthetic. It is an aesthetic of the surprising, which brings together that which does not belong together, visualises the unexpected and freely associates dream images in order to open a door to the subconscious. The hole, the omission in the middle of the left half of the painting, which represents an opening into the materiality of the painting, at the same time seems as if visual information had been erased. The puzzle thus arising and the suscep-

ted meaning resulting from this for the viewer, however, remain unresolved over time in the face of an enigmatic iconography that cannot be interpreted.

It is precisely this that constitutes the charm of Neo Rauch's paintings, which appear to refer to a great deal and tell an unprecedented story, but nonetheless always remain impalpable. It is this view into the subconscious that reveals itself in the pictorially manifested dream world of Neo Rauch. The painter himself has commented on this intention as follows:

"I am obviously a narrator; I need the representational to approach the poetry of my dreams more closely. (...) I can now finally spell with these things. (...) I try to direct. I try to curb the things and deliberately stage the aspects of the subconscious. (...) That is what's beautiful about the principle of painting, that the upheavals in the soul, the undersea currents manifest themselves very directly, whether I want them to or not."

# SIGMAR POLKE



In 1963, Polke coined the term 'Capitalistic Realism', together with Gerhard Richter and Konrad Lueg. Polke's paintings of the 1960s show ordinary mass products on substrates such as wallpaper or fabric. For inspiration, he drew on decorations and advertising of that time. From 1963 on, Polke used dot matrices. In his works, he criticized consumerism and politics, but always humorously. As of the 1980s, he worked with the most diverse techniques and materials in his abstract paintings, for instance with photochemical substances or ones that were sensitive to heat and moisture, but also with poisonous substances. Polke was awarded numerous honours, including the Golden Lion at the XLII Biennale di Venezia, the Carnegie Award at the Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, the Kaiserring of Goslar, and the Praemium Imperiale of the Japan Art Association, Tokyo. Comprehensive retrospectives of his works were held in 2001 in Humlebaek, Oslo and Cologne, as well as in 2007 at the Museum Moderner Kunst (MUMOK) in Vienna, and in 2014/2015 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London and at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne.







SIGMAR POLKE  
Oels, Silesia 1941 – 2010 Cologne

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Goldhair

spray enamel, acrylic and gouache on paper  
1999

99.7 x 69.9 cm / 39 1/4 x 25 1/2 in.

signed and dated lower right, titled in the lower centre 'Goldhaar' as well as dedicated lower left 'Für Fritz Storz'

We thank Mr. Michael Trier for his kind scientific advice.

Provenance

- Michael Werner Gallery, New York
- Private collection, Portugal
- Private collection (acquired from the above)
- Private collection, Miami/ Toronto (since 2014)

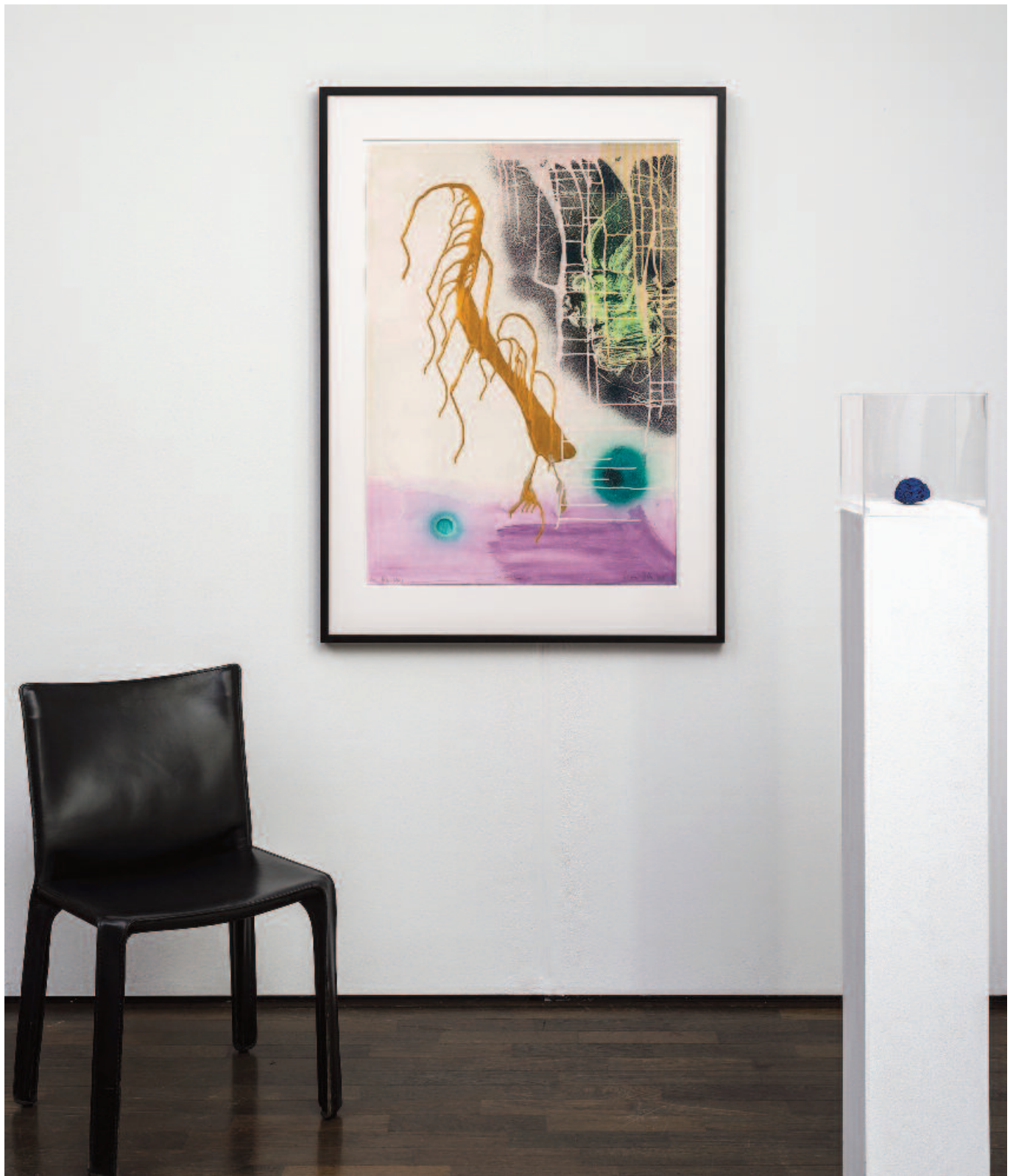
"It is the process in itself that interests me. The painting is not entirely necessary. The unpredictable turns out to be most fascinating."  
(Sigmar Polke)

It is this process-based aspect that Sigmar Polke also explores in his "Farbproben" (Colour Samples) from the 1970s onwards. Here he experiments with soils, chemicals, and pigments and – depending on the state into which the artist converts each one of them – observes their transformation on the painterly support. Just as with colours, Polke experiments with different painting techniques and combines them on the picture carrier.

"Goldhaar" (Gold Hair) from 1999 is an example for how manifold Polke is capable of bringing colours and forms into an artistic context together. At the centre of the composition is an elongated shape sprayed in gold

paint. Its excess colour is allowed to spill out in all directions and to form fine ramifications. Analogous to this, thin white lines evaporate out of a grey fog-like sprayed background on the left side of the work. Marks scraped onto the still damp background with the back of a paintbrush and highlighted in neon yellow interrupt this fine grid of lines. The lower area of the painting is defined by a violet blaze of colour: the broad-brush stroke of a gouache becomes weakens out towards the centre in a watercolour-like manner. On top, Polke sprays two blue circles with a three-dimensional feel to them. They appear to tear open the paper support and to break through it.

"Polke's 'abstract' painting reproduces natural processes and regularities with analogously controlled painting materials. By oscillating between amorphous and developing forms, with motivic abbreviations and initiated



chemical processes, he alludes to natural phenomena. If the apparently still changing, open flowing forms are combined with brush drawings, grid motifs, fabric patterns or transparent supports, they are definable either as natural or as an equivalent for on-going, open processes in the general sense, for example as mental processes such as memories, as historical transformation processes or alchemistic processes. The flowing forms are always

determined by content, the image content always also finds its counterpart on a material level."

(Anita Shah, *Die Dinge zu sehen wie sie sind*, Zu Sigmar Polkes malerischem Werk seit 1981, Weimar 2001, p.162).





SIGMAR POLKE  
Oels, Silesia 1941 – 2010 Cologne

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Untitled

varnish, dispersion and India ink on paper  
1988

70 x 100 cm / 27 1/2 x 39 3/8 in.

signed and dated lower right

We thank Mr. Michael Trier for his kind scientific advice.

Provenance

- GAHP Galerie und Artothek, Fürstentfeldbruck
- Private collection, Southern Germany (acquired from the above in 2000)

From the beginning of his career as an artist, Sigmar Polke has always maintained an ironic distance from the various trends in contemporary art and their theoretical claims, and addressed this relativizing view in his own work through pastiche, quotation and parody. The expectation of salvation from the "spiritual in art" remained suspect to him, and although he himself experimented with artistic techniques and invented new ones in many ways, this never happened with complete seriousness in the sense of contributing significantly to the history and development of contemporary art.

In his abstract painting from 1988, Polke clearly refers to Wassily Kandinsky's non-representational compositions. Although the work – unlike in cases in which Polke adds a mocking note through an inscription or title – refrains from any comment, the overemphasis of painterly elements alone, leads to an ironic tone. The superimpo-

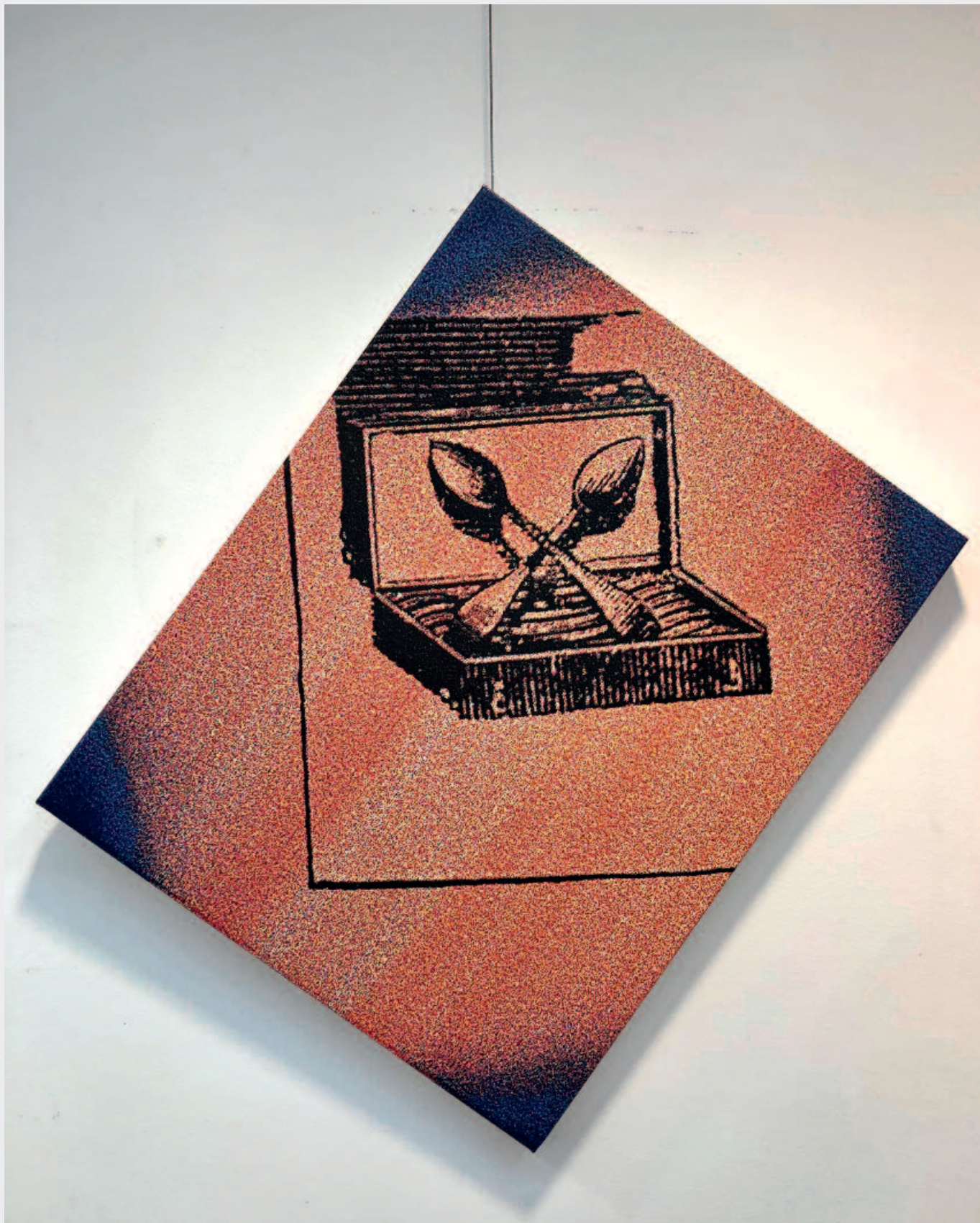
sed patches of colour, lines, and arabesques suggest a composition with its centre in the right-hand of the painting. But the sheer quantity of induced elements seems overly motivated. Polke's garlands, squiggles, wavy and crossed straight lines perform a carnivalesque dance that definitely has something musical about it, but lacks any seriousness or spiritual in the sense Kandinsky applied them in art.

The exuberant, almost exaggerated use of as many imaginable abstract patterns as possible mocks the complicated theoretical considerations on erratic forms in abstraction and satirizes the high standards of such pictorial inventions, as is also expressed in Sigmar Polke's tongue-in-cheek, laconic saying about the artist's self-image:

"Anybody can do easy."









SIGMAR POLKE  
Oels, Silesia 1941 – 2010 Cologne

Dr Pabscht het z'Schpiez s'Schpäckbschteck z'schpät bschteut



colour laser print in acrylic on vinyl

1980/1991

50 x 40 cm / 19 5/8 x 15 3/4 in.

verso signed, dated and numbered '64/100' on a label 'Edition für Parkett 30, 1991'

edition of 100 Latin and 20 Roman numbered

Becker/von der Osten 2000 Nr. 91

Provenance

- Edition für Parkett
- Private collection, Southern Germany

Literature

- Becker, Jürgen; Claus von der Osten (Ed.). Sigmar Polke. Die Editionen 1963 - 2000 Catalogue Raisonné. Ostfildern-Ruit 2000. No. 91, p. 264 f.

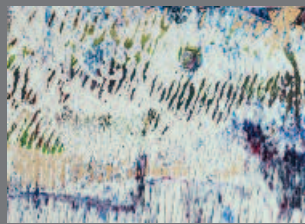
For his contribution to the issue of the Swiss art magazine Parkett, Sigmar Polke used a tongue twister as a title that is not only well-known but also popular, especially in Switzerland, and which he left in Swiss German dialect. Polke not only remained true to his ironic humour, which is typical for his artistic approach, but also his techniques of image quotation, copying, rastering and alienation, which is reflected here in the crookedly hung painting carrier.

The eponymous "Bacon Cutlery", which the Pope ordered too late in Spiez, is represented by a crossed pair of spoons on an open cutlery case. The motif is a picture

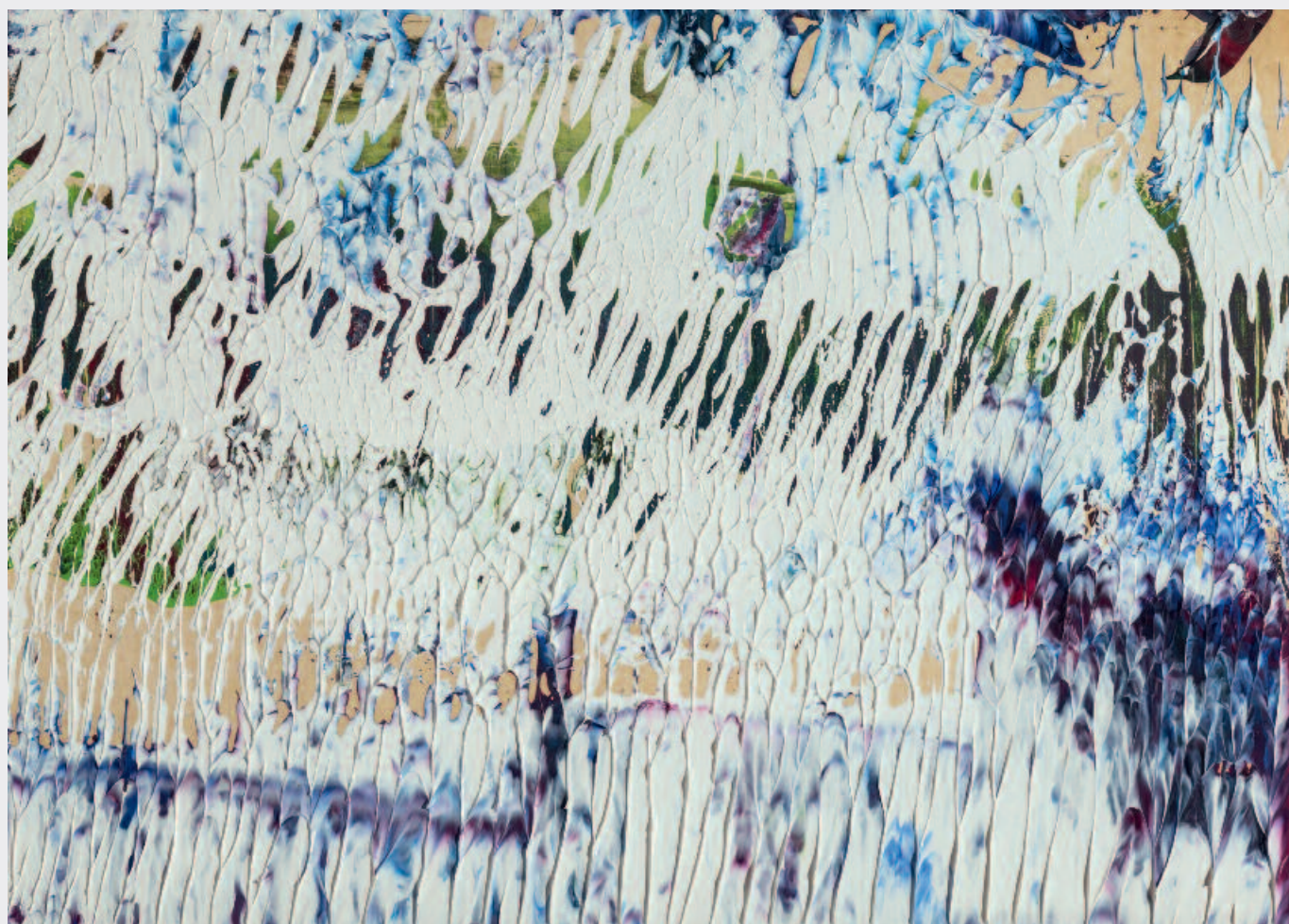
quotation from a collage by Max Ernst, and since the latter also took this detail from another template, Polke is dealing with a "third use", so to speak, with which he comments on quotation, shifting of meaning, context-dependent levels of meaning and the media distribution of images, a central topic of his artistic work.

The subject itself comes from the fifth collage in the group "Le Lion de Belfort", which is at the beginning of Max Ernst's famous collage novel "Une semaine de bonté" from 1933 (published in 1934).

# GERHARD RICHTER



Gerard Richter has arguably given contemporary art more points of departure than any other artist of the 20th century. Since the 1960s he has demonstrated a sheer limitless creative power, time and again producing completely new and seemingly contradicting bodies of work which each in itself would merit a life-time pursuit. His oeuvre is unrivalled today. He participated in the documenta in Kassel six times, received the Goslar Award for Modern Art (Kaiserring) and the Praemium Imperiale. In 1997 he received the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale.





GERHARD RICHTER  
Dresden 1932 – lives in Köln

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3.3.94

oil on cardboard

1994

21 x 29.8 cm / 8 1/4 x 11 3/4 in.

support cardboard 40 x 49 cm / 15 3/4 x 19 1/4 in.

verso signed and dated

also signed and dated on the support cardboard

Provenance

- Aschenbach Galerie, Amsterdam
- Private collection, North Rhine-Westphalia
- Private collection, Greece (since 2012)
- Private collection David Teplitzky and Peggy Scott (since 2016)
- Collection Conceptio Unlimited Limited, Hong Kong (2017)
- Collection Gerald Rodolitz, Bangkok
- Private collection, Hong Kong
- Private collection, France (since 2022)

Auction History

- Lempertz Cologne, December 1, 2012, lot 718
- Phillips London, June 28, 2016, lot 129
- Lempertz Cologne, June 1, 2022, lot 48

Gerhard Richter's work in oil on cardboard bares a date "3.3.94" and is a typical example for the artists' approach on abstract and non-representational painting. Here, Richter superimposes several layers of paint on top of one another and reworks them with a scraper, so that the layers of paint as well as the overall impression of the pictorial surface acquire a unique liveliness and a distinguished surface feel – all in order to challenge the viewer's usual habit of perception.

The cardboard is partially covered with blue, green and red onto which Richter then applies thick white paint. By using a scraper, the two layers are then entwined into a wavy meshwork with one another, almost merging organically into an animated surface of ridges. Either the pictorial ground or the colour shades beneath remain partially visible, or disperse with the white up onto the pictorial surface.

Since the underlying colours are only partially visible, one suspects the white topmost layer to have possibly covered

and alienated a figurative, legible representation. This artistic technique is comparable to the effect that Richter also achieves in his renowned overpainted photographs. The white in itself, applied in this manner, takes over a seemingly figurative role, appears as if in motion, growing and actively spreading over the painting. It is this thick, haptic surface that gives the painting its distinct appeal: it confers paint into a materiality; transforms pure colour into an active object.

This play on illusion and mimesis as opponents of pure abstraction is what Richter examines in painting. He challenges boundaries to aim at the viewers lack in perception; between the real, "true" materiality of colour and the so often anticipated representational character of painting. In addition, titling each painting with a specific date manifests a diary-like character. Each work becomes something like a brief encounter or momentarily snapshot within a much larger and continuous artistic quest.









GERHARD RICHTER  
Dresden 1932 – lives in Köln

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Untitled (18.3.89)



oil on paper mounted on artist's board

1989

sheet: 21 x 29.7 cm / 8 1/4 x 11 5/8 in.

artist's board: 36.2 x 44.2 cm / 14 1/4 x 17 3/8 in.

signed right and dated left on the artists board verso inscribed '18.3.'

The work is registered in the Online Catalogue Raisonnée of Gerhard Richter.

Provenance

- Galerie Ludorff, Düsseldorf
- Private collection, Germany (acquired from the above in 1997)
- Private collection, Germany (since 2005)
- Private collection Belgium (since 2022)

Auction History

- Christie's, London, June 24, 2005, lot 102
- Ketterer Kunst, December 9, 2022, lot 178

Exhibited

- Galerie Bernd Lütze, Friedrichshafen 1991/1992. Gerhard Richter, Arbeiten auf Papier 1988-1990. No. 7

# KATHARINA GROSSE







## KATHARINA GROSSE

Freiburg im Breisgau 1961 – lives in Düsseldorf and Berlin

### Untitled



acrylic and soil on canvas

2009

150 x 121 cm / 59 x 47 1/2 in.

verso signed and dated

#### Provenance

- Gagosian Gallery, New York
- Private Collection, USA
- Private Collection, France

#### Exhibited

- Baltimore Museum of Art. Katharine Grosse: Is It You? Baltimore 2020.

Abstraction in the works by Katharina Grosse derive from the artistic heritage of color field painting, abstract expressionism and the art of Informel. Her technique relates to the most diverse methods implied in such art genres as impressionism, graffiti, performance, process and installation art. Katharina Grosse detaches painting from any material reality, from the actual primacy of things. Her painting in itself is not something that needs to be developed, narrowed down or determined, nor does it follow the stipulation of an extra-painting reality. While a canvas is sharply delimited by its edges, her paintings run virtually over the borders and is in turn crossed by them in the form of cuts, lines and contours. In this respect, the edges of the canvas only appear as a possible, temporary and non-binding limitation of the painting. Her painting is without composition, determined solely by colour. She even challenges the craft of painting further by removing any visible trace of the actual

brushstroke the painterly appeal of a canvas. From 1998, the spray gun becomes Katharina Grosse's most valued tool, that opens towards a completely new world of artistic expression. Lively swaths of color run over the monumental canvas and create a surging complexity of tone, depth and movement.

Oranges and greens dominate the pictorial space, accentuated by rusty brown and violet parts. They stand in contrast to the white zones of the picture that have not (yet) been covered by paint. The magic of Grosse's painting lies in these oscillating, dynamic worlds of colour, which virtually seek to overgrow the entire surrounding space. Or as the artist puts it in her own words: "The overall painting or the ability of a painting to define a whole space, to move towards the realm of architecture is very much fascinating to me. I always make big paintings, I already painted big pictures as a child."

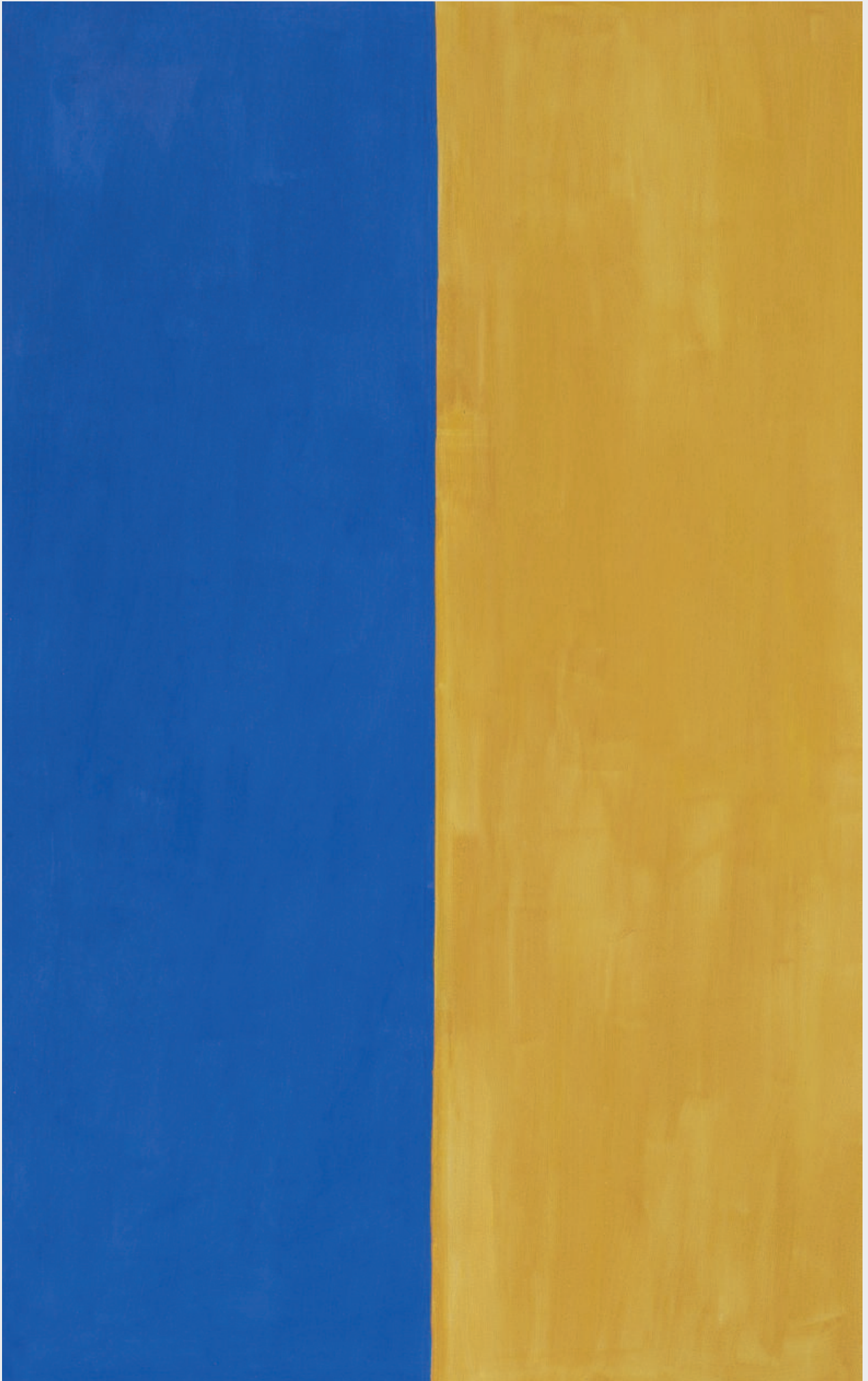


# GÜNTHER FÖRG

Günther Förg's oeuvre is marked by a pictorial language that encompasses several materials and media, focussing mainly on the relation to space. Since the late 1970s, he developed this language in the fields of photography, painting, sculpture and installations. With his material-accentuating, abstract style of painting that often manifested itself in black and grey monochrome works, Förg also unlocked the potential of lead and aluminium as new painting substrates. In the 1990s, he created large-format, coloured window and grid pictures as well as works in the tradition of Colour Field Painting, but always in the context of exploring and reinterpreting spaces. In his photographic series, he dealt with buildings that shaped the 20th century history of architecture. Yet here, too, the relation to space remained important and inspired Förg to further explore architectural structures and construction elements, outside of their context, from an artistic viewpoint. Förg's works were exhibited at documenta IX in 1992. He became a professor at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts in 1999.







GÜNTHER FÖRG  
Füssen 1952 – 2013 Freiburg im Breisgau

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Rivoli

acrylic on canvas

1989

220 x 140 cm / 86 5/8 x 55 1/8 in.

verso signed, dated and titled

The work is registered under the number WVF.89.B.0229 in the archive Günther Förg.

Provenance

- Greene Naftali Gallery, New York
- Private collection, Paris
- Private collection, USA

Exhibited

- Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli 1989.  
Domenico Bianchi, Alan Charlton, Günther Förg, Barbara Kruger, Toon Verhoef.

In 1989 Günter Förg created "Rivoli" for a solo exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art at the Castello di Rivoli near Turin. It is to this exhibition that the title of the present work alludes. It belongs to a series of rectangular, portrait formats, which divide and accentuate the architecture of the exhibition space. Each panel is split-up into strips of different widths and alternating colour shades, creating a double rhythm that transform the entire surroundings. Here, Förg intends to challenge an increased awareness for – as well as the relationship between – space and surface planes. Each picture in itself asks the viewer to question the spatial situation it is set in. The

painterly surface is deliberately left visible and emphasizes the dynamic brushstroke instead of reducing the work to a mere geometric composition. The colour-field in "Rivoli" is exactly divided in half and painted in blue and yellow, two of the three primary colours. Again, the compositional rigor contrasts with the painterly surface, so that the dynamic and the statics of an entire group is perfectly reproduced in this single work.







GÜNTHER FÖRG  
Füssen 1952 – 2013 Freiburg im Breisgau

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Untitled

acrylic on wood, in artist's frame  
1994  
63.6 x 35.5 cm / 25 x 13 7/8 in.

This work is registered under the number WWF.94.B.0249 in the archive Günther Förg.

Provenance

- Private collection, Germany
- Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna
- Private collection, Vienna
- Private collection, London
- Private collection, France

Auction History

- Phillips London, February 14, 2020, lot 170

Günther Förg is the most important representative of a conceptual colour field painting in Germany, which is strongly oriented towards involving and influencing the viewer due to its materiality, for example in the famous lead paintings, and the close relationship to architecture, which led him to wall painting, among other things. Large-format architectural and portrait photography, which has become stylistically influential for the entire genre, also constitutes a major part of Förg's body of work. It has received great attention worldwide since the artist took part in documenta 9 in 1992.

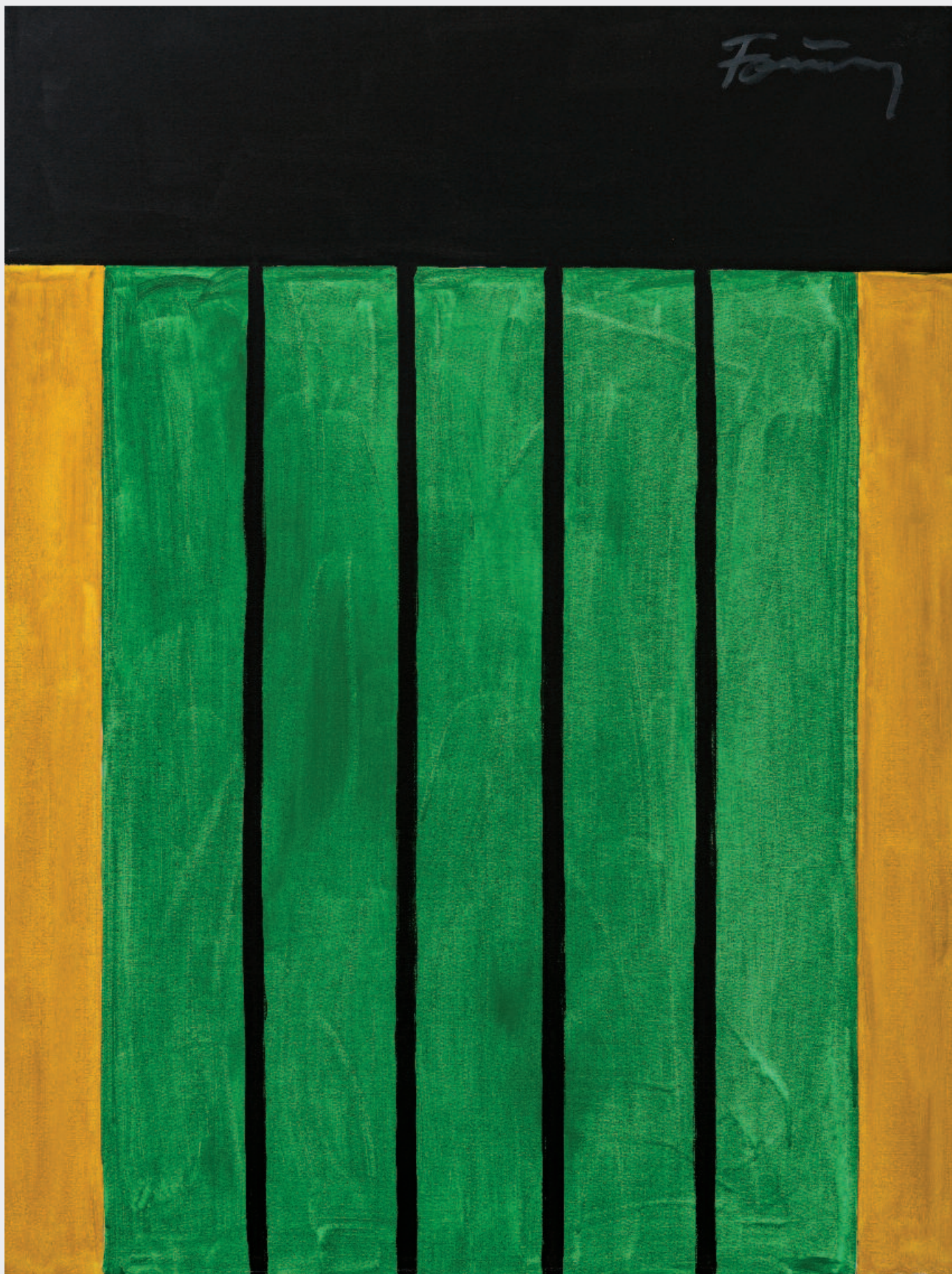
In his untitled work from 1994, Förg vividly reflects on his approach to painting. The gestural painting style in the two orange-yellow and rust-red colour fields contradicts the strict geometric composition, which Förg implies as given, but nevertheless undermines through his painting style. This contradiction is quite characteristic of his painting, which certainly intends to influence the viewer's

perception in a suggestive way. The spontaneous association of colour field painting and geometric abstraction that Förg plays with here is called into question by the proliferating, lively form of the coloured areas. It is not clear to the viewer which field overlaps the other and whether an overpainting, which seems to be showing in some places, has taken place. Förg plays a game of deception with foreground and background, which the picture seems to have rather than a juxtaposition of two coloured areas at the same level. This gives the painting not only a movement in the colours themselves, but also a spatial depth that evokes the painterly theme of perspective and the feeling of the constructive, the architectonic.

Günther Förg succeeds here in creating a complex colour-space structure in an extremely limited space and with a maximum reduction of means that contains his artistic concerns at the core.







GÜNTHER FÖRG  
Füssen 1952 – 2013 Freiburg im Breisgau

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Untitled

acrylic on canvas  
2000  
120 x 90 cm / 47 1/4 x 35 3/8 in.  
signed upper right  
verso signed and dated

The work is registered under the number WVF.00.0501 in the archive Günther Förg.

Provenance

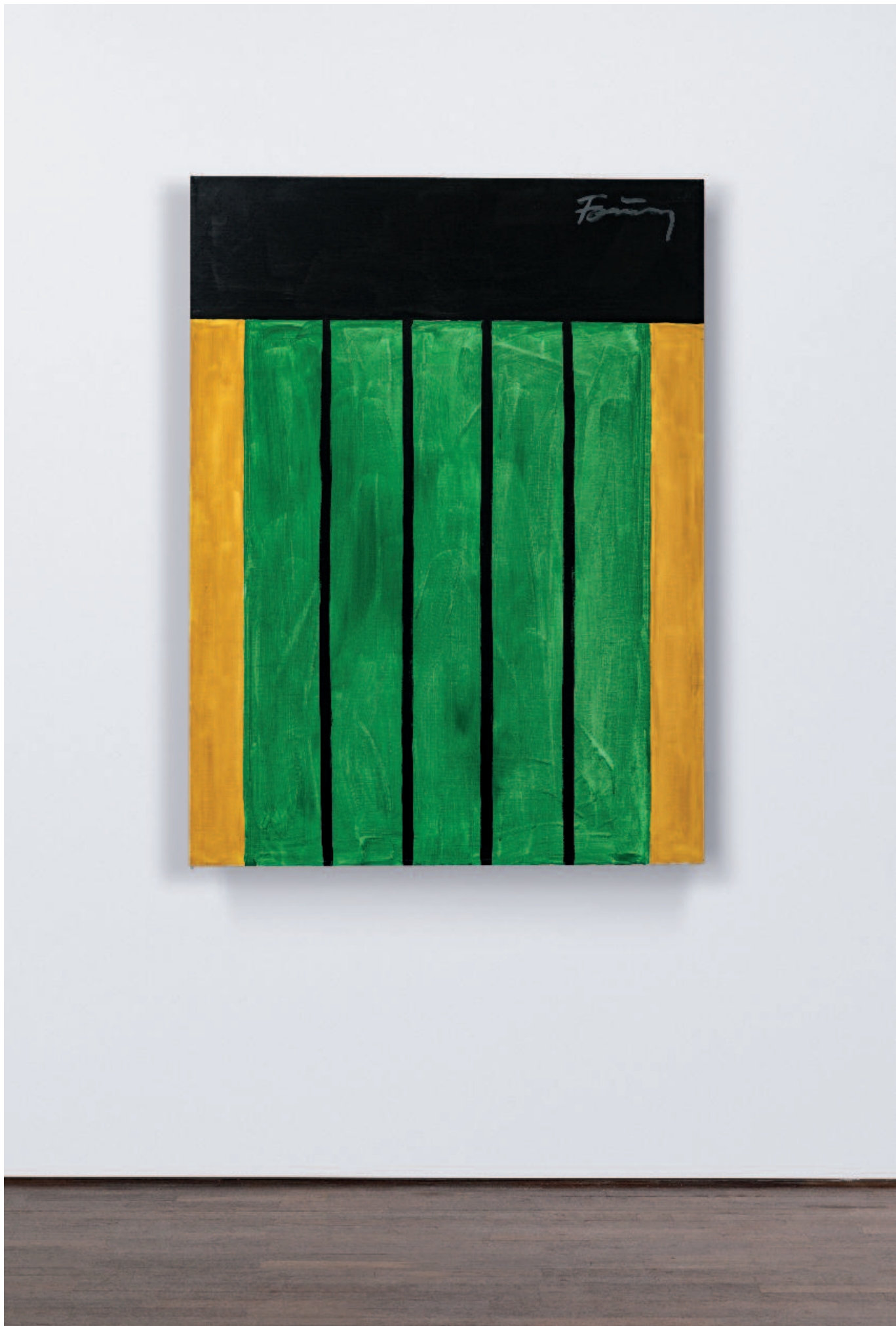
- Private collection, Belgium
- Private collection, Zurich
- Private collection, Germany

"Untitled" from 2000 seems to inscribe itself in the space around it. The luminosity of the colour fields – the central green part and ochre-yellow sides – contrast sharply the dense black top. At the same time, it re-enacts a physically existing window or an abstract symbol dominating the space.

With the exception of the plain black zone, Günther Förg's brushstroke can practically be retraced. The vertical black stripes that run across the picture are anchored in the orange-coloured fields implementing a grid through which the green parts of the picture emerge. However, the impression of a perspective view oscillates through the picturesque texture of the green areas with a completely two-dimensional image.

Förg strove to find a visual language that freed painting from realistic representation without becoming mere abstraction. His murals affect the viewer with their colours and intend to actually change their mood and behaviour. This also applies to the present painting, which seems to open up towards a landscape view in a puzzle-like effect and refuses at the same time any pictorial reading that is so characteristic for the artist.







# PUBLICATION DETAILS

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