

GERMAN ART from JOSEPH BEUYS to MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

# DE-NATURED

Selections from the James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach Collection

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Ackland Art Museum  
101 S. Columbia Street  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
[www.ackland.org](http://www.ackland.org)

© 2011 Ackland Art Museum

All rights reserved.

No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission of the publisher.

This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition *De-Natured: German Art from Joseph Beuys to Martin Kippenberger, Selections from the James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach Collection* (Ackland Art Museum, April 8 – July 10, 2011). Works were chosen for this exhibition and all checklist entries were written by Peter Nisbet, chief curator. *De-Natured* was made possible by James Keith Brown, Eric Diefenbach, and the William Hayes Ackland Trust.

Published by  
Ackland Art Museum  
[ackland.org](http://ackland.org)

Designed by  
Rivers Agency  
[riversagency.com](http://riversagency.com)

Printed in the United State of America by  
Chamblee Graphics

GERMAN ART from JOSEPH BEUYS to MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

# DE-NATURED

Selections from the James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach Collection

**JOSEPH BEUYS**

**GERHARD RICHTER**

**SIGMAR POLKE**

**HANNE DARBOVEN**

**BERND AND HILLA BECHER**

**THOMAS RUFF**

**ANDREAS GURSKY**

**THOMAS STRUTH**

**MARTIN KIPPENBERGER**

## IMAGE CREDITS

### **BEUYS**

© 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

### **RICHTER**

Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York / Paris

### **POLKE**

© 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

### **DARBOVEN**

© 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

### **B + H BECHERS**

Sonnabend Gallery

### **RUFF**

Courtesy David Zwirner, New York

© 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

### **GURSKY**

© 2011 Andreas Gursky / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

### **STRUTH**

Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York / Paris

### **KIPPENBERGER**

© Estate Martin Kippenberger, Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne



# FOREWORD

Passion, discernment, and curiosity are words that immediately come to mind when attempting to describe the collecting activity of James Keith Brown (UNC-Chapel Hill, '84) and Eric Diefenbach. From their first purchases in the early 1990s to the most recent additions, these collectors have actively engaged questions that undergird private collecting. Learning from museum curators, other collectors, galleries in the U.S. and abroad, as well as their own keen vision, Brown and Diefenbach have assembled a large and growing collection of contemporary art.

It is worth noting that at the same time that they were beginning to collect, Berlin was evolving into a new center for forward-looking artists and galleries – and, it appears, for forward-looking collectors. Seasoned travelers, Brown and Diefenbach have a clear interest in building a multinational collection, but artists from Germany and Eastern Europe have been a particular interest. They often focus on artists who are roughly their contemporaries, frequently following an artist early in his or her career, and then continuing to watch and to collect over a period of years. In this way, they have amassed a collection that presents a number of artists in some depth.

The ten artists in this exhibition suggest another focus. These artists came to maturity in the 1960s and 1970s, a generation or more before the artists who initially captured Brown and Diefenbach's interest. But the connection is clear. These artists taught and influenced many of the younger contemporary artists, and were added to this personal collection not simply for their aesthetic merit, but because of the specific backdrop they create. For example, after acquiring works by Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth, they began to look at Bernd and Hilla Becher, whose teaching and work form profound influences. This connection, and others like it, suggests ways in which this collection is informed by research and by a growing understanding of the interweaving of one generation with its predecessors and its followers.

DE-NATURED is the latest in an informal and intermittent series of exhibitions highlighting the choices and the insights of private collectors. Such exhibitions provide our audiences with rare access to another point of view and the processes of selection in a private collection. When viewed within the context of the museum setting, these new contexts complement our public collection in surprising and significant ways. Offered as a companion exhibition to *Romantic Dreams/Rude Awakenings*, which surveys the Ackland's strong holdings of German art from 1840-1940, we see a broad representation of works that vitally influence the generation of artists working today.

We are delighted to present selections from the collection of James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach, who have been, and I am certain will continue to be, active and innovative collectors of contemporary art as well as good friends to the Ackland and to The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am grateful to them both for the generous way in which they have shared these works with us.

EMILY KASS, DIRECTOR

# DE-NATURED

For well over three decades, contemporary art from Germany has commanded extraordinary international attention and acclaim. Generation after generation of German artists has maintained a high-profile presence on the worldwide art scene. Why this should have been so is not entirely clear. One reason surely has to do with the fact that German artists have had to deal with a severe legacy of a traumatic history marked by the events of the Nazi dictatorship, the Holocaust of the European Jews, the terror of World War II, and the resulting tense divisions of the Cold War. Germany can be said to have experienced in extreme form some of the apparent characteristics common to most advanced industrial societies in the age of mass political movements, modern violence, and media saturation. The visual art emerging from this constellation of circumstances has resonated strongly and persistently throughout all those societies, including those where the historical background has been less acute, less brutal.

The artists in this exhibition constitute something of a pantheon of the best-known German artists of this recent past. Born in the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s, these ten artists cover a broad aesthetic spectrum but are held together by interrelationships, influences, and the quality of individual achievement. The senior figure of Joseph Beuys (born 1921) is the only one old enough to have actually fought in the Second World War (and his solitary status must in some measure reflect the untimely death of so many contemporaries who might have also become major artists). Beuys' deep understanding of the wounds in German society, paralleled by an exemplary experimentalism and ambitious goals for his healing art, was surely a catalyst for many subsequent artists to aim high, even if only in challenging their powerful predecessor. Other generative artists were able to connect with either the vital traditions of prewar German culture, such as the link made by Bernd and Hilla Becher (born 1931 and 1934) to the New Objectivity movement of the 1920s, or with contemporaneous international developments, such as the engagement with French and American art that was so crucial for Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke. Younger artists have then been able to build on these accomplishments.

For all these German artists, there is no longer an untroubled, natural relationship to any stable verities – whether of national identity, historical continuities, or indeed the actual world of events, society, or the environment. All is fractured; all is problematic. This “de-natured” situation is surely the inescapable condition for all postwar (or indeed modern) culture, and this exhibition does not want to suggest that Germany is unique in this. Nevertheless, German artists have surely been particularly sensitive to the predicament, a sensitivity that may have been a significant spur to the complex creativity that is now so widely recognized.

The “de-natured” position heightens doubts about the possibility of authenticity, originality, and the validity of representation in art. Accordingly, it is not surprising that photography, that most pervasive and yet most contested of representational techniques, plays a significant role. Likewise, seriality, systems, and chance play down the significance of the individual, expressive creator. The prevalence

in this exhibition of multiples of one kind or another (editioned objects, prints, or photographs) reflects not just the predilection of the collectors or of the curator, but rather emerges logically from these artists' understanding of the problematic status of the unique original work of art; in some cases, the category of multiple is then itself undermined and destabilized.

Of course, as a reflection of the interests of the collectors, who own more works by all the exhibited artists, the exhibition does not survey all important aspects of German art of its chosen period. Interested viewers may wish to supplement the exhibition by looking at works by contemporaneous artists who have conventionally (but, it must be said, misleadingly) been characterized as reviving early twentieth-century Expressionism, such as Georg Baselitz (born 1938) or Anselm Kiefer (born 1945), or by artists conceptually close to those in the show, such as Blinky Palermo (born 1943) or Rosemarie Trockel (born 1952). Nevertheless, this generous loan of some three dozen works, supplemented by a few recent acquisitions from the Ackland's own collection, forms a complex and compelling introduction to the remarkable efflorescence in postwar German art, a burgeoning that continues. Indeed, it was an initial and ongoing engagement with prominent younger German artists on the contemporary scene that led the collectors to an investigation of the earlier generations. As their collection expands, as the Ackland's commitment to art of the recent past deepens, and as the international resonance of German art grows, we look forward to future opportunities to work together.

PETER NISBET, CHIEF CURATOR

*In the checklist that follows, all works, unless otherwise noted, are loans from the James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach Collection. Dimensions are recorded in centimeters, height before width. Where appropriate, reference is made to the catalogue raisonné of an artist's prints and multiples, abbreviated to the author's last name and the work's entry number. The checklist is not organized alphabetically by artist, but rather in a discursive sequence. Works are in chronological order within each artist's listing.*

Bernd and Hilla Becher: checklist no. 20

Joseph Beuys: checklist nos. 1-3

Hanne Darboven: checklist nos. 18-19

Andreas Gursky: checklist no. 23

Martin Kippenberger: checklist nos. 31-39

Sigmar Polke: checklist nos. 15-17

Gerhard Richter: checklist nos. 4-14

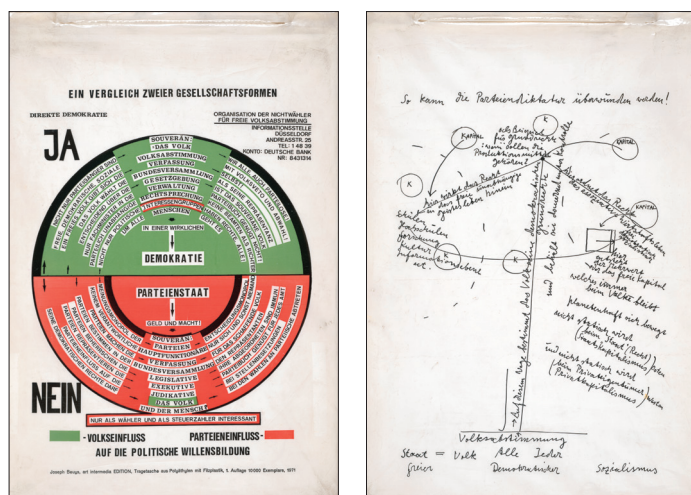
Thomas Ruff: checklist nos. 21-22

Thomas Struth: checklist nos. 24-30

# JOSEPH BEUYS

1921-1986

Born in 1921 in Krefeld, Germany, Beuys attended the Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1947 to 1951. In 1961, he began his career as a very influential teacher at the Academy. In the 1960s he became known especially for his "actions," enigmatic and allusive performances that often involved unconventional materials such as felt and fat. These signature materials later became associated with a story from the artist's wartime experiences, in which he recounted that nomadic Tartars had used fat and felt to save his life after his Luftwaffe plane had been shot down in the Crimea in 1944. Beuys' sculptures, drawings, editioned objects, actions, and public pedagogy all revolved around ideas of healing, energy, social transformation, participatory politics, and, especially in his later years, ecological renewal. Beuys founded (or co-founded) several political organizations: German Student Party (1967), Organization for Direct Democracy through Referendum (1971), the Free International University (1974), and the Green Party (1980). He died in Düsseldorf in 1986.



1

## JOSEPH BEUYS

*How the Dictatorship of the Parties Can Be Overcome, 1971*

polythelene bag, wool felt, and printed papers

75.7 x 51 cm (bag)

67 x 47.5 cm (felt)

Number 390 from an edition of 500 (Schellman 40)

L2011.5.2



This multiple combines several elements: a plastic shopping bag, printed on both sides with Beuys' diagrams illustrating his thinking about radical democracy, referenda, and social organization; a piece of felt with a notch cut in the corner; and various printed flyers, manifestos, and appeals (not exhibited here). This unconventional form of distributing art and messages encourages the recipient/viewer to make connections between political thought, enigmatic sculptural materials, and action.

## 2

### JOSEPH BEUYS

*Noiseless Blackboard Eraser, 1974*

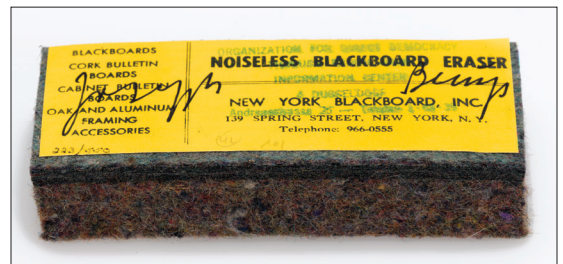
wool felt and printed paper

13 x 5 x 2.5 cm

Number 223 from an edition of 550 (Schellmann 101)

Published by Ronald Feldman Fine Art, New York City

Auckland Art Museum, Auckland Fund, 2006.7.5



Beuys' educational impulse often manifested itself in lecture demonstrations, during which he would draw elaborate conceptual and illustrated diagrams on blackboards. During his first trip to the United States in 1974 (delayed until the conclusion of the Vietnam War), Beuys used this type of eraser to erase such a blackboard that an art collector wanted to purchase. The editioned version can stand for the urge to protect ideas and thoughts from commercial misuse or from the stagnation of permanence. Beuys would have liked the use of felt, a material that can muffle and insulate, for this eraser that is, significantly, promoted as "noiseless." Furthermore, Beuys' additions balance his personal presence, in the prominent signature, and the institutional agenda, with the stamp of the "Organization for Direct Democracy."

## 3

### JOSEPH BEUYS

*Felt Postcard, 1985*

printed felt

10.5 x 15 x 0.9 cm

Unlimited edition (Schellman 539)

Published by Edition Staeck, Heidelberg

L2011.5.3

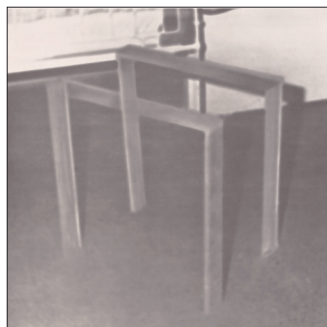


Beuys was devoted to communication in all its forms, literal and metaphorical. He often used the simple symbol of the postcard, that epitome of the personal message combined with an image. Along with postcards in wood, metal, and plastic, he produced this unlimited edition of felt postcards, linking communication to his typical evocative material, where the medium is indeed a large part of the message. The printed text, which on a postcard would conventionally identify the image on the other side, here provides a caption for the entire object.

# GERHARD RICHTER

BORN 1932

Born in 1932 in Dresden, Richter received a classical art training at the Dresden Academy in communist East Germany. After beginning a successful career as a mural painter there, he fled to West Germany in 1961 and enrolled at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, where he studied until 1964. He has since gone on to establish himself as perhaps the most significant living European painter of the postwar period, challenging both any attempt to declare painting dead or irrelevant, and any traditional idea of a stylistic coherence or progression within an artist's oeuvre. Moving readily between representational and non-objective approaches, Richter has explored photograph-based painting, the monochrome, aleatory systems, and gestural abstraction, not to mention his prolific production of editioned prints, objects, and artist's books. Rigorously opposed to any ideology or theoretical constraints, he can be said to have rediscovered – and consistently questioned – the potential of painting as a source of beauty and aesthetic validity.



4

**GERHARD RICHTER**

*Untitled*, from the portfolio *Nine Objects*, 1969

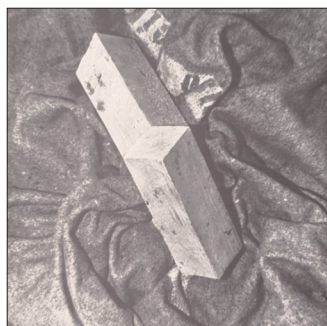
offset photolithograph on paper

45 x 45 cm

Unnumbered impression from a total edition of 100 (Butin 26)

Published by Galerie Heiner Friedrich

Auckland Art Museum, Auckland Trust, 2010.38.5



5

**GERHARD RICHTER**

*Untitled*, from the portfolio *Nine Objects*, 1969

offset photolithograph on paper

45 x 45 cm

Unnumbered impression from a total edition of 100 (Butin 26)

Published by Galerie Heiner Friedrich

Auckland Art Museum, Auckland Trust, 2010.38.5

In the 1960s, Richter's work focused largely on exploring the relationship of painting to photography. He would base paintings on apparently trivial, usually black-and-white photographs, often derived from mass media publications, and use a remarkable variety of paint handling techniques to "blur" or otherwise transfigure the source. The 1969 portfolio *Nine Objects* continued this deadpan investigation of the reliability of visual representation by presenting various wooden objects crudely constructed by the artist and then photographed and manipulated to demonstrate trite optical illusions. The surreal irruption of these irrational objects into the banal middle-class domestic environment is, of course, only made possible by art, however diminished its means, however obvious the artifice. Both portfolio sheets illustrated here also deal with the theme of doubling, mirroring, and repetition which surfaces often in Richter's work.



6

**GERHARD RICHTER**

*Overpainting (Brown)*, 1972

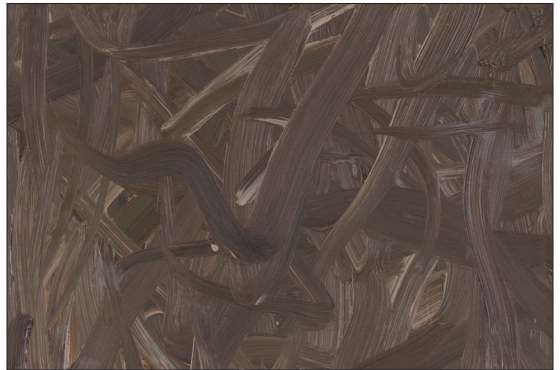
oil on canvas

27 x 40 cm

Number 65 from an edition of 120 (Butin 46)

Published by the Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster

L2011.5.18



7

**GERHARD RICHTER**

*Overpainting (Brown)*, 1972

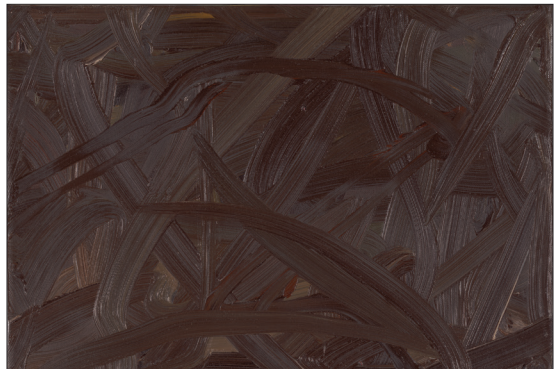
oil on canvas

27 x 40 cm

Number 91 from an edition of 120 (Butin 46)

Published by the Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster

L2011.5.19



These two oils are in fact two parts of an editioned work, which is listed in both the complete catalogue of the artist's paintings (no. 325/1-120) and in the complete catalogue of the artist's multiples (Butin no. 46). One hundred and twenty canvasses were hung next to one another to form a solid block (270 x 480 cm). This composite canvas was then painted as a whole, with the individual small canvasses then sold piece by piece. The artist is here playfully raising a host of provocative questions: are these two paintings fragments or integral wholes? Are they unique objects, or is the apparent arbitrariness of the abstract brushwork enough to render them essentially equivalent and interchangeable? Is the gestural quality of the paint application expressive or random? The German title of these works (*"Vermalung"*) is sometimes translated as "Unpainting." Richter returns often to such issues and a number of other works in the exhibition probe the relationship between the individual handmade work, photographic reproduction, and serial editions (see, for example, checklist nos. 8 and 11).

## GERHARD RICHTER



8

### GERHARD RICHTER

*Kassel (Documenta IX)*, 1992

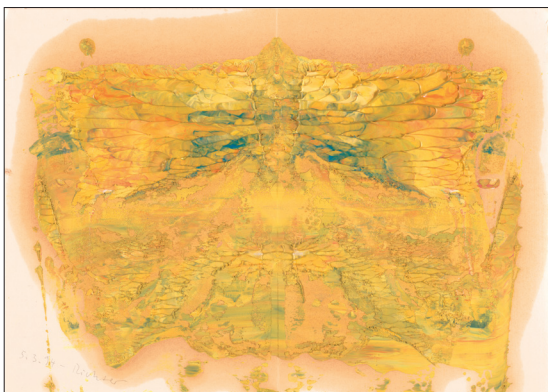
enamel over color offset photolithograph, mounted on white cardboard  
15.9 x 23.3 cm

Number xx/xxv from a total edition of 80 (Butin 78)

Published by Documenta GmbH, Kassel

L2011.5.20

Richter has painted over his own photograph of one of the main buildings housing the major exhibition of contemporary art, *Documenta*, held every five years in Kassel, Germany. The edition was the artist's contribution to *Documenta's* collective *Portfolio B*, which also included works by artists such as Jimmie Durham, Pat Steir, and Christopher Wool. In the edition, 50 are numbered 1-50, 25 i-xxv, and there are 5 artist's proofs. All deploy black and white paint over reproductions of this color photograph.



9

### GERHARD RICHTER

*Untitled*, 1994

oil on paper  
21 x 29.5 cm

L2011.5.21

This sheet offers a simple but compelling instance of Richter's persistent interest in doubling, reflection, and repetition. The image is created from a thick layer of oil paint, in almost willfully ugly colors, pressed between two halves of a folded sheet. As with the famous Rorschach inkblots, the resulting shape is mirrored along the central axis, one side a "print" of the other (neither side is primary). The chance configuration of the viscous oil tempts viewers to free-associate, plunging them into hopeless speculations about the possible meanings of Richter's abstract art, especially one generated largely by chance.



# 10

**GERHARD RICHTER**

*Untitled*, 1999

oil on chromogenic print

10 x 14.8 cm

L2011.5.22



For his overpainted photographs, Richter often uses his own snapshots, commercially printed in a standard format. These casual images will be embellished with quickly applied swaths of thick oil, which partially obscure, but thereby also enhance, the scene represented. This example uses a photograph of an otherwise unidentified exterior wall, and the viewer is tempted to ask whether any German artist, and in particular one whose professional life was so determined by the Cold War division of Germany, can deploy such an image without alluding in some way to the Berlin Wall. (Another overpainted print of the same image is actually entitled *Mauer*, the universal term for the barrier that cut off East Germany from the West from 1961 to 1989.) Is there a chance that this modest 1999 work was made with the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Wall in mind?

# 11

**GERHARD RICHTER**

*Snow-White*, 2005

acrylic and graphite over color offset print

22.5 x 32 cm

Number 61 from an edition of 100

L2011.5.23



In another example of Richter's interest in overpainting and layering, this work is one of one hundred made by applying numinous white acrylic and extraordinarily delicate graphite lines over offset prints of details of one of the artist's colorful abstract paintings of 2004 (complete catalogue no. 890-5). The title *Snow-White* surely refers more to the consistent coloration of this edition than to the fairy-tale character, though the story of the "fairest of them all" who survives so many attempts to destroy her, may have some applicability for an artist who, almost despite himself, makes breathtakingly beautiful and critically adored works over the course of a career that seems marked by his own attempts to undermine painting by photography, by chance, by radical stylistic variety, indeed by almost any means available.

## GERHARD RICHTER



12

### GERHARD RICHTER

*Quattro Colori (Four Colors)*, 2008

enamel on aluminum composite panel, mounted on wood

19.4 x 19.4 cm

Number 31 from an edition of 80

Published by the Serpentine Gallery, London

L2011.5.24



13

### GERHARD RICHTER

*Quattro Colori (Four Colors)*, 2008

enamel on aluminum composite panel, mounted on wood

19.4 x 19.4 cm

Number 61 from an edition of 80

Published by the Serpentine Gallery, London

L2011.5.25

In the 1960s Richter began making “color chart” paintings, deploying arbitrary arrangements of colors based on commercially available samples. The interest has continued throughout his career. These two works are from an edition of eighty, each using four colors chosen at random from the twenty-five that Richter used for his 2007 painting, *4900 Colours: Version II*. (This work consisted of a series of forty-nine paintings, each made up of four panels with twenty-five randomly arranged squares.) The painting was shown at the Serpentine Gallery in London, for which Richter then produced the *Quattro Colori* edition. 2007 also saw the unveiling of Richter’s stained glass window for the south transept of Cologne Cathedral, comprising some 11,500 squares in seventy-two colors. Such works foreground Richter’s love of chance as a regulatory principle, allowing his work to some extent to be determined by the facts of the commercial world (with the color chips) and by random permutations.

14

GERHARD RICHTER

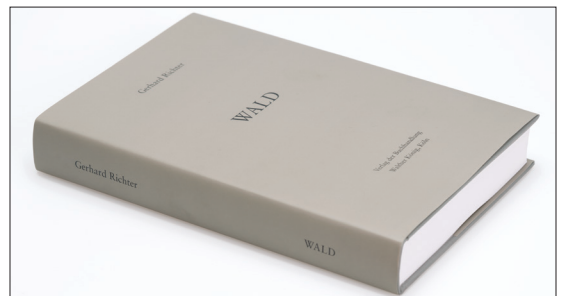
*Wood*, 2008

oil over chromogenic print

18.5 x 12.5 cm

Number 57 from an edition of 80 with accompanying  
book (Cologne: Walther Koenig, 2009)

L2011.5.26



Like other overpainted photographs in this exhibition (checklist nos. 8 and 10), this work stages a direct confrontation between the two media. Just as the miasmic gray paint is applied by the artist, so too was the photograph taken by him: one of a large series of almost abstract images of the dense woods near Richter's home in Cologne. Two hundred eight-five of these photographs were published in loosely organized groupings in the 2009 artist's book *Wood (Wald)*, whose text derives from a German forestry magazine. The words of the text were randomly reorganized (with overly explicit and recognizable names removed), and then printed in a confusing sequence of pages which gradually fill and then empty of words. The result is a frustrating, but poetically evocative rumination on the forest, that central point of reference for the German sense of cultural identity. Meaning shimmers through the words and pictures; the principles organizing the sequence of images and the arrangements of the words gesture towards and then withhold clarity and sense.

# SIGMAR POLKE

1941–2010

Polke was born in 1941 in Oels, a town in Lower Silesia (later Poland). After the war, his family escaped first to East Germany and then, in 1953, to West Germany. He attended the Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1961 to 1967. Whilst a student, he, Gerhard Richter, and another friend founded “Capitalist Realism,” a form of German Pop Art that parodied both communist aesthetic orthodoxy and Western consumerist society. Ever mercurial and anarchistic in his approach, Polke produced works of a bewildering variety of styles and nontraditional techniques, drawing on an equally bewildering variety of sources in popular and high culture. His enigmatic, witty, multilayered pictures sometimes evoke alchemical processes and organic transformations, as well as deploying allusions to the modern technologies of reproduction (Ben-Day dots, Xeroxing, photography). He was also dedicated to the widest possible distribution of his art, producing a large number of relatively inexpensive prints and editions. From 1977 to 1991, he was professor at the Academy in Hamburg. Based in Cologne since 1978, he died in 2010 after a long battle with cancer.



## 15

### SIGMAR POLKE

*Girlfriends I*, 1967

offset photolithograph

48 x 60.8 cm

Number 7 from an edition of 150 (Becker 3)

Published by Galerie h, Hanover

Auckland Art Museum, Auckland Fund, 2010.39

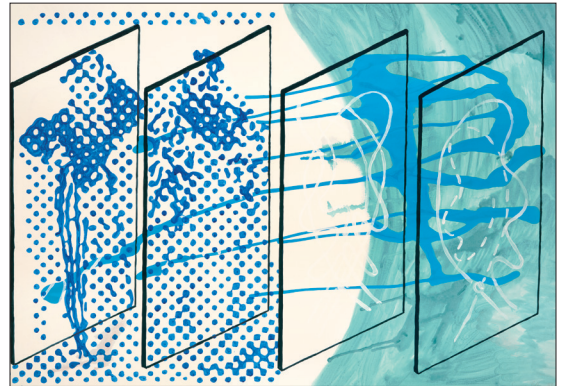
This print, derived from a press image, is one of the artist's most famous early works. Distancing himself from the superficial happiness promoted by mass media and by Germany's postwar economic miracle, Polke is here also concerned with the half-tone dot (even playfully so, quoting it in the female's polka-dot swimsuit patterns), one of the dominant processes in twentieth-century visual culture printmaking. A second version of the print was handcolored by the artist, a layering technique to produce an edition of unique impressions which Polke often used in his prolific printmaking career (see checklist no. 16).



**16**

**SIGMAR POLKE**

*Untitled (Mönchengladbach 1992), 1993*  
 offset photolithograph, reworked with felt tip pen  
 70 x 100 cm  
 Number 18 from an edition of 80 (Becker 98)  
 Published by the Museumsverein Mönchengladbach  
 L2011.5.16



This reworked print was issued by an art exhibiting society as a fundraising edition in late 1992, a year when the associated museum presented an exhibition of Polke's most recent paintings. This is a common practice in Germany (see, for example, also checklist nos. 6-8). Polke's image is typically enigmatic, combining four planar surfaces, set at an angle (sheets of glass? canvases?), on which two pairs of barely decipherable shapes almost fit: at right, two curvilinear abstractions, and, at left, two standing figures in Ben Day dots, the unique addition for this sheet. Other impressions of the print have other configurations of dots in different colors.

**17**

**SIGMAR POLKE**

*His Highness, or When do Points count?, 2002*  
 color screenprint on commercially printed fabric  
 92 x 72 cm  
 Number 33 from an edition of 66  
 L2011.5.17



The translation of this print's title ("*S.H. – Oder wann zählen die Punkte?*"), is speculative, as S.H. may well stand for words other than "Seine Hoheit" in German. It would however be too optimistic to assume that a certifiably correct translation could aid substantially in interpretation. Polke's antic humor and iconographic evasions ensure that. But the phrase "when do points count" does direct attention to Polke's signature use of dot patterns, here doubled in the Ben Day dots forming the image fragment of the hands proffering the cup, and in the cheerfully trite dot patterning of the fabric surface. Other prints in the edition use fabric with the same pattern in different color combinations. Further elements of the composition are the layer of translucent coating applied over most of the fabric (presumably enabling the silkscreen printing to be stable, but in a way that foregrounds the fact of this coating) and the random black splash of silkscreened ink that seems to stain and mar the entire image (coffee spilled from the cup onto the tablecloth?). Once again, Polke plays on the pleasures of our perplexity.

## 1941-2009

[illegible]

The result is an entirely clear, aesthetically compelling presentation of a rigorous method. Much of Darboven's vast oeuvre consists of similar conceptual elaborations. The format may change, but the fundamental procedures remain constant. What gives special poignancy to this example, though, is the weightiness in German history of September 1989. This was the month of the massive "Monday demonstrations" in communist East Germany, peaceful protests that ultimately led to the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the unification of the country. Darboven was by no means an artist unaware of history. Parts of her work address directly or indirectly political events and issues; even her purest "calendrical counting" engages with time and its passing. Nevertheless, the viewer may be challenged by the radical neutrality of this version of a historic moment. The second work by Darboven in this exhibition (checklist no. 19) relates closely to a project that did indeed engage indirectly with the consequences of "September 1989."

# 19

## HANNE DARBOVEN

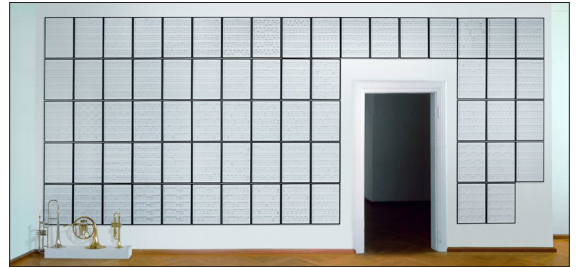
*Children of this World*, Brass Trio, Opus 43, 2007

sixty-eight framed lithographs and three musical instruments  
61.5 x 44 cm (each framed lithograph) overall dimensions variable

Number 15 from an edition of 15

Published by Editions Schellmann, New York and Munich

L2011.5.5.1-71



Not all of Darboven's work was devoted exclusively to "calendrical counting" (see checklist no. 18). At times she incorporated texts and images, rendered simple numbers in abstract "writing," and created installations with sculptural additions. An example of the latter was *Children of this World*, a massive project involving 220 volumes (with typing, writing, drawing, and photographs), over 2,250 framed sheets, and numerous dolls and toys. Created over six years (1990–1996) in response to the end of the Cold War, this work about childhood, innocence, and dreams reflects Darboven's profound hope for progress and for the future. Part of this work was one of the artist's musical compositions, based on the results of calendrical counting for one whole century. These results were presented in the installation in the form both of typed out numbers and the sheet music derived from those numbers. In 2007, Darboven published an edition of just the musical score, together with the three instruments for which the piece was written. The present exhibition offers the opportunity to hear this musical composition (Opus 43a) in a recorded 1997 performance by members of the Ludwigsburger Brass Quintet.

# BERND AND HILLA BECHER

**1931–2007, AND BORN 1934**

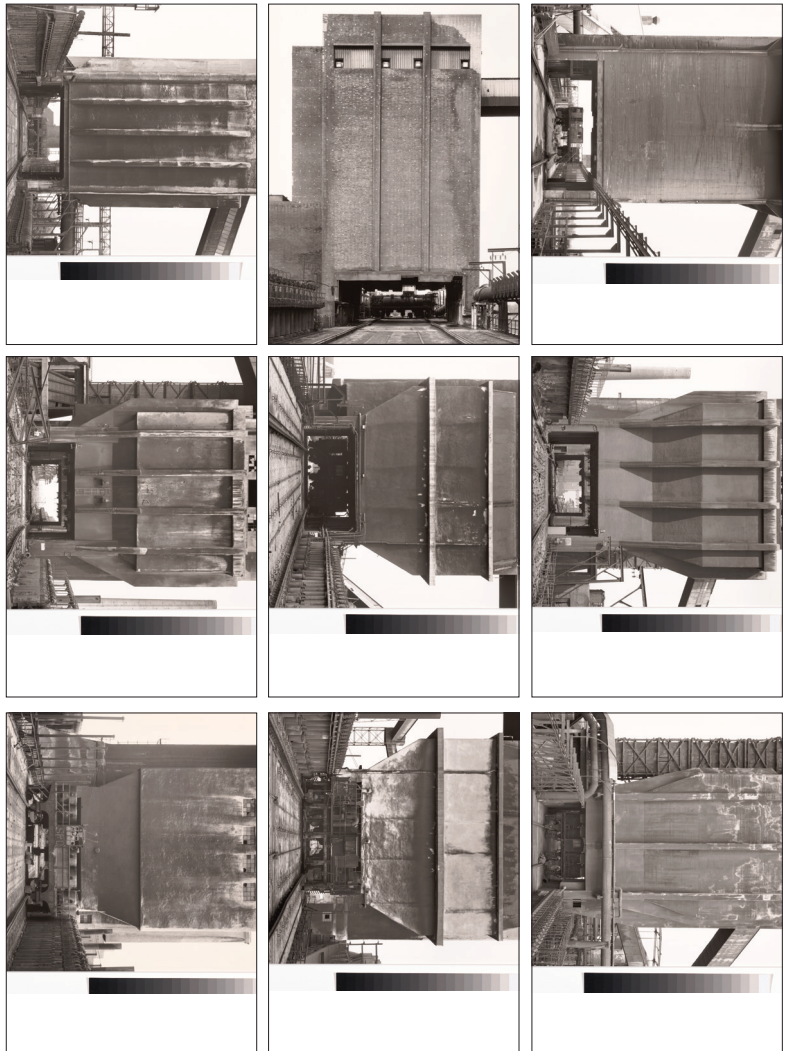
The husband-and-wife team of Bernd and Hilla Becher was born in 1931 in Siegen and in 1934 in Potsdam, respectively. Married in 1961, the couple first collaborated on their life-long project of photographing industrial buildings in 1959. Watertowers, grain silos, gas tanks, and other structures were photographed in black-and-white in the same manner: an objective, often direct viewpoint, excluding people and other anecdotal incident, against a uniform grey sky. The photographs would then be combined in grids of typologies, focusing the viewer's attention on both the structural similarities and the individual peculiarities of the "anonymous sculptures" (as the artists titled an early publication of their work). The Bechers' systematic photography of functional architecture encompassed places across the Western world, deriving as much from a documentary tradition as from conceptual impulses. They also photographed half-timbered houses in the Ruhr region, as well as less well-known panoramic views of industrial sites. Although only Bernd, who died in 2007, held a professorship, the couple was enormously influential as teachers at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. Among their students were Thomas Ruff, Andreas Gursky, and Thomas Struth.



20

**BERND AND HILLA BECHER**

*Coal Bunkers*, 1967-93, printed in 2007  
nine gelatin silver prints  
56 x 46 cm (each)  
L2011.5.1.1-9



Coal bunkers were one of the many types of industrial buildings which the Bechers photographed as part of their worldwide project. The images in this work were taken over the span of some twenty-five years, being placed together in this unique combination especially for the artists' monographic exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 2008. Although not the case in this example, many of the Bechers' composite images will identify each site by place name and country, along with the year in which the negative was originally made.

# THOMAS RUFF

**BORN 1958**

Born in 1958, Ruff studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1977 to 1985 and was himself a professor there from 2000 to 2006. His international breakthrough came with his 1986 series of monumental passport-style portraits, apparently adopting the same objective and systematic approach of his teachers, Bernd and Hilla Becher. Subsequent series have shown Ruff to be the most experimental of the Bechers' students, as he has gone on to make photographs using newspaper clippings; archival images of the night sky; pornographic images found on the internet; military night-vision technology; NASA photographs of Saturn; scientific illustration; and a range of other pre-existing sources. Ruff is always interested in the artificiality of image-making and the mediated nature of all experience in contemporary culture.



## 21

**THOMAS RUFF**

*Portrait (E. Zapp), 1990*

cibachrome print

160 x 119 cm

Number 4 from an edition of 4

L2011.5.27

Ruff made his name in the 1980s with monumental frontal color portraits. Very little social or emotional information about these young people, drawn from the artist's own social circle, is made available. The ability of portrait photography to delve beneath any surface is here radically questioned, though the people are also portrayed as equals and worthy of this treatment at a large scale. Alongside the critique of photography (and these are photographs about portrait photography as much as they are about the individuals), there may also run a democratic impulse.

22

**THOMAS RUFF**

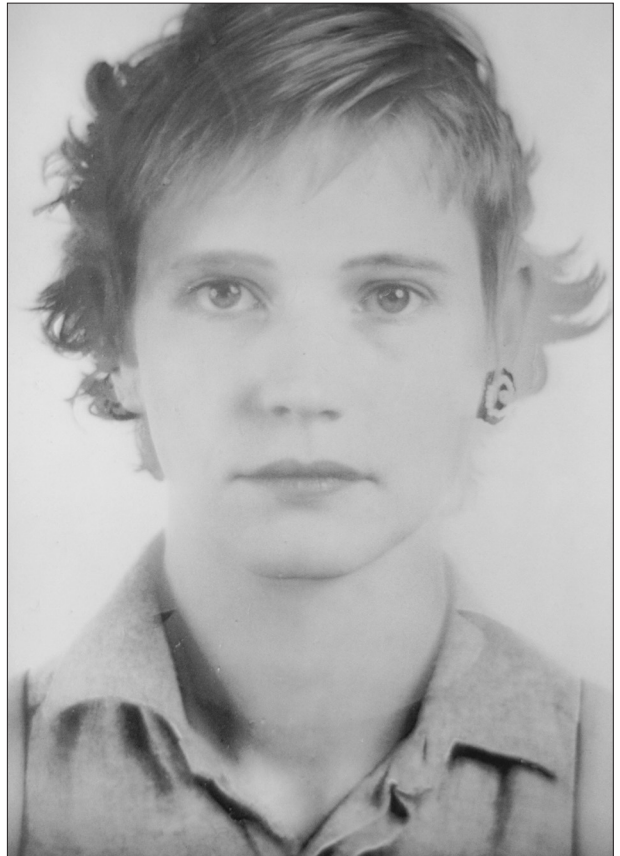
*Portrait Number 109/97, 1994-95*

screenprint, mounted on aluminum

169.9 x 119.1 cm

Number 1 from an edition of 3

L2011.5.28



In the mid-1990s, Ruff returned to the genre of portraiture with his series *Other Portraits*. Continuing to question the conventions of the medium, the artist here used a montage machine that had been part of German police equipment in the 1970s to create composite images of crime suspects. For each “Other Portrait,” Ruff blended two negatives from his earlier series (the title refers to the numbers of those negatives), but he chose people of differing facial characteristics and even gender. The artifice is clearly visible. The series was first presented in the German Pavilion at the 1995 Venice Biennale.

# ANDREAS GURSKY

**BORN 1955**

Born in Leipzig in East Germany in 1955, Gursky grew up in Düsseldorf as the son of a commercial photographer. After studies in Essen (1978–1981), he attended the Düsseldorf Art Academy (1981–1987), where he was a master student of Bernd Becher in 1985. Known for his large-format images of landscapes, architecture, and spectacle, his work seems to aspire to the status and qualities of monumental painting. Deploying digital manipulation since the 1990s, Gursky has explored themes of capitalism, globalization, and mass culture. The subject of a retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 2001, Gursky lives and works in Düsseldorf.

23

**ANDREAS GURSKY**

*Breitscheid Intersection, 1991*

color offset print

45 x 60 cm

Unnumbered impression from an edition of 50

L2011.5.6



Not all of Gursky's images have the monumental format for which he has become so well known. This early editioned print shows an anonymous place near the important highway intersection at Breitscheid, just outside Gursky's home town and major art center, Düsseldorf. The romantic landscape format organized around anchoring horizontals is here relativized by the juxtaposition of a modern autobahn (for some, the very trademark of Germany), desolate landscaping, and blank clouds.



# THOMAS STRUTH

BORN 1954

Born in 1954 in Geldern, Germany, Struth attended the Düsseldorf Art Academy, initially studying with Gerhard Richter. He shifted in 1976 to Bernd Becher's class after being made aware that his own set of photographed Düsseldorf streetscapes viewed from a central perspective was closely related to the Bechers' approach. Struth's work for about a decade focused on such streetscapes in Europe, Japan, and New York. Subsequent series of works have been family portraits and a series of large-scale photographs of visitors and art in some of the world's great museums. A further series extended some of the themes of the *Museum Photographs* to various sacred and secular commemorative sites (cathedrals, natural landmarks, and others). A 1992 commission for works for a hospital in Winterthur, Switzerland, resulted in landscapes and flower studies, and recent work has focused on images of jungles from around the world (the *Pictures from Paradise* series).



## 24

### THOMAS STRUTH

*58th Street at 7th Avenue, New York/Midtown, 1978*

gelatin silver print

36.8 x 51.3 cm

Number 2 from an edition of 10

L2011.5.29



## 25

### THOMAS STRUTH

*Greenwich Street at Franklin, 1978*

gelatin silver print

30.5 x 39.8 cm

L2011.5.30

Struth first visited New York on a scholarship from the Düsseldorf Art Academy in 1978. There he continued his series of cityscapes, usually taken from a central position in the middle of the street. The all-but-empty scenes force the viewer to engage not only with the potential and personality of the urban site, but also with the power and parameters of photographic vision. In 1987, an exhibition of ten years' worth of Struth's investigations of cities as disparate as Paris, Tokyo, New York, and Düsseldorf was tellingly titled *Unconscious Places*.

26

**THOMAS STRUTH**

*Traditional Japanese House I, Yamaguchi, 1995*

gelatin silver print

36 x 50.7 cm

Number 4 from an edition of 10

L2011.5.31



27

**THOMAS STRUTH**

*Old Street with Wooden Houses, Yamaguchi, 1996*

gelatin silver print

43.9 x 55.1 cm

Number 3 from an edition of 10

L2011.5.32



Struth began photographing in Japan in 1986. In addition to views in Tokyo and Kyoto, he has photographed scenes in Yamaguchi, the capital of the eponymous prefecture in Honshu province in the southwest. In this city of some 200,000 inhabitants, Struth has mainly focused on unassuming older and traditional wooden architecture, where some signs of modernity (utility poles and wires, for example) intrude to anchor the image in the present.

## THOMAS STRUTH

28

### THOMAS STRUTH

*Galleria dell'Accademia II, Venice, 1995*  
chromogenic color print, face-mounted to Plexiglas  
176 x 140 cm  
Number 10 from an edition of 10  
L2011.5.35



Since the series *Museum Photographs*, which brought Struth substantial acclaim in 1989, the artist has often returned to the theme of the relationships between the masterpieces of painting in the Western tradition, the public space of the museum, the role of the viewer (visitor, tourist, art enthusiast), and his own photographs. For this work, Struth has chosen a particularly resonant masterpiece: Titian's final painting, the *Pieta* of 1576 (completed by Palma Giovane after the plague claimed the aged artist). The dramatic night scene of the dead Christ carries intensely personal resonances: it was apparently painted for Titian's own tomb-chapel in Venice; it contains a text pleading for mercy for the artist and his son; and the figure of Nicodemus, the old man kneeling in front of the corpse, may have been intended as a portrait of Titian. Struth's photograph respectfully observes two young visitors contemplating this masterful meditation on death, surrounded – and seemingly confined – by the funereal paraphernalia of the museum experience: bench, gallery map, radiator, guard rail.



29

THOMAS STRUTH

*The Consolandi Family I, Milan, 1996.*  
chromogenic color print, face-mounted to Plexiglas  
110 x 135 cm  
Number 4 from an edition of 10  
L2011.5.33



Just as Struth's photographs of urban scenes are always precisely identified, so too is his series of family portraits, which carry not only the name of the family but also, significantly, the city in which it lives. Struth's subtle psycho-geography of place carries over into his delicate, but always respectful examination of family relationships and dynamics. Struth knows the families he photographs, allows them to assume the arrangements and poses they wish, and uses long exposure times and large formats to achieve a clear intensity of expression. This picture shows Dr. Paolo Consolandi (1921–2010) and his family. Consolandi was a notary and one of Milan's leading collectors of modern and contemporary art, notably drawings and the work of Lucio Fontana.

30

THOMAS STRUTH

*Huanghe Lu, Shanghai, 1997*  
chromogenic color print, face-mounted to Plexiglas  
93 x 116.1 cm  
Number 2 from an edition of 10  
L2011.5.34



Struth's interest in cityscapes has continued into a series of photographs taken in China, beginning in the mid-1990s. In this daytime scene of the visual cacophony of an ordinary Shanghai street known for its neon lights and simple restaurants, Struth again manages to elicit from us a careful attention to detail and contrast: modern signage next to wooden scaffolding; cars alongside bicycles; the leafless tree echoing the forms of Chinese written characters.

# MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

1953–1997

Born in Dortmund, Germany, in 1953, Kippenberger studied art at the Hamburg Academy of Art at a time when Sigmar Polke was one of the professors. Kippenberger's provocative "bad boy" public persona cultivated confrontation and controversy. His prolific work encompassed performance art, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation art, photography, as well as posters, invitation cards, and catalogues. A restless traveler, Kippenberger not only created work in a variety of countries, he also made such travel a theme in his vast series of hotel drawings using letterhead paper. An important body of self-portraits stressed the vulnerability of the artist; other works caustically engaged art and society. Grander projects in the years before his untimely death involved a parodic "museum of modern art" on the Greek island of Syros and the farflung entrances of a fictive worldwide subway system "METRO-Net." He died of liver cancer in Vienna, Austria, in 1997.



31

## MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

*Untitled (Hotel am Schlossgarten Stuttgart), 1987*

ballpoint pen on collaged paper and leaf on hotel stationery

29.7 x 21.2 cm

L2011.5.8

This collage deploys a couple of simple puns: the central image of a ballpoint pen is drawn in ballpoint pen, and is surrounded by a leaf (in German, "Blatt") affixed to a sheet of paper (also "Blatt"). The obviousness of these one-liners is balanced by the delicacy of the collage, in which the anthropomorphic image of the writing implement seems to grow out of the central vein of the desiccated but enveloping and protective leaf. The tentative drawing and unconventional organic material subtly evoke the aesthetic practice of Joseph Beuys, a point of reference in some way for many of the artists in the current exhibition. Beuys died the previous year, and this work may be a form of humble homage, though Kippenberger undercuts the metaphysical associations by including brand names (in the printed stationery and the drawn "BIC").

32

MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

Untitled (Alpin Park), 1989

ink and graphite on hotel stationery

29.5 x 21 cm

L2011.5.7



This gripping image of a lumber truck, perhaps speeding out of control with tires smoking, is puzzling but powerful. The disjunction between the designation "Post" (indicating a mail service vehicle) and the load of massive logs is difficult to reconcile, though they may be linked by the use of hotel letterhead paper (for mailing) and the name of the hotel (including a reference to a park and thereby to trees). Moreover, the downhill trajectory of the truck parallels the ski-slope angle incorporated into the graphic design of the hotel's name. At all events, the sense of destructive catastrophe seems suitable for an artist whose career was so marked by alcohol, excess, and risk-taking, and the sheet ends up carrying something of the force of a self-portrait.

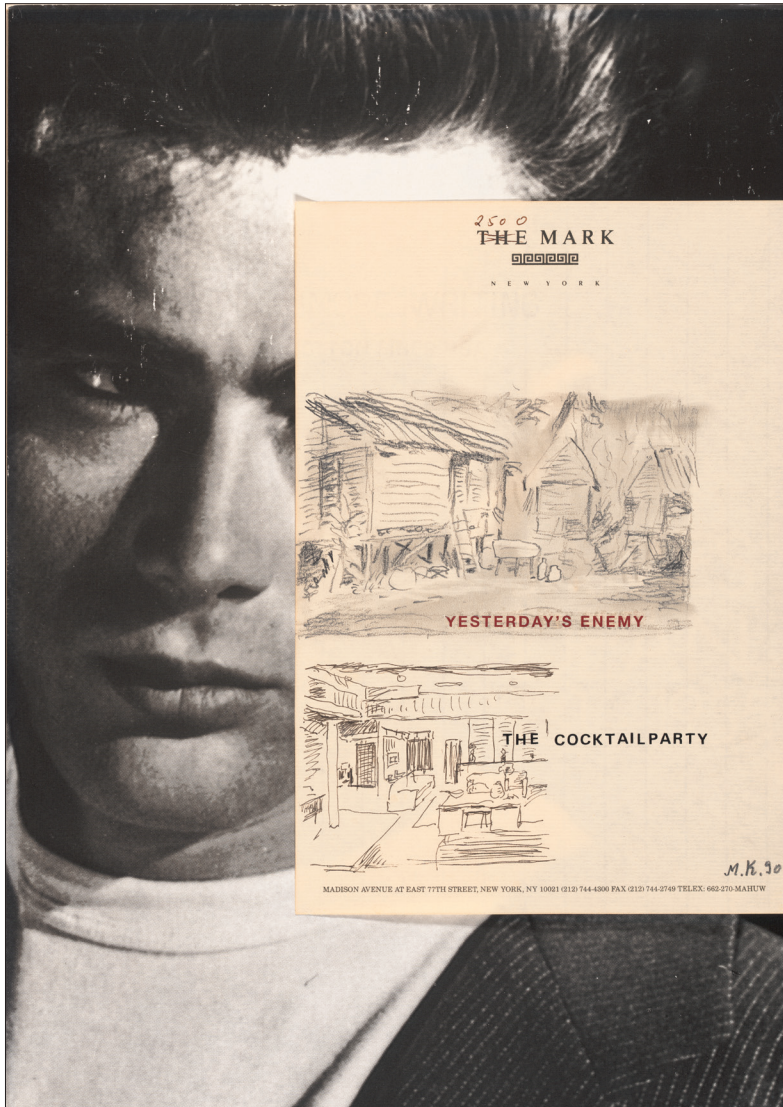


## MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

# 33

### MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

*Untitled (The Mark)*, 1990  
graphite, ink, and Letraset on hotel stationery,  
mounted on offset printed poster  
41.8 x 29.4 cm  
L2011.5.9



This hotel drawing amounts to a meditation on authenticity and honesty. It brings together three elements. The publicity photograph of James Dean (cropping out Natalie Wood) refers to *Rebel without a Cause*, his famous 1955 film about adolescent rebellion against hypocrisy and convention; the drawing itself alludes to two dramatic productions. *Yesterday's Enemy* is a 1959 film about the Burma campaign in World War II, famous for honestly highlighting the horrors and atrocities of war on both sides of the conflict. *The Cocktail Party* is T. S. Eliot's 1949 play which mixes aspects of the traditional "drawing room comedy" with darker and more absurdist explorations of human isolation and deception. Typically for Kippenberger, all these themes are evoked through reference to stage and film, just as his own notorious artistic and personal "honesty" was a performed stance and strategy. The artist introduces a deflating realism by altering the name of the fashionable hotel on Manhattan's Upper East Side into a financial sum (2,500 German marks).

34

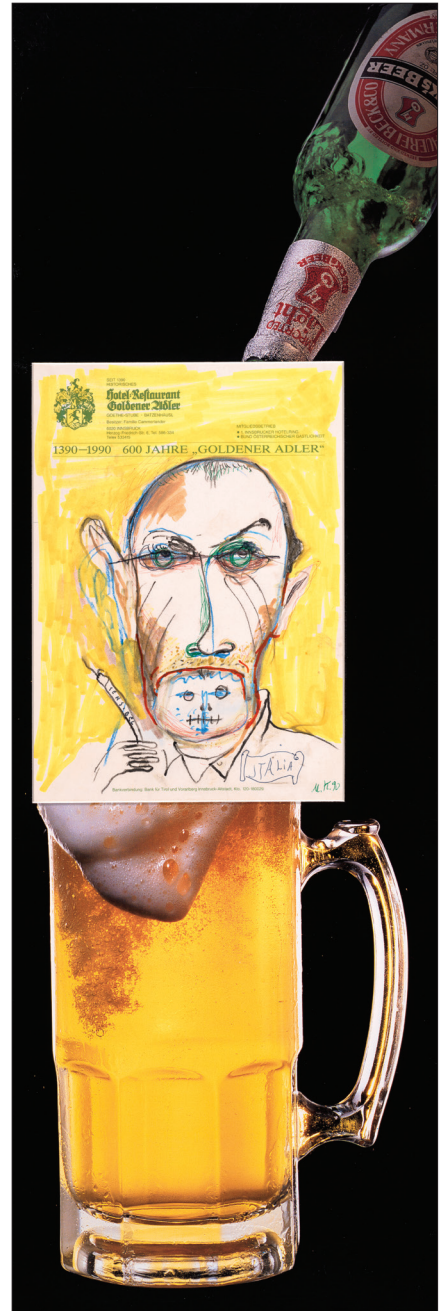
MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

*Untitled (Hotel-Restaurant Goldener Adler), 1990*

felt tip pen, ballpoint pen, and wax crayon on hotel stationery, mounted on offset printed poster

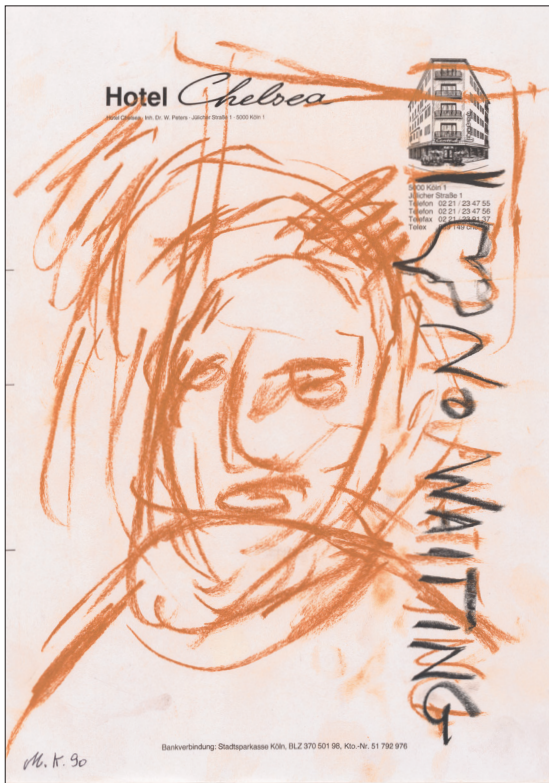
90.8 x 29.9 cm

L2011.5.10



As with checklist number 33, Kippenberger has here affixed his hotel drawing to an advertising poster. The vitality and exuberance of the foaming beer as it is poured out of the bottle (an imported German brand) contrast with the abject figure of an aged artist holding a limp phallic brush (inscribed “sensitive”). The face has two smaller visages drawn over its chin, one with the eyes closed, the other with the mouth stitched shut. The main head clearly alludes to the famous late self-portraits by Pablo Picasso, an artist whose productivity and chameleon-like artistic persona played an important role for Kippenberger.

## MARTIN KIPPENBERGER



# 35

### MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

*Untitled (Hotel Chelsea), 1990*

oil pastel on hotel stationery

29.5 x 21.3 cm

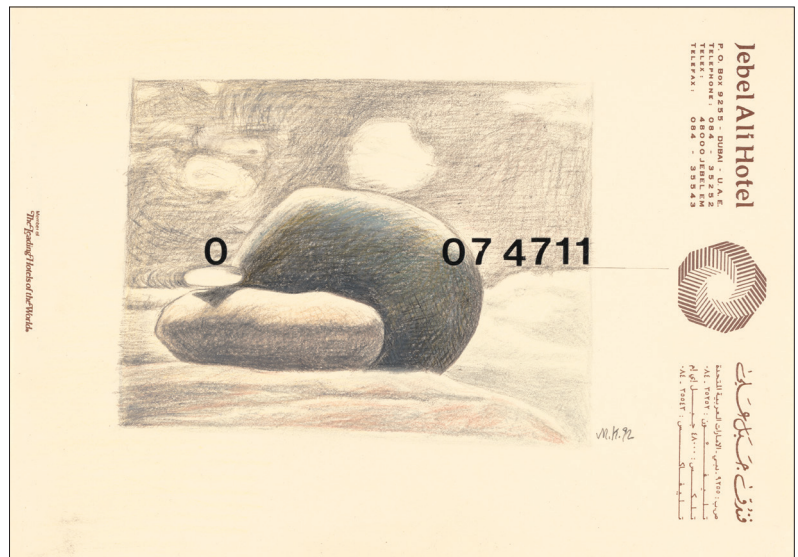
L2011.5.11

This drawing is very closely related to a set of fifty-two sheets entitled *Heavy Gal* (Flick Collection, Berlin), all of which use oil pastel on stationery from the Hotel Chelsea in Cologne (a place where Kippenberger had stayed in 1986). Also common to the drawings is a layering technique that here combines an energetic, impatiently drawn study of a head with the bumper-sticker slogan "I love no waiting," incorporating the heart symbol that Kippenberger also used in many stickers included in his collages of the period.

36

**MARTIN KIPPENBERGER**

*Untitled (Jebel Ali Hotel Dubai)*, 1992  
colored pencil and Letraset on hotel stationery  
20.5 x 29.4 cm  
L2011.5.12



Do the numbers in this hotel drawing refer to the famous “eau de Cologne” brand (4711) and James Bond (007)? Do they echo and parody the Dubai hotel’s printed phone numbers? The relationship to the drawn image of boulders in a seemingly expansive landscape (the desert of the United Arab Emirates?) remains characteristically elusive.



# MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

37

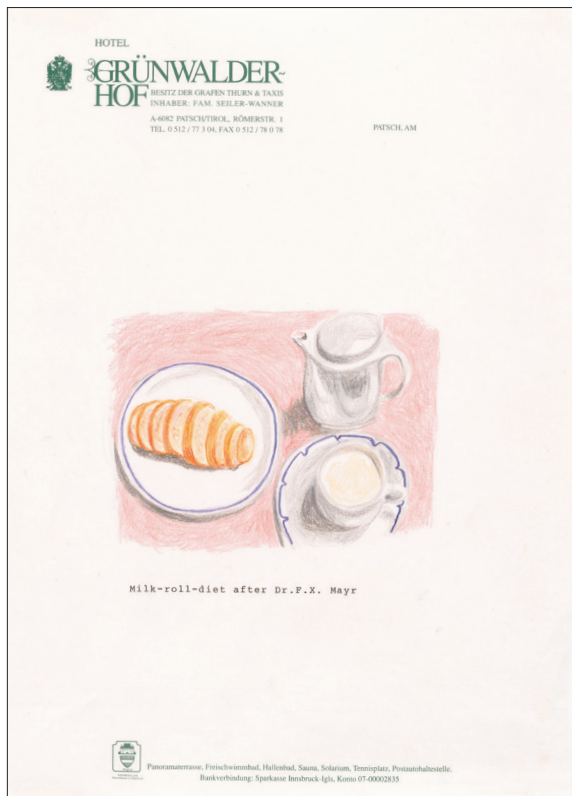
**MARTIN KIPPENBERGER**

*Untitled (Grunwalder-Hof, Milk-Roll-Diet After Dr. F.X. Mayr), c. 1994*

colored pencil, graphite, and typewritten lettering on hotel stationery

29.7 x 20.6 cm

L2011.5.13



Franz Xaver Mayr (1875–1965) was an internationally influential Austrian doctor who promulgated a healing therapy based on cleansing the intestine through a strict diet involving a quarter-liter of milk and a dried roll at morning and lunchtime. This digestive detoxification would lead to improved health, longevity, physical appearance, and spiritual well-being. This regimen is still widely offered, notably in luxury spa hotels, though apparently not at the Austrian hotel whose stationery Kippenberger used here. (Other hotel drawings on this stationery are dated 1994, giving an approximation for this undated sheet.) Food played an important role in Kippenberger's iconography (as it did for Joseph Beuys), and he would surely have been as suspicious of purity in nutrition as he was of purity in art and aesthetics.



**38**

**MARTIN KIPPENBERGER**

*Untitled (Omni Shoreham Hotel)*, 1994/95  
watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil, and graphite on  
paper strips woven through hotel stationery  
22.5 x 27.9 cm  
L2011.5.14



Kippenberger engaged in some way with most of the major artists and art movements of his time. He treated the purity and apparent rigidity of minimalism with particular scorn. The parodic modernist grid created by weaving together strips from two now indecipherable images, results in a powerful interplay between clarity and obscurity.

**39**

**MARTIN KIPPENBERGER**

*Untitled (New Hotel Siru)*, 1995  
colored pencil, felt tip pen, and ballpoint pen on hotel stationery  
20.9 x 29.8 cm  
L2011.5.15



The Hotel Siru in Brussels opened in 1990 with each room designed by a different Belgian artist. Kippenberger's use of this stationery for his image of an interior is especially poignant. Two coffin-like cradles (one upended) contain sheets or shrouds covering their occupants. The beds are alone in this hellish room with its gridded floor and dado surmounted by flame-like wallpaper. The artist's inscription, written in reverse as if from the "other side," reads: "Here's my blanket. Here's your blanket. Only the very best."

## **ACKLAND NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD**

James Keith Brown, chairman  
J. Kenneth Chance  
Shirley Drechsel  
John Eckblad  
Susan Eckblad  
Paula Flood  
Jim Turner Inscoc  
Alexander Julian  
Meagan Julian  
Ruby Lerner  
Beatrice Cummings Mayer  
Mac McCaughan  
Paula Davis Noell  
James Marion Parrott  
Sheldon Peck  
Katharine Lee Reid  
Herbert Shatzman  
John LeRoy Townsend III  
Carol Tresolini, ex officio

## **EMERITUS MEMBERS**

C. Perry Colwell  
Charles Millard  
Robert Myers  
James R. Patton Jr.  
Josephine Ward Patton  
Ann Bondurant Young



# ACKLANDARTMUSEUM

THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA *at* CHAPEL HILL