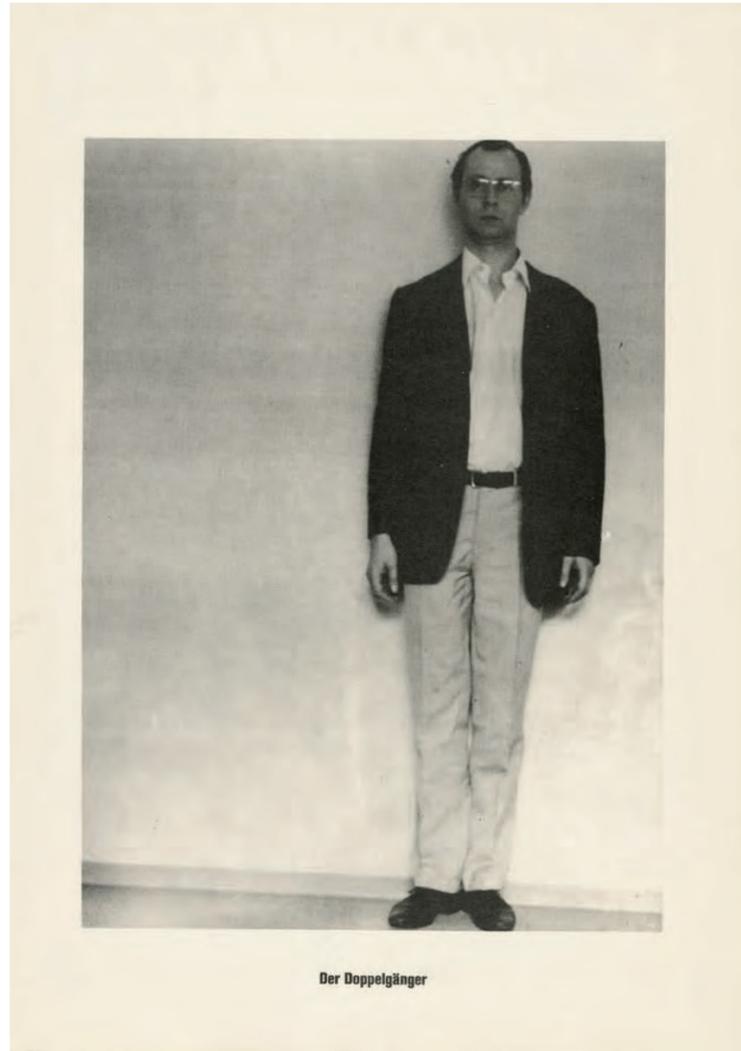




Alibis
SIGMAR POLKE
1963–2010

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Edited by Kathy Halbreich
with Mark Godfrey, Lanka Tattersall, and Magnus Schaefer



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Foreword

Museums with a focus on the art of their time are especially dependent upon the artist, and they are extremely fortunate in being able to engage in fruitful conversations across the decades with those who are most influential. Sigmar Polke was such an artist. It is an honor to present his first truly comprehensive retrospective, ranging across distinct mediums such as painting, film, performance, photography, Xerox, drawing, and installation, as well as hybrids of them. This exhibition, initiated with Polke's approval in 2008 by Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, The Museum of Modern Art, unites three institutions with a profound commitment to the artist: The Museum of Modern Art; Tate Modern, London; and Museum Ludwig, Cologne. We applaud the single-minded devotion and intellectual breadth of the curators involved: Kathy, along with Lanka Tattersall, Curatorial Assistant in MoMA's Department of Painting and Sculpture, and Mark Godfrey, Curator of International Art, Tate Modern. Kasper König, the former director of Museum Ludwig, and his successor, Philipp Kaiser, were dedicated to hosting the exhibition in Polke's hometown of Cologne. The curator Barbara Engelbach has been a special partner at Museum Ludwig and has used her expertise in film to present the first in-depth exploration of Polke's work in that medium.

The two organizing institutions have enjoyed numerous opportunities to share with the public the persuasive diversity of this artist's achievements, suggesting why several generations of artists have found the freedom of his cross-disciplinary approach, coupled with his attacks on artistic as well as social conventions, so galvanizing. The Museum of Modern Art was the first major museum in the United States to acquire a painting by Polke when it purchased *Mao* in 1982, a decade after it was made and just prior to the artist's first solo show in this country, at Holly Solomon Gallery, New York. When the Dannheisser Collection, given to MoMA in 1996, debuted in a 1998 exhibition, the curator Robert Storr incisively wrote in the accompanying catalogue that "Polke has made disorder his medium." In 1999 The Museum of Modern Art presented Margit Rowell's revelatory extensive study *Sigmar Polke: Works on Paper, 1963–1974*. Like MoMA, Tate has a long history of supporting Polke and making his work accessible. In 1995 Tate Liverpool presented a widely acclaimed survey, *Sigmar Polke: Join the Dots*, organized by Judith Nesbitt, which included work from the years 1963 to 1994.

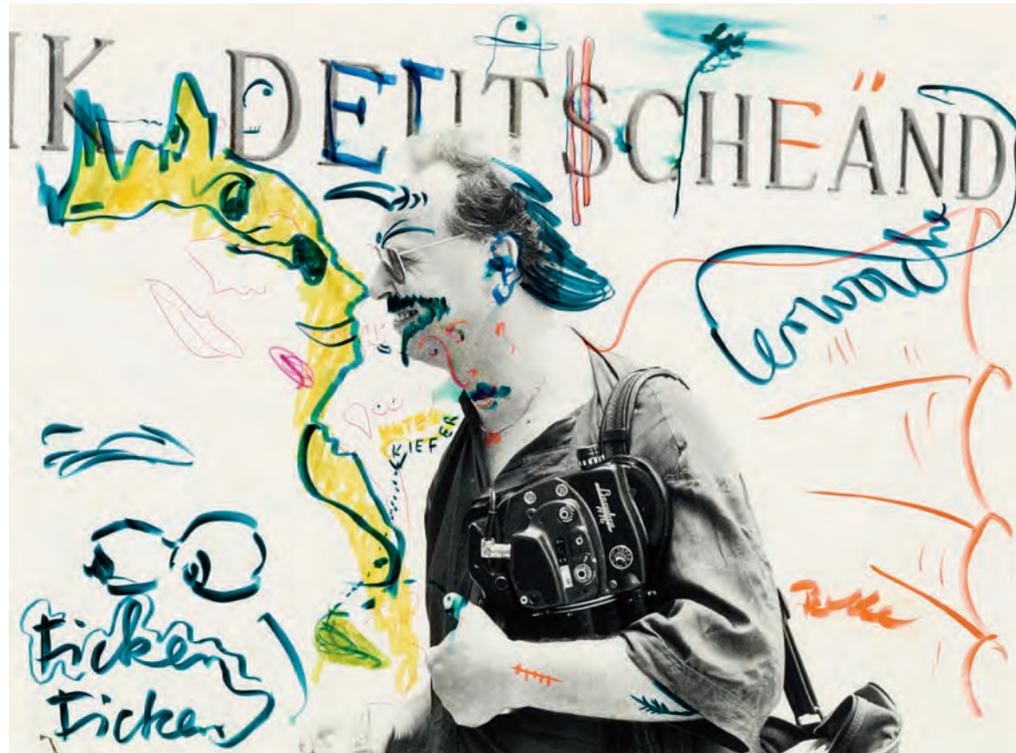
Eight years later, the exhibition *Sigmar Polke: Paintings and Drawings, 1998–2002*, organized by the Dallas Museum of Art, was mounted at Tate Modern as *Sigmar Polke: History of Everything*, in an installation conceived by then-director Vicente Todolí, in close collaboration with the artist. A focused display of key 1960s works by Polke from the Froehlich Collection was on exhibit at the same time. We anticipate that this exhibition, the first major retrospective to embrace all the mediums Polke so vigorously exploited, will make visible why he occupies such a central position in twentieth-century art and is recognized as one of the most daring, astute, and experimental artists of the post-war period.

An exhibition and publication of this size and aesthetic ambition—the premiere at MoMA is one of the largest shows to be organized by the museum—requires the conviction of many sponsors. At MoMA, none has been more generous than Volkswagen of America; the company's continued support makes such innovative initiatives first imaginable and then realizable. Hanjin Shipping, under the leadership of Mrs. Eunyoung Choi, immediately understood the importance of this exhibition and became a key partner. We are especially grateful for the essential contributions offered by our trustees and friends: the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, Sully Bonnelly and Robert R. Littman, and The Contemporary Arts Council. Additional support was provided by The Junior Associates and by the MoMA Annual Exhibition Fund. Crucial funding for the catalogue came from The International Council and its Jo Carole Lauder Publications Fund. Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder, in characteristic fashion, understood the importance of warmly celebrating at MoMA the hundreds of lenders, catalogue contributors, family members, and friends whose belief in the artist made all things possible. At Tate Modern the exhibition is supported by the Tate International Council.

Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to the artist's family for its unstinting assistance during the research and organization of this exhibition and publication. After Polke's death, in 2010, his children, Georg and Anna Polke, and his wife, Augustina von Nagel, became invaluable partners, helping the curators grapple with the erudite and complex intelligence underlying Polke's significant artistic achievements. They continued what Sigmar Polke wanted: an exhibition of singular range that would be seen in communities where large numbers of artists live and work.

Glenn D. Lowry, Director
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Chris Dercon, Director
Tate Modern, London



Acknowledgments

Kathy Halbreich

Sigmar Polke died in June 2010, two years after the planning for this retrospective began. I thought first about whether to proceed without him, and then how. The encouragement and trust of two people were influential beyond measure: the artist Augustina von Nagel, Polke's wife, whom I first met nearly twenty years ago, and Glenn Lowry, The Museum of Modern Art's director, who in 2008 offered me the opportunity to work with him at this remarkable institution. Their capacious intellectual and emotional generosity guaranteed the ambition of this publication and exhibition, one of the largest to be organized at MoMA. Their humor helped preserve my own, reminding me of how often Polke used laughter to deflate pretense and expectations, to make ideas and things unfamiliar again so they could be encountered as if new. Shortly after Polke's death, Augustina recognized the promise of making everything in his estate available: through our careful study in Polke's studio, library, and storage, his intellectual and aesthetic itineraries have become clearer, so that those who peruse this catalogue are able to draw closer, too. She was joined by Georg and Anna Polke, our essential partners even on those days when they questioned whether my approach would sufficiently represent the experimental daring and brilliance of their father's achievements. I know that this journey, in stirring up so many memories, passions, and questions, was arduous for them, and I am grateful for the family's indulgence and hospitality. There is no way to adequately thank them.

It has been marvelously stimulating to organize this exhibition with Lanka Tattersall and Mark Godfrey. The serious research began when Lanka joined me four years ago as the project's first curatorial assistant. Her probing intelligence and nuanced insights, along with her sleuthing, diplomacy, and perfectionism, have made every aspect of this project better. Not an hour or mile went by when I didn't feel extremely fortunate to have Lanka by my side; thanks to her unerring sense of direction, we never got lost, literally or figuratively. Mark, who is the Curator of International Art at Tate Modern, became our curatorial collaborator in summer 2011; his detailed command of the postwar art scene in Germany, coupled with a profound engagement with the conceptual history of painting, made him an ideal colleague. I am especially grateful to Mark for the clarity that was the result of his probing questions about and suggestions for the catalogue's structure and contributors. Curatorial Assistant Magnus Schaefer, who shouldered primary responsibility at MoMA

for perfecting this catalogue, from addressing authors' concerns to negotiating the rights for well over five hundred illustrations, exhibited a quiet determination and vivacious intellect from the moment he arrived in 2012. Joseph Logan's deeply discerning and responsive design resulted in the catalogue's Polkesque spirit without succumbing to imitation. Sheer pleasure, these collaborations!

Without the artist, we three curators came to depend heavily on others.

We are hugely indebted to Georg Castell and Michael Trier, Director and Artistic Director, respectively, of the Estate of Sigmar Polke, for their commitment to helping us realize this project despite the demands of setting up the Estate at the same time. At every turn, we had the advantage of Georg's judicious advice and Michael's unique understanding of the technical and philosophical underpinnings of Polke's work, which has deepened through his responsibilities as the artist's preferred conservator. It is a particular pleasure to look at and think about art with Michael. Sophia Stang, Nelly Gawellek, and Kathrin Barutzki, Research Associates for the Estate, were unfailingly accommodating. Astrid Heibach, Polke's friend since the 1970s, graciously shared the information gleaned from working with him on the films shown in his 2009 exhibition at the Hamburger Kunsthalle; Anke Mebold, an archivist at the Deutsches Filminstitut, added important technical expertise.

While this is the first retrospective to include the many mediums that Polke explored and exploited, it follows a number of groundbreaking exhibitions accompanied by important catalogues. We benefitted immensely from the earlier scholarship of, and often long conversations with, curators Dorothee Böhm, Bice Curiger (whose documentary, made with Jacqueline Burckhardt, on the stained glass windows in Zurich's Grossmünster, was commissioned for this exhibition), Martin Hentschel, John R. Lane, Petra Lange-Berndt, Gloria Moure, Petra Roettig, Margit Rowell, Dietmar Rübel, Katharina Schmidt, Paul Schimmel, Dierk Stemmler, Guy Tosatto, and Vicente Todolí. We appreciate the graceful openness of several of the artist's friends whom we barraged with questions; these include Mariette Althaus, Jo Baumann, Lonti Ebers, Friedrich Wolfram Heubach, Klaus Mettig, Michael Oppitz, Gerhard Richter, Katharina Sieverding, Katharina Steffen, Helen van der Meij, and Britta Zöllner.

Polke did not leave behind a record of his collectors, so one had to be constructed from various sources including earlier publications, gallery archives, and auction records. Michael Werner and Gordon VeneKlasen, who enjoyed a long relationship with the artist, shared invaluable information with us. Gordon, as director of Michael Werner Gallery, was involved in the earliest conversations with Polke about this exhibition, and he supported it immediately. We also are grateful to gallerists Fred Jahn, Mike Karstens, Christian Lethert, and David Zwirner, as well as the scholar Wiebke



Siever and art advisor Allan Schwartzman for locating crucial loans. Amy Cappellazzo, Chairman, Contemporary Development, Christie’s; Lisa Dennison, Chairman, Sotheby’s, North and South America; and Henrik Hanstein, Lempertz all identified key collectors.

This catalogue emphasizes the intellectual engagement of a new generation of commentators—curators, scholars, and artists—who had not yet had an opportunity to write extensively about Polke, the sole exception being Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Modern Art at Harvard University, whose candid reconsideration of the exhibition he organized in 1976, Polke’s first retrospective, brings the past into the present. The publication begins with a panoramic chronology by Kathrin Rottmann, a visiting lecturer at Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe, who expanded upon earlier research to display a dazzling grasp of the political, cultural, and biographical material that gave shape to Polke’s career. The sixteen contributors, including Lanka, Mark, Magnus and me, are: Christophe Cherix, The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Chief Curator of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Barbara Engelbach, Curator, Contemporary Art Collection, Photography and Media Art, Museum Ludwig; Stefan Gronert, Curator of Contemporary Art, Kunstmuseum Bonn; Rachel Jans, Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Christine Mehring, Department Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Art History, The University of Chicago; Matthias Mühlung, Director, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich; Marcelle Polednik, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville; Christian Rattemeyer, Harvey S. Shipley Miller Associate Curator of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the artists Paul Chan, Tacita Dean, John Kelsey, and Jutta Koether. The range of this new research hints at the amplitude of Polke’s concerns and their pertinence today. The bibliography, lovingly assembled over the years by Erhard Klein, one of the artist’s earliest gallerists and a trained librarian, picks up where the 1997 Bonn exhibition leaves off. The catalogue also benefitted from the assistance of Hendrik Bündge, Curatorial Assistant, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden; and Rolf Staeck of Edition Staeck, each of whom made a special effort to track down important photographs, as well as the photographers who generously allowed us to use their images. The leadership of MoMA’s Publisher Christopher Hudson and Associate Publisher Chul R. Kim, together with the exquisite care exhibited by Marc Sapir, Production Director, and Emily Hall, Editor, is evident in the quality of this complex effort.

This exhibition was administered by MoMA. A project of this scale depends upon the care of many more people than can be properly identified and thanked here. I hope all my colleagues at MoMA know how much I appreciate

the miracles they deliver daily. I am particularly grateful for the unstinting dedication of: Nancy Adelson in General Counsel’s office; Jennifer Cohen in Exhibition Planning and Administration; Anny Aviram and Scott Gerson in Conservation; Jennifer Wolfe in the Registrar’s office; Lana Hum, David Hollely, and Peter Perez in Exhibition Design and Production; Ingrid Chou, Samuel Sherman, and Sabine Dowek in Graphic Design; Tàlia Kwartler, 12-Month Intern in the Department of Painting and Sculpture; Lauren Stakias and Claire Huddleston in External Affairs; and the deeply engaged staffs of Communications, Digital Media, Imaging and Visual Resources, the Library and Archives, and Education. At some point in the process, curators from all of the seven curatorial departments at MoMA lent their expertise. In addition to Christophe and Christian, I would like to single out Rajendra Roy, Chief Curator in the Department of Film; Ann Temkin, Chief Curator, and Leah Dickerman, Curator, in the Department of Painting and Sculpture; and Roxana Marcoci, Senior Curator in the Department of Photography, for collaborating so freely. Ramona Bannayan, Senior Deputy Director, Exhibitions and Collections; Todd Bishop, Senior Deputy Director for External Affairs; and Peter Reed, Senior Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs, were all enthusiastic advocates and kind friends. The contributions of Amy Chen, my assistant, cannot be overestimated and consequently my affection for her is boundless.

Our partnership at Tate Modern began with conversations with Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate, whose deep affection for the artist made him a natural partner, and Vicente Todolí, the former director of Tate Modern; Chris Dercon, Director, Tate Modern; Achim Borchardt-Hume, Head of Exhibitions; Helen Sainsbury, Head of Programme Realisation; Patricia Smithen, Head of Conservation Programme; Rachel Kent, Programme Manager; Wendy Lothian, Registrar; Helen O Malley, Administrator, Exhibitions and Displays; Phil Monk, Art Installation; and Assistant Curator Kasia Redzisz were Mark’s indispensable cohorts. The exhibition at Tate Modern has been made possible by the provision of insurance through the UK Government Indemnity Scheme. On behalf of Tate we would like to thank the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council of England for providing and arranging this indemnity.

An exhibition succeeds or fails based on the generosity of its lenders: without the following institutions and individuals, our exhibition would be nothing more admirable than a good intention. Recognizing the fragility of some of the works and the centrality of all of them to the collections that house them, I am profoundly grateful for the willingness of all to participate in this exhibition. Again, it is appropriate to single out for special thanks the artist’s Estate for generously loaning numerous works ranging from delicate notebooks to monumental paintings to newly restored films. Josef and Anna Froehlich, and their daughter Anita Froehlich, similarly

allowed us to borrow seventeen works from their sterling collection of Polke’s early works.

My deep appreciation goes to colleagues from those public and private institutions that parted with essential works, including Douglas Druick, President, Eloise W. Martin, Director, and James Rondeau, Frances and Thomas Dittmer Curator and Chair, Department of Contemporary Art, The Art Institute of Chicago; Melih Fereli, ARTER/Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul; Klaus Schrenk, General Director, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich; Udo Kittelmann, Director, Nationalgalerie Berlin; Matthias Frehner, Director, and Claudine Metzger, Curator, Graphic Collection, Kunstmuseum Bern; Stephan Berg, Director, Kunstmuseum Bonn; Udo Brandhorst, with Armin Zweite, former Director, and Achim Hochdörfer, Director, Brandhorst Collection, and Nina Schleif, Curator, Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Frieder Burda, Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden; Lynn Zelevansky, Henry Heinz II Director of Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Marieluise Hessel and Tom Eccles, Executive Director, CCS Bard Hessel Museum; Maxwell L. Anderson, Eugene McDermott Director, and Jeffrey Grove, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, Dallas Museum of Art; Walter Soppelsa, Director, Daros Services AG, Zurich; Charles Esche, Director, and Christiane Berndes, Curator, Head of Collections, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands; Doris Fisher with Laura Satersmoen, Executive Director, Fisher Art Foundation, San Francisco; Friedrich Christian Flick, Friedrich Christian Flick Collection; Mitchell and Emily Rales, Maria Gabriela Mizes, Glenstone; Andreas Blühm, General Director, Groninger Museum; F. C. Gundlach and Sebastian Lux, Managing Director, Stiftung F. C. Gundlach, Hamburg; Hubertus Gaßner, Director, and Brigitte Kölle, Head of Contemporary Art, Hamburger Kunsthalle; Maja Hoffmann and Anna von Bruehl, Director, LUMA Foundation, Feldmeilen; Timothy Potts, Director, and Thomas Kren, Associate Director for Collections, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Brigitte Baumstark, Director, Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe; Petra Zimmermann, Director, and Claudia Gehrig, Librarian, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, Media Library with Regina Wyrwoll; Lisette Pelsers, Director, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; Helmut Friedel, former Director, and Matthias Mühlung, Director, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich; Fergus McCaffrey, McCaffrey Fine Art, New York; Eva Schmidt, Director, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen; Michael Semff, Director, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München in der Pinakothek der Moderne; Angelika Nollert, Director, and Thomas Heyden, Chief Curator, Neues Museum, Staatliches Museum für Kunst und Design in Nürnberg; Corinna Thierolf, Curator, Art from 1945, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Helge Achenbach and Annika Forjahn, Sammlung Rheingold/Achenbach Kunstberatung GmbH; Neal Benezra,

Director, and Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Brent R. Benjamin, Director, St. Louis Art Museum; Consuelo Císcar Casabán, Director, and Raquel Gutiérrez Pérez, Subdirectora General Técnico Artística, Institut València d’Art Modern; Olga Viso, Executive Director, and Darsie Alexander, Chief Curator, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Michael Werner and Gordon VeneKlasen, Michael Werner Gallery, New York.

Individuals part with works that often are on view in their homes, so that agreeing to a loan requires a special sacrifice. For their special kindness and devotion to the artist, I am grateful to Ruth and Theodore Baum; Jürgen Becker and Susanne Hegewisch-Becker with their children Marie and John Becker; Nicolas Berggruen; René Block; Axel Ciesielski; the Cranford Collection, London; Jennifer and John Eagle; H.R.H. Duke Franz of Bavaria; Ute and Eberhard Garnatz, with the assistance of their daughter, Julia Garnatz; Friedrich Wolfram Heubach; Edward Jaeger-Booth; Christof Kohlhöfer; Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis; Rudolf Lauscher; Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum; Agnes and Edward Lee; Michael and Susanne Liebelt with Beatrice von Bismarck, Dorothee Böhm, Petra Lange-Berndt, Kathrin Rottmann, Sebastian Hackenschmidt, and Dietmar Rübel; Siegfried Loch; Lutz Mommartz; Annette and Peter Nobel; Howard E. and Cindy Rachofsky; Leslie Rankow, on behalf of Imago Holdings and The Charles Lafitte Foundation; Inge Rodenstock; Alex Sainsbury; Alison and Alan Schwartz; The Estates of Emily and Jerry Spiegel; Katharina Steffen; Beth Swofford; Jeffrey Wilks and Lise Spiegel Wilks; Wolfgang Wittrock; Britta Zöllner; Thomas W. Bechtler, zL Zellweger Luwa AG; and all those who wish to remain anonymous.

Friends stay by your side on good days and bad. Both occurred during the years this project took to realize, and for their constancy and love I give thanks to Hilton Als, Paul Chan, Angus Cook, Gary Garrels, Robert Littman, and Patricia van der Leun as well as my son, Henry Kohring, and mother, Betty Halbreich. Glenn Lowry gave me the gift of returning to a curator’s mission: to become intimately involved with another life. While Polke’s influence, almost singular in its power and scope, is widely acknowledged by artists working today, I often missed the man. He visited me twice in dreams, once conversing softly with Immanuel Kant in my living room. In Freudian fashion, I saw this as an anxiety dream, transposing Kant for “can’t,” as in “I can’t do this.” The dream certainly was an accurate reflection of reality: no single exhibition can be the definitive Sigmar Polke show. There are many more shows to do, and I envy those colleagues who will go forward and make them. I, happily, am left with a bounty of memories and, I hope, a critique based on lessons that I learned from the artist about being overly dependent on reason, pure or otherwise. I, however, have no living room. Thank you, Sigmar.

Volkswagen

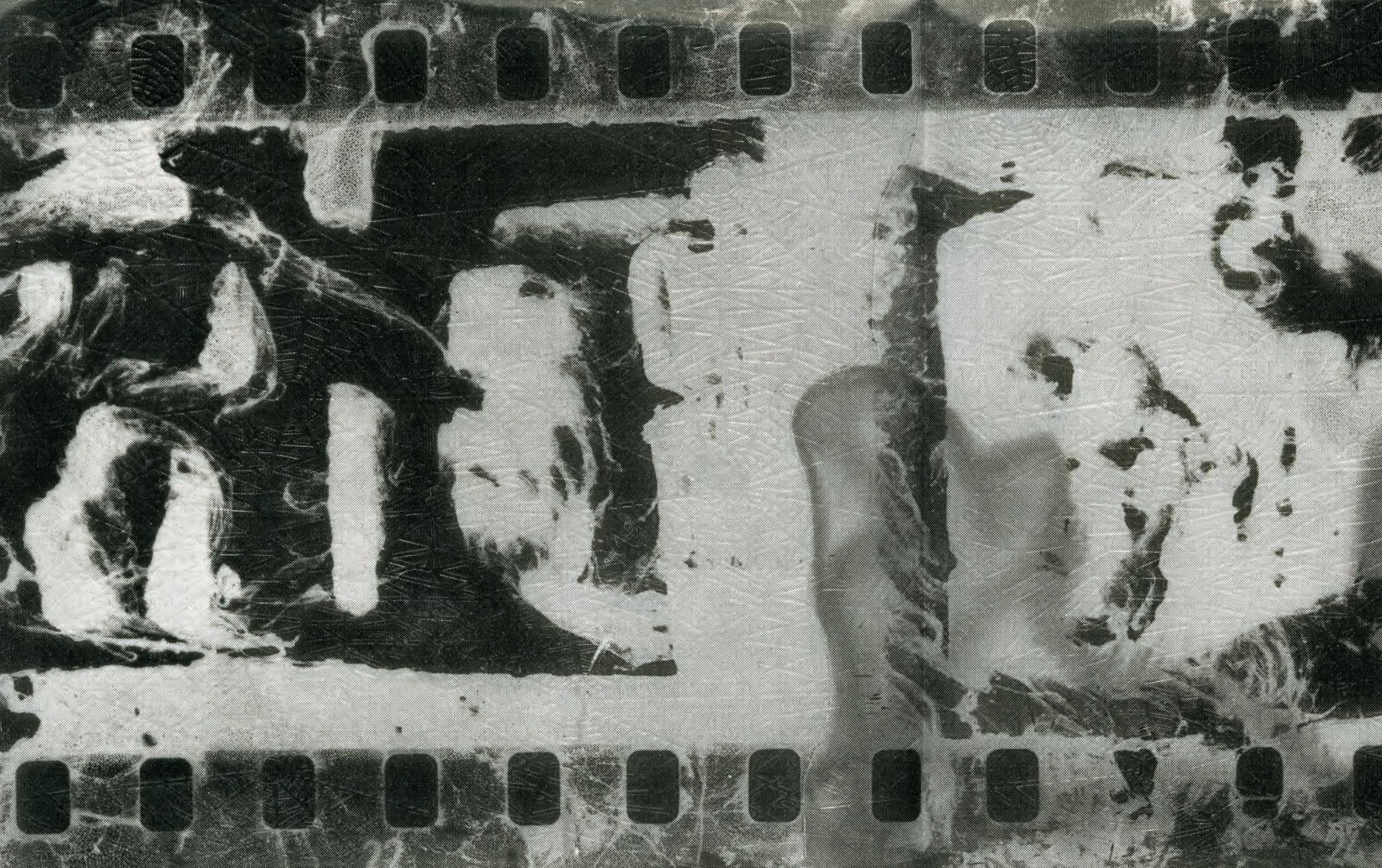


Volkswagen of America is deeply honored to be the sponsor of *Alibis: Sigmar Polke, 1963–2010*, one of the largest exhibitions ever presented at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and a retrospective focusing on an artist whose singular practice has changed how the rest of the world perceives German art since the mid-twentieth century. Widely regarded as one of the most influential artists of the postwar generation, Sigmar Polke possessed an irreverent wit that, coupled with his exceptional grasp of the properties of his materials, pushed him to experiment freely with the conventions of art and art history. The power of Polke's work arises from his highly individual and multifaceted style, his open-mindedness toward international influences, and his provocative examination of history and society.

The world of Volkswagen is similarly characterized by diversity and based on a clear vision. Our company, which is aiming to become the world's leading automaker both in economic and ecological terms, delivers personal mobility in 153 countries around the globe. At any place and time, our products and our way of working are defined by sustainability, quality, and passion.

We hope that visitors to this unique retrospective find themselves both inspired by Polke's work and engaged in debate with it, and that it encourages them to approach history with both insight and humor. Furthermore, we would like to thank The Museum of Modern Art for their trusting and inspiring partnership.

Jonathan Browning
President and CEO, Volkswagen Group of America



Alibis: An Introduction

Kathy Halbreich

Magic itself has many of the hallmarks of criminal activity. You lie, you cheat, you try not to get caught—but it's on stage.

—Raymond Joseph Teller, of Penn and Teller, 2013¹

Alibis: Sigmar Polke, 1963–2010 is the first retrospective to encompass the artist's experiments across all mediums, focusing on his influential and wide-ranging innovations in painting, photography, film, print, Xerox, drawing, collage, sculpture, and performance, as well as those works in which they fully merged. By fiercely testing the limits of his mediums he arrived at hybrids, which by definition are impure. Such unbridled exploration allowed him to escape easy explication and to avoid being circumscribed by critics. This may be why Sigmar Polke's work often confuses me. And why his stubborn destabilizing of the merest suggestion of fixed meaning sometimes scares me.

This retrospective has been sadly realized without the artist, who died two years into its planning. Having worked with him before, I was surprised by how quickly he agreed to adopt a cross-disciplinary approach. I had anticipated greater resistance because Polke so intensely prized his privacy that he made it difficult for anyone to grasp the whole of who he was or what he stood for. He was widely viewed as a contrarian without a recognizable style, and he liked that. However, despite his concomitant suspicion of the orderliness that gives shape to coherence, when all the mediums from different periods are brought together what emerges is a set of intellectually and aesthetically consistent beliefs. He undoubtedly knew this and worried that too much about him would be exposed. But in time I came to understand another reason why Polke previously had permitted major exhibitions that focused only on a limited number of mediums: they acted as something of an alibi, distracting from the principles of contamination that marked his approach to sources and materials and provided the philosophical foundation for his promiscuous intelligence.

Polke pushed his materials to the point where reason falters and where things begin to find their form not through the artist's foresight or deliberate hand but through such nonrational conditions as gravity, accident, and the associative power of the unconscious. No binaries satisfied, no ideology appealed, no geometry embodied the divine, and no truth held sway. He was obsessed with arriving at a less stilted and less sentimental form of expression through the use of chance; he wanted to free his materials from his control in order to undermine facility, to move beyond what he already knew. He burned holes in mattress ticking in *Camp (Lager)* (1982) and choreographed plumes of smoke from a small oil lamp to make large sooty paintings on glass in 1990. He blew minerals and meteor dust onto canvas, creating the pixelated depth of virtual space before the computer made prosaic such expansive dimensions. Topical



Fig. 1 Sigmar Polke in the Eifel mountains of western Germany, 1993. Photograph by AVN



Fig. 2 Two spreads from an untitled album (*Swastika*). After 1982. Colored ink on paper, spread: 10 3/8 x 14 1/4" (26.3 x 37.4 cm). Private collection

cartoons, furniture advertisements that burlesqued the “moderne,” photographs of pornographic masquerades, and decorative motifs from art history were mixed as fluidly as the liquids—resin, house paint, coffee, and brandy, diluted to various viscosities—he spilled to create lavalike flows and, when dried, crystalline patterns in which it is often possible to discern a figure, born of the unforeseen. The microscopic informed the macroscopic, collapsing the conventions of perspective and tying creation to kaleidoscopic revelation. He experimented wildly, even dangerously. To augment the work of Antoine Henri Becquerel, who in 1896 discovered radioactivity by placing uranium salt on a photographic plate and observing how the mineral’s invisible rays had stained the ground, Polke set uranium (a material used to color photographs, glass, and glow-in-the-dark paint, as well as to tint viruses to make them visible through an electron microscope) on unexposed photographic paper to make abstractions suggestive of cosmic explosions or paranormal emanations. He did this in 1982, a year after the huge antinuclear protests in Brokdorf. Something startling results from Polke’s deployment of decay, from his harnessing of the radioactive decomposition that occurs when a system is disturbed and an atom loses energy as it moves from parent radionuclide to new daughter nuclide.

In place of purity, Polke sought the shadows in which things come to be. Flux prevailed and anything that appeared fixed was quickly set aside. He often altered the aesthetic heredity of his mediums by debasing the integrity of each; by breaking and recombining their genetic conventions, he cultivated crossovers of material and meaning that reflected parental traits but were independent of them. By employing silver bromide, typically used in the emulsion for photographic prints, as a pigment in *Watchtower* (*Bufo Tenin*) (*Hochsitz [Bufo Tenin]*) (1984, cat. 218), Polke created a painting that would continue to blacken over time with exposure to light. Its material fluctuations mirror the unstable meaning of the subject, a structure used variously to survey the habitat of hunted animals, to protect the Eastern border, and to guard the concentration camps, thus shifting associations from the mundane to the monstrous. Further, by making it difficult to discern this lookout, the artist suggests both how history may be repressed and how an ideology of vision dependent upon willful blindness once functioned in the everyday lives of Germans. He transported what he learned in the darkroom to painting, turning a static object into something closer to a slow-motion film. In his photographs he debased the medium’s classic fixation with fidelity as well as its chemistry, mixing a toxic brew of developer and fixer to summon surprising apparitions from scratched and overlapping negatives. This mongrel darkroom technique, informed by the LSD-induced visions he experienced while processing his *Paris* pictures in 1971, anticipated the ghostly images he would later conjure from

the rebellious interaction of paint, lacquer, and resin; the temporal dislocation and layering of narratives prompted by these phantasmagoric procedures also are reflected in the competing time zones and stories he created in his films, through double exposures and the camera’s tilt.

When meanings multiply, certainty dissipates. For example, Polke challenges the fixed signification of a swastika seen on two sides of the same notebook page (fig. 2): on the first side he inked, in magenta, a right-facing swastika, a five-thousand-year-old symbol used by many cultures before being appropriated by the Nazis to denote a racially “pure” state; on the back of the sheet the swastika bleeds through and is reversed, coming closer to its original Sanskrit reference to the good or auspicious, which, given its perverted local use, is almost unbearably poignant. Some scholars have suggested that the cultural dispersion of the swastika derived from the sighting of a comet, with its swirling arms of gas, as it dramatically passed close to Earth; given Polke’s interest in such phenomena—evidenced in *Comet* (*Komet*) (1982)—he likely was aware of this theory.² An alternative hypothesis, by a mathematician who has explored the patterns underlying the biology of perception, posits that during altered states of consciousness the neural activity displayed on the visual cortex reproduces the parallel structure of the swastika.³ So the symbol may have appeared to Polke during a hallucination.

Why would Polke have repeatedly used this highly provocative symbol? Any conjecture of the artist’s intent must embrace indeterminacy precisely when certainty would bring comfort. Polke avoided easy assurances, even as he risked placing himself in an unfavorable light; in the lack of resolution embodied in doubt he found greater license than certitude provides. Although it is illegal in Germany to employ the swastika as a symbol in almost any capacity—which doubtless enhanced its appeal for Polke—he also must have sensed that its persistent vilification after the war had robbed it of some of its animating power, like an expletive repeated constantly, and thus felt almost obliged to use it. “I tend to feel that he feels a kind of morbid fascination for it,” wrote a critic in 1992, “as an image that has become almost banal through over-exposure. . . . It is a terrible image of our capacity for cruelty, terrifying in its sumptuousness. In its sensuality it shows how we milk signs for their significance.”⁴ Although this critic was explaining why the emotional impact of the watchtower falters, his comments could apply to the artist’s deployment of the swastika. Yet Polke rescued the symbol’s shocking associations in *Paganini* (1981–83, cat. 191), in which a group of them spiral like musical notes around the deathbed of the Italian violinist, whose virtuosity, perhaps aided by a medical condition that gave him unusually flexible joints, was so extraordinary that one audience member claimed to have seen the devil assisting him. Thus, Polke associates the seduction practiced by

the artist with the deceptions of Adolf Hitler. As a resolute nonconformist, Polke wrestled with the truths that only the most skeptical among us know are nothing more than myths and alibis. This is where the melancholy begins.

Many of Polke's friends recall his unusual ability to see through the deceit, subterfuge, and artifice of polite society, to penetrate the trivialities of the status quo in order to make visible its unstable values. With an enormous economy he cut away the fatty niceties of good taste in images of burned bread, exotic palm trees few could afford to visit, and sausages adulterated with flour. In *Chocolate Painting (Schokoladenbild)* (1964, cat. 17) he ridiculed the close parallels between commercial design and abstract art as well as the misplaced appetites stirred by luridly colored advertisements for a lifestyle of increased consumption at a time when the humble potato remained a dietary necessity. He understood how material desire could be manipulated, perceptively equating the selling of consumer goods with the erotic goodies offered by Playboy bunnies in a 1966 painting. (Since this was made six years before the magazine was published in Germany, Polke may have lifted the image from a soldier's contraband.) Recognizing that all systems had failed, he dismantled scientific classifications and mathematical conclusions in paintings such as *Solutions V (Lösungen V)* (1967, cat. 60). He found amusement in belittling the suffocating piety of the postwar period in which yesterday's commandant could shift seamlessly into a new life as a judge—true testimony to how petit bourgeois life depended on a sideward glance. His was a continuous battle to distance himself from the ordinary, yet the commonplace provided the most polluted mix of the bromide and burdened, as in a 1963 drawing of a bar of soap (cat. 10) that memorializes both the everyday routine of the domestic bath and the singular horror of the concentration camp's fake showers, into which people were herded and gassed. The mordant declaration of the 1964 drawing "*We Want to Be as Free as the Fathers Were*" ("*Wir wollen frei sein wie die Väter waren*") (cat. 31) makes for a sour laugh even today.

His relentless mistrust of the rational and rote may be best understood in the context of the time and place in which he came of age. He was born in 1941, when the "hypnotic appeal" of the Third Reich was at its apex, shattering forever the belief, born of the Enlightenment, that reason would lead to liberation.⁵ What, then, was the way forward? Bice Curiger, one of Polke's closest friends, has said that he approached art as a way to fight "against the madness of facts."⁶ One of the hardest facts to fathom was the existence of the authoritarian virus that, released in the 1930 general election by the establishment of the Nazi party, infected the nation's conscience. While certain facts, such as the existence of the Holocaust, are incontrovertible, others are more fugitive; the doctrinaire prescriptions that provide the political rationale for both good and evil often migrate in

time away from the facts that bring them into being. This rupture in the membrane between truth and fiction has long provided a creative opening for the thinkers who most radically disrupt our sense of reality, who obliterate earlier formulations of the ideal or absolute with unexpected reversals of the regulated pattern of old expectations or hypotheses. This juxtaposition of the status quo and the new is akin to the discrepancies that distinguish the blackest humor, when the neatness of earlier assumptions is undermined and the angry vitality lurking in the laughter is exposed. The volcanic urgency of Polke's unconventional approach to making art targets this place of invention.

The caustic humor shadowing his work locates the incongruity between how we expect things to be and how they truly function, between appearances and reality. Polke's acerbic visual and verbal asides were sometimes confused with cynicism. But as Slavoj Žižek has explained, "Comedy does not rely on the undermining of our dignity with reminders of the ridiculous contingencies of our terrestrial existence. . . . Or to put it another way, what effectively happens when all universal features of dignity are mocked and subverted? The negative force that undermines them is that of the individual, of the hero with his attitude of disrespect towards all elevated universal values, and this negativity itself is the only true remaining universal force."⁷ Polke's use of humor, with its cutthroat contradictions that subvert customary syntax and association, reflects how much he wanted—needed—to break free of conformity and its troubled sibling, purity. Although he pitilessly tested the orthodoxies of all forms of authority—of family, teachers, and society—he rarely seemed satisfied. Perhaps, then, only a man in snakeskin pants, shedding identities and artistic approaches (fig. 3), could persistently pursue something as seductive and elusive as the release from all constraint while also recognizing the impossibility of finding any permanently liberating answer to the most pressing questions of his time: how the remains of logic could be reconstituted, and how civilized behavior could be redefined. In this pursuit he studiously avoided any signature style or medium, so that his aesthetic method—first in one place, then in another—enacted the role of an alibi.

This exhibition and publication set Polke's skepticism against the flattened landscape and subsequent turbulent transformation of postwar Germany. Indeed, his corrosive humor—itsself evidence of his attachment to the discordant ironies of contemporary life—was sharpened by seeing how modernism's aesthetic principles of purification, once so cleanly aligned with the relentless forward momentum of progress, were manipulated to create the malevolent pseudoscience of eugenics, the foundation for Nazi "solutions," turning modernity's utopian aspirations to ash. For an artist of Polke's age the vile irony of this twist must have been magnified by recognizing how the masses had in part



Fig. 3 Bernd Jansen. *Willich (Polke in Python Skin)* (*Willich [Polke in Pythombaut]*). 1973. One of seven gelatin silver prints: 14 1/8 x 9 1/8" (36.5 x 25 cm). Joint loan of Beatrice von Bismarck, Dorothee Böhm, Petra Lange-Berndt, Kathrin Rottmann, Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Michael Liebelt, and Dietmar Rübel



Fig. 4 *The Illusionist (Der Illusionist)*, 2007. Gel medium and acrylic on fabric, 7' 2 3/4" x 9' 10 1/4" (220 x 300 cm). Jennifer and John Eagle and The Rachofsky Collection

been mesmerized by a deft appropriation of the mechanisms of artistic spectacle, deployed, for example, in Leni Riefenstahl's films, in Albert Speer's architecture, and in pageants such as the Tag der Deutschen Kunst (Day of German art), held in Munich in 1939. Perhaps, as Michael Kimmelman has noted, the distortion of the principles underlying an increasingly essential idea of picture making was inevitable, given that "what might be called the inherent narcissism of modernist abstraction, with its inward-turning focus on its own formal means and devices, its willful divorce from the sort of close social observation and proletarian politics . . . is not incompatible with the clean-sweep radicalism promised by Facism. Nor is it inconsistent with the notion of a centralized, supreme author, or authority."⁸ Polke constantly mocked the authority of divine inspiration, artistic influence, critical judgment, and governmental dogma in works such as *Higher Beings Commanded: Paint the Upper-Right Corner Black! (Höhere Wesen befahlen: Rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!)* (1969, cat. 99), in which the hand-painted title, in a facsimile of the font of a bureaucrat's typewriter, provides a hilarious tagline for the ultimately ominous interplay among spiritual, artistic, and political powers.

Although Polke was politically agnostic and rarely spoke about his artistic preferences, there is a clear aesthetic link between his approach and the chance-based, mixed-medium adulterations of Max Ernst and other Dadaists practicing around 1919 in Cologne, where a residue of military control and censorship remained from World War I. These anti-art experiments, deemed degenerate by the Nazis, were well documented in the first postwar Dada exhibition in Germany, in Düsseldorf in 1958, which Polke would have seen as a seventeen-year-old, as well as in Hans Richter's firsthand account *Dada: Kunst und Antikunst (Dada: Art and Anti-Art)*, published in Cologne in 1964. Polke eagerly absorbed and expanded on the impurity of the Dada artists' radical cross-disciplinarity, but he never openly acknowledged his dependence on both the concept and technique of contamination as the most logical response to Nazi attempts to cleanse the national body of such fictional ethnic pollutants as Jewish "bacilli."⁹ However, in how he lived and what he made he rejected the widespread mistrust of the provisional or speculative that was clearly broadcast in the slogan on Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's campaign posters from the 1950s: "Keine Experimente!" (No experiments!). But while he shunned the easy assurance of the bourgeois lifestyle, I can't shake the sense that Polke was haunted by his inability to free himself entirely from the constraints inherent in all constructions of reality shaped by misplaced or pernicious definitions of the proper and normal. He struggled to see beyond the wicked compliance of those in command and those who followed, but none of his beloved optical instruments, magic illusions, hallucinogens, books, or travels could provide an enduring alternative. He swung

between being inhibited and propelled by the knowledge that the mystification of truth as practiced by both state and family had cultivated a singular evil in the guise of false normality: neighbors simply disappeared and fathers returned from the front in silence. This transgression was experienced by many in Polke's generation as a betrayal by all authorities. Donald Kuspit has written that "Polke uses abstraction—a kind of abstract if mechanical process—to punch holes in the representation of social reality—the dots are so many holes undermining the image they form—suggesting that it is a mass deception."¹⁰ It is impossible not to see Polke's skepticism, and the creative agency that grew out of it, as rooted in the fear of such deception.

In 1963 Polke found in his handmade raster-dot patterns a perfect visual model for this oscillating vision of reality, which frustrates finding any final form. The resulting disorientation became both foundational precept and process, beginning with the early 1960s raster paintings and continuing throughout his career. To capture the aggravation of all the senses sensing at once, he mined the blurred vision, floating sensations, and accelerated heart rate of the hallucination, wishing to lose his physical, intellectual, and perceptual boundaries in order to become part of something larger, as well as to escape for a few moments the loneliness of the desire to be different or, perhaps, the more suppressed hope not to be. It is likely he also found release in the near-intoxication of the pseudomyopia brought on by long periods of painting just a few inches from the canvas; this condition exacerbated his nearsightedness, which he believed had prompted his attraction to rasters in the first place. Working at such an intimate range, Polke dissolved into the dynamism of his marks and thus avoided responsibility for the picture's overall image until late in its evolution; this allowed him to trick himself into finding a greater fluidity between narratives, as well as between abstract and figurative patterns. And by inverting the mechanics of the printing process—by applying the dots by hand rather than reprographically—Polke brought together two opposite emotional states, linking the passion of a critique to the remove of a meditation. When each dot is laboriously applied by hand rather than mass-produced, the ironic must be linked to the contemplative in order to attain the patience required for the task.

In the swirl of marks that results, an image is not a picture of the thing itself but an alternative projection that we come to understand only as the dots lose their individuality, the mind fills in the space between them, and the visual pollution begins to cohere. Images are continually assembling and falling apart before our eyes. On his attraction to this constant motion, Polke said, "I like the way that the dots in a magnified picture swim and move about. The way that motifs change from recognisable to unrecognisable, the undecided, ambiguous nature of the situation, the way it

remains open. . . . Many dots vibrating, swinging, blurring, reappearing: one could think of radio signals, telegraphic images, television come to mind."¹¹ Invisible signals and rays of all sorts populate Polke's works. A film from the 1970s follows a colleague as he walks through Hamburg, using a mirror to capture and fracture the sun's rays. *Seeing Rays (Strahlen Sehen)* (2007, cat. 263), one of Polke's late lens paintings, is based on an illustration from *Oculus Artificialis Teledioptricus Sive Telescopium* (The teledioptric artificial eye, or telescope), a book on optical instruments from 1685, that shows four men looking up in shock, with a web of sight-lines connecting their eyes to a flying dragon. Although a trace of the imaginary beast remains in the painting, it almost wholly disappears into an equally impossible solar event of near-apocalyptic animation. But Polke's real focus in this work is not on the imagined but on making palpable the complexity of both the idea and the experience of vision. He invented a hologramlike apparatus by superimposing an undulating, semitransparent lens above a painted canvas, so that the imperfect three-dimensional imagery coheres and disperses with the viewer's movement. Thus, late in his career, he circled back to the perceptual vibration of his early raster paintings, such as *Girlfriends (Freundinnen)* (1965/1966, cat. 36). Many of Polke's drawings contain a male figure with alien attributes who transmits and accepts energy waves, functioning as both antenna and medium. Art, then, was a discipline of consciousness and vision rather than a message or mannered form of self-expression. This was a very big responsibility.

In public Polke preferred to treat this responsibility as a joke by juxtaposing, in his actions and remarks, the emotional conflict of tragedy with the ambiguity required for comedy's optimistic resolution. But the discrepancy between appearances and perception plagued him, set him apart, and sometimes made him difficult. It prompted his encyclopedic and not entirely recreational study of hallucinogens from various cultures, including mushrooms and frog urine (fig. 5). He performed without inhibition for photographs and films: wrapping himself in a pink flannel painting covered with loosely drawn swear words both archaic and contemporary (cat. 77; page 197); pantomiming a slapstick dive into a pitcher of water; enlivening a New Year's Eve party by doing a handstand on the toilet and then using his pal Blinky Palermo's painting as a seesaw; and scandalizing guests with a Nazi salute at a gallery opening. But a dark and grating mood underlaid these actions; his carefree posture was at least partially a pose, a studied sleight of hand, like those employed by the magicians he admired to elegantly distract a victim's attention from the contrivance of the trick (fig. 4). Polke used humor to release the tension in his barbed critiques and to propel himself forward. By contaminating the familiar, he revived the enchantment inherent in all things seen for the first time.



Above: Fig. 5 *Mu nielnam netorruprup*. 1975. Offset print on poster, 27 1/16 x 19 1/16" (70 x 50 cm). Collection Katharina Steffen, Zurich
 Following page: Fig. 6 Page from an untitled notebook ("*We Make Our Lines with a Ruler*" ["*Striche machen wir mit dem Lineal*"]). c. 1969.
 Collage, watercolor, and ballpoint pen on notebook paper, 8 1/4 x 5 1/4" (21 x 14.7 cm). Private collection



Polke found a similarly generative power in the destructive mechanisms of kitsch, in the ways in which its lowbrow sentimentality distorts and trivializes the original without regard to status (fig. 6). Of course, he recognized kitsch as a product that with its repackaging of cultural traditions for mass appeal celebrated the norms he rejected. In characteristic contradictory fashion he both appreciated and poked fun at kitsch, understanding how its vulgarity exposed concerns about what matters, what should be cared for, and what is memorable. But by incorporating it into his work, Polke didn't intend to make his art easier to grasp; in creating a new context for the hackneyed image, he aggressively disrupted its workaday or standard meaning, further complicating the commonplace. Kitsch has been a topic of critical debate since 1939, when Clement Greenberg borrowed the German word for his Marxism-inflected essay "Avant-garde and Kitsch," which was conceived under the shadow of the opening, two years earlier, of the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate art) exhibition in Berlin. These political circumstances stoked Greenberg's desire to segregate the most progressive abstract art from the tawdry populism essential to the Third Reich's propaganda as well as to its polemical dismissal of modern art. He warned that kitsch's appeal to the working class was based on a formulaic dilution of aesthetic values, providing "all that is spurious in the life of our times."¹²

But Polke toyed with rules of taste, both contrived and cultivated, to reveal the disparities that produce them. He exploited the doubling evident in desire's perversion as it gives rise to the ersatz, in how the hausfrau's enduring affection for Albrecht Dürer's exquisitely observed sixteenth-century hare precipitated its transformation into a cheaply reproduced and decorative kitchen towel, devoid of the craft that had made the original so beloved. In an ironic play on the oedipal, the younger artist restores the elder's hare to the realm of art by incorporating one of these mass-produced cloths in his painting *Hand Towels (Handtücher)* (1994). But the poor pirated hare, carrying all that historical weight into a new artistic context, signals its own death; like the generations of a photograph or a photocopy repeatedly reproduced, it loses verisimilitude. By both resurrecting and killing one of Dürer's most esteemed works, Polke found his way around the aura of this ur-German artist without entirely denying his admiration for him. His frequent return to motifs in Dürer's oeuvre may also convey sympathy for the artist whom Heinrich Wölfflin accused in 1928 of betraying his German heritage by adopting foreign characteristics learned during his travels to Italy. Such nationalistic critique of stylistic adaptation, rooted in distaste for the "other," would have fascinated Polke, who analyzed style in order not to be trapped by one and affection in order to escape any suggestion of paternal imitation.

Solutions are the product of a lack of freedom multiplied by a complacent satisfaction.

—Sigmar Polke, 1976¹³

The painful circumstances of Polke's childhood begin to explain his compulsive rejection of convention and conformity. By the time he turned twelve years old, in 1953, he had lived in extreme poverty as well as through the trauma, hostilities, and punishing imaginative constraints of three ideological battles: the silence of his architect father, who was "conscripted to build military-related strategic facilities" by the Nazis, the purpose of which he never revealed; the instability in Silesia, exacerbated by the new Polish regime that, resentful of repeated Prussian invasions, began to expel all Germans in 1945; and the repression in Communist East Germany, where his parents, aunt, and six siblings had fled, before escaping to the Rhineland eight years later.¹⁴ Friends and relatives described the family's circumstances as impoverished. A sister recalled the birth of a new child in East Germany as the occasion for an additional, much-needed ration card. But life in West Germany was not much easier. Reconstruction, beginning with the surrender of the Third Reich in 1945, was a long, painful process; two years after the war's end, food production was only fifty-one percent of what it had been in 1938, with widespread shortages. The family had to rely partially on gleaning the fields for food and, well into the 1950s, lacked money for such simple items as tram fare, making it difficult to maintain friendships outside the immediate family.¹⁵

In a 2003 interview Polke recalled his ambivalent feelings upon first seeing spotless new cars in a showroom window: "When I came to the West I saw many, many things for the first time. But I also saw the prosperity of the West critically. It wasn't really heaven. That early painting of mine, *The Sausage Eater* from 1963, was critical in a way; you can eat too much and blow up too big. This attitude—looking at what is happening from a point of view outside—is still part of my work."¹⁶ Polke's love-hate relationship with the political and economic power of the United States began here, with an abundance both unattainable and unwanted. Even as the flood of consumer products in the 1950s operated like a narcotic, dulling memories of recent need and longing, there was a chill in the air. Increased prosperity had its own cost, and Germany, like postwar Japan, experienced what Ian Buruma has described as "bourgeois conformism . . . with its worship of the television set, the washing machine, and the refrigerator ("The Three Sacred Treasures"), its slavish imitation of American culture, its monomaniacal focus on business, and the stuffy hierarchies of the academic and artistic establishments."¹⁷ And it wasn't only domestic goods that were inundating Germany after the war. American art was becoming increasingly dominant; ninety-seven works by Abstract Expressionists, loaned by The Museum of Modern

Art, New York, captivated audiences at Documenta 2, in 1959, two years before Polke began his studies at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf.

Joseph Beuys, who championed an expanded role for art based on the energy of emotions he believed had been stunted by overdependence on rationality, was the most revered professor at the school. Even Polke, who did not join his friends Palermo and Katharina Sieverding in Beuys's classroom, was not immune to his influence, although an early 1970s photograph, with Beuys's name written in tiny script in the middle of a light-filled orb that, like the sun, occupies the center of the system, humorously reflects a bit of ambivalence toward the teacher's self-mythologizing and shamanistic magnetism. A friend remembers Polke later contemptuously spitting out, "I was not a student of Herr Joseph," as if to erase any trace of the artist who presented himself as a father figure.¹⁸ Polke elected instead to study under Gerhard Hoehme and K. O. Götz, abstract painters who were largely responsible for introducing Art Informel to Germany. This postwar movement, with its emphasis on unpremeditated experimentation and spontaneous brushwork, was seen as a critical response to both the geometric rigidity of Cubism and the National Socialist Party's 1937 ban on abstract work, which it had degraded as being un-German, Jewish, Bolshevik, and lacking in craft. After the defeat of the Third Reich, however, the principles of abstraction in Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism attracted renewed support in Germany. But even as a young student Polke was apt to adopt a contrarian position and grew increasingly suspicious of the ease with which abstraction was once again hailed as a universal language, seeing it as an act of dissimulation masking recent history, the stain of which remained visible in everyday life.

Vestiges of these past horrors were present in the art of Polke's professors, both of whom had served in the military. Hoehme's experiences as a pilot shaped his desire to lift painting out of two dimensions; in *German Allegory—A Fragment—The Hakenkreuz Picture (Deutsches Gleichnis—ein Fragment—das Hakenkreuzbild)* (1964) he placed several swastikas beside a mirror so that viewers cannot escape their own image, a juxtaposition reflecting both progressive formal pursuits and the need to assimilate the circumstances of wartime combat. Götz's fascination with the technological advances enhanced by wartime enterprise was explicit in his classroom drills that mediated mechanical vision through handmade technique. Whether or not Polke participated in these assignments, he certainly would have seen their results: by filling in the squares of a grid with felt-tip pens, the students created patterns of fluctuating density, with an effect analogous to the electronic flutter of the screen or "the dancing swarms of dots" of the enemy planes Götz would have tracked on radar.¹⁹ The sway of Götz's related experiments with the pixilated matrix of electronic images

extended beyond his classroom; Nam June Paik, an early member of the Fluxus group, whose cross-disciplinary practice included performances suffused with gallows humor, credits Götz with influencing his disruption of the television picture in his debut exhibition in 1963 in Wuppertal.²⁰ Polke also would have been exposed to the motif of the raster in the work of Zero group artists such as Otto Piene, who produced monochrome *Rasterbilder*, as well as drawings made of smoke blown through a stencil to create layers of slightly offset dots.

Art based on the media and on photomechanical operations had been appearing internationally since the early 1960s. Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol discovered the lure of the screenprint between 1961 and 1962, and Polke followed in 1963. But the sociological conditions that shaped the pursuits of the Americans and their German colleagues were distinct. They are most easily understood by observing the divergent types of people they chose to represent: Warhol's first portraits were of the sex symbols Troy Donahue and Warren Beatty, while Polke's first raster work was of Lee Harvey Oswald (figs. 7, 17), who had assassinated President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, just a month before the drawing was conceived. Unlike Warhol's fairly straightforward mechanical process, Polke's approach adamantly inverts the truth. His Oswald drawing appears to be a mechanical reproduction but in fact was made by a primitive process of dipping the tip of a pencil eraser into paint and employing it as a stamp to make dots reminiscent of those in the original halftone image. A different emotional inflection characterizes the paintings from New York and Düsseldorf, with Polke avoiding the triumphant quality of Lichtenstein's cleanly defined imagery, in which the Benday dots are all the same size, providing less tonal range, density, and visual disturbance than Polke's rasters. His more disparaging position is evident in the contrast between the allure of Lichtenstein's painting *Hot Dog* (1963), with its crisply rendered weiner resting in a bun like a plump, enticing odalisque, and the meanness of his own *Sausage Eater (Der Wurstesser)* (1963, fig. 8), in which thin brown links are inhaled by a figure who exhibits great appetite but no pleasure. An insatiable yearning impels Polke's eating machine, painted with an infallibly charmless hand.

Warhol's fascination with the proximity of fame and tragedy—something familiar to Polke as well—is apparent in *Sixteen Jackies* (1964), which sets four images of Jacqueline Kennedy, radiant in the moments before her husband's death, atop eight showing her grief-stricken at his funeral. The latter is what we remember, and this psychological melancholy brings Warhol closer to Polke. Polke would have been aware of the older artist's work starting in the early 1960s from reproductions in art magazines such as *Studio International*, film screenings around Cologne, and exhibitions in German museums and galleries. In



Fig. 7 Raster Drawing (Portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald) (Rasterzeichnung [Porträt Lee Harvey Oswald]). 1963. Poster paint and pencil on paper, 37 1/16 x 27 1/2" (94.8 x 69.8 cm). Private collection

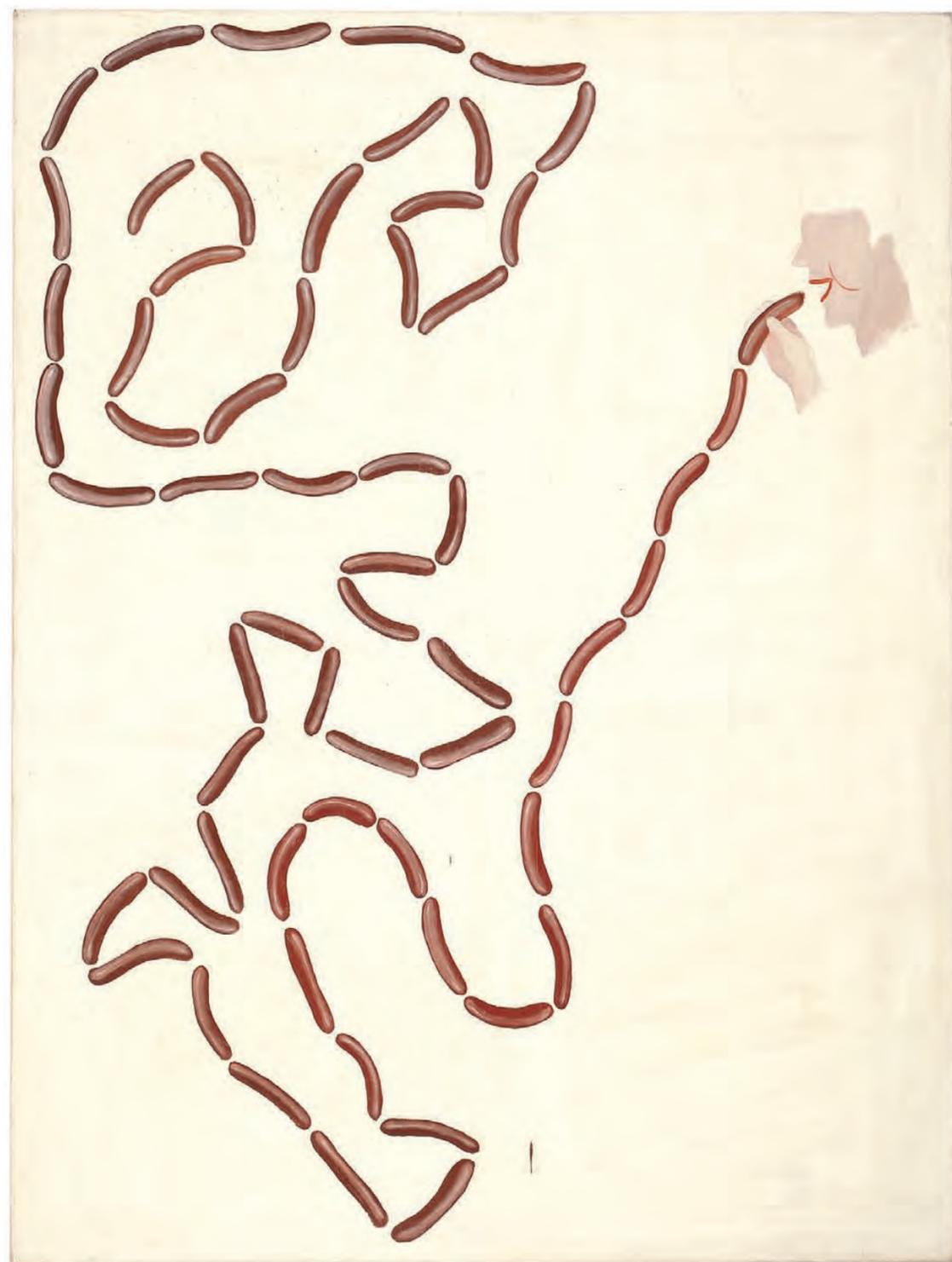


Fig. 8 *The Sausage Eater (Der Wurstesser)*. 1963. Dispersion paint on canvas, 6' 6 3/4" x 59 1/2" (200 x 150 cm). Friedrich Christian Flick Collection

1976, when Polke was thirty-five years old and Warhol forty-eight, they were seen in simultaneous exhibitions at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, and a year later both were featured in Documenta, the massive exhibition established in 1955 in Kassel, a city where there had been a forced-labor camp producing heavy tanks, and that had been substantially bombed by the Allies. The exhibition was intended to ensure Germany would find its place again in the world of benign international exchange. Neither Warhol nor Polke expressed any anxiety about leveling conventional artistic hierarchies, such as those between popular culture and fine art, perhaps because they shared a number of predilections that influenced their thinking about how and out of what to make art. Both considered themselves outsiders, a condition of distance that may be required in order to see the rules that bind clearly enough to begin to break them. They employed both still and moving cameras as alter egos, hiding behind them in order to simultaneously capture others and maintain detachment. They recognized that the allegedly faultless repetition of reprographic processes was a naive pursuit of the mechanical age; while Warhol deadpanned his desire to paint as perfectly as a machine, he joined Polke in mining the inevitable mistakes of the printing process. They complicated the idea of the original by combining distinct paintings to make new ones: Warhol often belatedly abutted a solid-color canvas to one of his silkscreen paintings depicting a film star or electric chair, suggesting a final fade; Polke, for his 1984 retrospective at Kunsthaus Zürich, made a temporary work by combining the five-part painting *Reagan 1-3, The European Problem, Coffin Lid (Reagan 1-3, Das Problem Europa, Sargdeckel)* (1981) with earlier paintings including *With Yellow Squares (Mit gelben Quadraten)* (1968, cat. 93), which itself could easily be retitled “the problem with the modern.” Both artists made works commemorating Leonardo da Vinci, explored the latent imagery of the Rorschach, and delighted in using gold as a material. Widely misunderstood during their lifetimes, they were accused of artistic nihilism for accommodating the machinations of the market.

By linking Polke and Warhol, German critics were able to discount both. One critic, reviewing Polke's first major survey, organized in 1976 by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh when it traveled to Düsseldorf, dismissed him as “this little Warhol from the Rhine” who “wants to make us see what is behind things. Or next to them.”²¹ But most critics avoided what was right in front of them. Only one writer, from *Unsere Zeit*, a newspaper associated with the Communist Party, spoke openly of the provocative historical elements the artist had added to his hometown exhibition, noting that while some paintings worked well as petty jokes on modern art, Polke “goes a step further and explicitly points to the ‘perpetrators.’”²² Polke was explicit, indeed: he smuggled into the museum and furtively assembled a slatted



Fig. 9 Installation view of Sigmar Polke: *Bilder, Tücher, Objekte; Werkauswahl, 1962-1971*, Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1976

wooden fence, behind which some of his best-known works were strewn alongside a slide projection of important Nazi officials. But what was most disturbing was the crudely made sign he hung above the structure, which read, “Kunst macht frei” (Art makes you free), butchering the words that famously identified the entrance to Auschwitz (fig. 9). By replacing “work” with “art,” Polke brought the stink of the Third Reich into the museum and, further, baldly questioned art's transformative possibilities. He left no room for polite debate. Buchloh and Jürgen Harten, the Kunsthalle's director, were put in a compromised position: Harten, worried about controversy, insisted at first that Buchloh ask Polke to remove the installation, but, equally trapped by the potential repercussions of censoring an artist (which Polke must have foreseen), he soon retracted his demand. Polke had made it impossible for even his supporters to assume anything approximating a heroic posture. Despite the notoriety of this event, only three photographs of the installation remain in the museum's archive. The critic's final complaint about the survey was that although Polke “[understood] and [showed] the utter senselessness of his situation and his lack of perspective” he did not make an attempt to change it.²³ I wonder.

Using the destructive force of accident to stimulate innovation, Polke resisted being subdued by the regulatory order that Germans were habituated to. He mined the destruction found in deviations, slips, imperfections, distortions, and mistakes to find new ways of seeing old things. For example, he subverted the photocopier's ease of multiplication by manipulating images as they were being printed, reverting a modern ideal of efficiency to something artisanal. In one instance Polke altered an illustration from a 1905 manual on the repair of a knitted garment, degrading its readability with repeated pulls through the copier until the recurring purls became an abstract pattern. The original image was

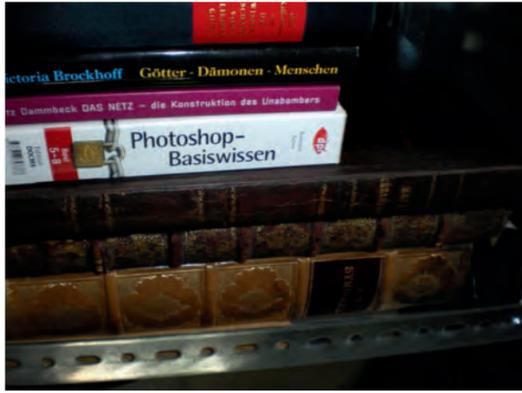


Fig. 10 Sigmar Polke's library, Cologne, 2010

buried in the new pattern as a kind of secret history, but it was the fabric's tears and irregularities that triggered Polke's invention of a new abstract whole. Even the most ordinary domestic objects—such as a child's book of math assignments—became a platform for critiquing a punitive order: underneath a teacher's correction—"We make our lines with a ruler," written in red script and, unlike the pupil's notations, precisely following the paper's grid—Polke glued a cartoon of two Greek damsels washing a godlike figure and drew wavy lines escaping from the trio like rays of restless energy (cat. 107). Here, it seems likely he was following, perhaps unconsciously, the example of William Blake, one of his favorite poets, with whom he communed in *Telepathic Session II (William Blake–Sigmar Polke)* (*Telepathische Sitzung II [William Blake–Sigmar Polke]*) (1968, cat. 88). The poet's aphorism "Improvement makes straight roads, but the crooked roads without improvement are roads of genius" suggests a mantra for Polke's behavior and method.²⁴

*The only word that is not ephemeral is the word death. . . .
To death, to death, to death. The only thing that doesn't
die is money, it just leaves on trips.*

—Francis Picabia, 1920²⁵

Polke lived where he worked, effortlessly moving between two large studio areas, a kitchen, a library that functioned as a living room, and a garden in a small industrial area outside the center of Cologne. He often painted in the parking lot, where wind-borne detritus and insects settled into the amber washes of resin and were preserved like geologic fossils. The distinctions between library, pharmacy, laboratory, printing facility, and traditional workshop collapsed. He drew inspiration and images from many sources in his library of tens of thousands of recent and antique volumes

(fig. 10), on philosophy by Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, Jean Baudrillard, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Søren Kierkegaard, and Paul Virilio; on religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism; on optics, optical illusions, and magic; on hallucination and the ritual uses of intoxication; on physics, chemistry, mineralogy, meteorology, and alchemy; on nineteenth- and twentieth-century exploration, some pertaining to the colonies of the German Empire; on folklore, religion, and myth from around the world, by both esteemed historians and discredited ones, such as Mircea Eliade; on Renaissance painting, hieroglyphs, and ancient art from around the globe; on interior design and Nazi uniforms; and on child psychology and trauma, as well as psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn's 1922 *Bilderei der Geisteskranken* (*Artistry of the Mentally Ill*), a favorite of the Surrealists for its connecting of psychic transgression with insight. There were also early German legal tomes, a weathered book on Kabbalah, magazines from World War II, salesmen's sample books from the time of the economic miracle, and computer journals. He pasted newspaper headlines and cartoons into notebooks, entered newspaper clippings into folders every day, and piled photographs cut from magazines on a long table next to bottles of ink in myriad colors and beakers full of homemade solutions, including a green pigment tinged with arsenic. He made thousands of slides from these found images, to be projected later onto canvases stacked in the studio, in several sizes and various states of completion. Projects covered the floor. Cameras, magnifying loupes, stencils and spray guns used in some of his raster paintings, slide projectors, two big photocopying machines, and a film-editing board sat close at hand. Objects from other parts of the world furnished the rooms, including a worn set of Indonesian gamelans and black Chinese lacquerware, composed of a resin extracted from deciduous trees.

He often worked without assistants and never described his process in detail. He kept his own counsel. The gaps in public understanding that resulted left him more room to maneuver experimentally in his studio and tempered the expectations of those he permitted to show and sell his work. His desire for autonomy was so deep-seated that he buried his telephone in a suitcase and kept the door to his studio barred to almost everyone, powerful gallerists and curators included. He was known to be reluctant to make dates or, once they were confirmed, to keep them. Polke's mischievous (if maddening) elusiveness was but one way he willfully suppressed the market for his work. He worked obsessively, creating an abundance of art in all mediums, without regard for what might constitute a transitional material experiment or a fully realized suite of photographs, a modest sketch or a richly detailed large-scale painting. Given the paradigmatic objects he kept for himself, however, in a collection named for a favorite aunt to divert

collectors, he clearly knew the difference between the exemplary and the one-off. He must have found it entertaining to release works of uneven quality and to observe which ones would be most easily absorbed into the commercial system. Even early in his career he complicated his work's value by undertaking collaborative projects.

For the most part, Polke's attempts to confuse people were successful: his financial success, while substantial, never reached the level of that of his American and German peers. Although he might have laughed off any comparison with Karl Marx, he certainly would have found something perversely useful in Marx's belief that "the secret is the abstract value of value, which in a complex exchange economy, is essentially empty."²⁶ So when he declared that he learned from Francis Picabia's *Portrait of Cézanne* (1920) that he "did not have to take art so seriously," it's hard not to see behind this feint a mirroring of the purposelessness that Theodor Adorno declared would keep art from becoming a fetish of the marketplace.²⁷ Many collectors, critics, and curators never fully grasped how Polke's ambivalence about success was tied to a fear that it would undermine his radicality and normalize his achievements; this fear led him to conceal a scheme of techniques and beliefs that was more deliberate than his stylistic abandon and affinity for travesty suggest.

Which may explain why Polke was not ready to cede all control in conceptualizing this exhibition. He championed a nonchronological approach, preferring a slightly diabolical mix of works organized around what he called "problematics."²⁸ Without his guidance, it seemed both inappropriate and impossible to mimic his seemingly loose but ultimately studied arrangements, which often were so hermetically constructed that they set the exhibition and publication outside the specifics of time and place. Instead, we found another way to proceed by looking closely at how the analytic and anarchic were combined in his work. Polke is often cited for treasuring the intuitive and coincidental, but it is too simple to identify his approach as merely the pursuit of perception arising from the spontaneous and happenstance. For Polke, intuition and reason were not opposites; his anxious intelligence acted as intuition does, as a hyperconscious way of making sense of the world. He would bully an idea, pursuing it to the edge of sense, until distinctions between *yes* and *no* fell away and were replaced by something more inchoate and closer to the potential implied by *maybe*. In much of his most accomplished work, it is possible to glimpse this third way of seeing. This state of in-betweenness is evident in an untitled photograph (1986, cat. 225) on which Polke both drew and painted, and in which a naked woman (pissing out the name Kiefer) emerges serendipitously in the space left between two figures, one a self-portrait, the other the devil. It plays a similarly instrumental role in a stained glass window employing the Rubin vase, the famous optical illusion in which it is possible to see the

profiles of both a chalice and a face as the dominance of negative and positive space reverses (page 246, fig. 3). That he included this perceptual ambiguity—these two interpretations of reality—in the sequence of twelve monumental windows completed for Grossmünster, the Protestant cathedral in Zurich, just a few months before his death, reveals a lot about the covert disposition of his vision and his belief in the persistent doubling of meaning, in the dissolution of any one truth. What we have consequently preserved in our organization of this exhibition, on which chronological order has been imposed, is the artist's desire to "destroy the hierarchies," to blur all binaries, which he did more completely than any artist of his generation, in order to invent what a critic called "painting after the end of painting."²⁹

In listening to Polke—itsself an educational, entertaining, and exhausting experience—I sensed that concepts had the palpable presence of one of his materials. My impressions from our last meeting record him ranging across histories, sources, and periods with unusual erudition and imaginative grace. He was intellectually unrestrained. In one moment he would explain the ecstatic idealism of Neoplatonic thought, used by early Christians to describe how salvation was achieved not through religious ritual but through dialectic investigation of the ephemeral material reality of the human and the intuited potential of the divine. A few minutes later he compared the symbolic transfiguration of wafer and wine into Christ's flesh and blood, through transubstantiation, to the ways in which abstraction and figuration are linked rather than opposing concepts. Both ideas certainly informed the design of the stained glass windows, which he was still working on when I last visited, with hundreds of computer printouts, material samples, photocopies, and drawings stacked on tables and spread out on the floor. Polke's apprenticeship as a teenager to a Düsseldorf stained glass maker, who was likely involved with the repair of the war-damaged windows of the great Cologne cathedral, must have elevated his ambition for this final work, surely one of his most accomplished and synthetic. Even with this ancient art form, the craft and history of which he intimately understood, he was not content to approach it conventionally; he incorporated into his windows thin, translucent slices of brilliantly dyed agates that remind us of the molecules constituting all living organisms. Biology—our ability to reproduce ourselves at the level of proteins and nucleic acids—rather than divine intervention is the catalyst for creation. It's easy to imagine that Polke agreed to this project not because he was a man of faith—despite his family's deep religiosity, he was not—but because he clearly understood how the church had made its canon accessible through illuminated pictures and wanted to disrupt the restrictive certainty of that hierarchical order.

Indeed, Polke's interest in the history of consciousness, the force of the unconscious, and the surprise of



extrasensory perception was always tempered by systematic doubt and argument, which led him to seek systems of knowledge from other cultures as alternatives to Western structures of power, representation, and truth. He traveled broadly, to Brazil, Japan, Korea, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Tunisia, Egypt (fig. 12), Lebanon, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, and other destinations. There, he found liberation in the nonconforming psychological realities of the foreign and faraway. But he was not a naive traveler. In footage taken in Papua New Guinea (once a German protectorate) during a yearlong journey to Australia and Bali and places in between, Polke captures the ritual dances, weddings, and funerals of the local people who, in some scenes, are clearly providing amusement for the tourist trade. But Polke then pulls back to reveal his awareness of the displacement inherent in travel: standing high above the scene, he pans slowly over the trees from the dusty road of the town to the adjoining luxury hotel, where white men dressed in white clothes are playing a game of tennis. This skepticism also is visible in *The Living Stink and the Dead Are Not Present* (*Die Lebenden stinken und die Toten sind nicht anwesend*) (1983, fig. 11), a painting composed of three patterned textiles, which he completed two years after his return from this journey. The left-hand panel consists of a repeating design of elephants, an animal seen only in zoos in northern climates; the fabric in the center, with its striped abstraction, vaguely recalls tribal decoration. The right-hand panel, the most revealing, shows two Polynesian women whose posture and dress root them in the landscape, a dangerously sentimental notion about the natural vitality of those who live outside modern cities; the flower fallen from one woman's hair functions as a memento mori. These images are lifted directly from Paul Gauguin's *Parau api: What News?* (1892) and *Maternity II* (1899), works that embody the sympathetic but domineering vision of a painter who sought to reinvent himself by settling on the island of Tahiti. Polke, of course, was aware that Gauguin's search for an authentic, uncorrupted Eden ended in disillusion, with the artist both witnessing and participating in the devastating Westernization of this South Seas arcadia. So while Polke was susceptible to the lure of the exotic, his knowing appropriation of Gauguin's "native" imagery indicates he recognized the perils of colonialist voyeurism, and of his own attempts to disappear entirely into another identity.

Just as travel provided him with new ways of surveying the world, flight stimulated the panoramic vision that shaped Polke's imaginary life across the decades. He traced his surname by connecting the dotlike stars of an existing constellation in *Starry Heavens Cloth* (*Sternhimmeltuch*) (1968, cat. 86), and he renegotiated the Afganistan landscape he had traversed in the 1970s by reproducing the surveillance routes of unmanned drones in *The Hunt for the Taliban and Al Qaeda* (*Die Jagd auf die Taliban und Al Qaida*)



Opposite: Fig. 11 *The Living Stink and the Dead Are Not Present* (*Die Lebenden stinken und die Toten sind nicht anwesend*) (detail). 1983. Acrylic on patterned fabric, 9' 2 1/4" x 11' 9 1/4" (280 x 360 cm). Collection of the Estates of Emily and Jerry Spiegel
Above: Fig. 12 Sigmar Polke in Cairo, 1997. Photograph by AVN

(2002, cat. 258). But Polke knew his desire for celestial navigation was inflated: we can only smile at the silliness of the small self-portrait *Polke as Astronaut* (*Polke als Astronaut*) (1968, cat. 82) completed a year before the first Moon landing, in which a balloonlike face, painted in black, floats above the surface of a textile most likely made for a boy's bedroom, with a pattern of space travelers tethered together with blood-red lines. As in so much of Polke's work, clowning is followed by unpleasant associations. This is no conventional hero's portrait: one of modern man's most grandly scaled scientific aspirations—the transcending of gravity—is pictured as diminutive and debased. There is also, in Polke's suggestion of the potential for madness in misapplied scientific striving, an echo of the story of Icarus, who, like Polke, was the son of a master craftsman. The father constructed wings of wax and feathers to satisfy his child's desire to fly, but Icarus, out of both hubris and delight in the experience of weightlessness, ignored warnings about flying too close to the sun and fell to his death. An appetite for extremes has long been considered dangerous, and the plight of the mythic Icarus is often ascribed to his rejection of moderation—a principle familiar to Polke as well.

Sense is order, and order is in the end nothing but conformity with our nature. . . . When we wish to commit anything to memory, we endeavor always to introduce some definite sense or order into it; for example, we use genera and species in the case of plants and animals, and with other things we show resemblance by introducing rhymes. Our hypotheses belong here as well: they are necessary, for without them we would be unable to remember things. . . . The question is, however, whether everything is legible to us. Certainly through much experiment and reflection we are able to introduce meaning into things that are either for us or altogether

meaningless. Thus we see faces or landscapes in the sand, though they certainly are not there. Symmetry is another example, as are silhouettes in inkblots and so forth, and the same may be said of the ascending scale we introduce in the animal kingdom: all this is not in the things but in us. In general, we cannot too frequently reflect that in observing nature, and especially the order found in nature, we are always only observing ourselves.

—Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, 1789–93³⁰

It can be exhausting and alienating to live with the knowledge that everything—from the patterns of history to electromagnetic fields to the quarks that constitute the smallest building blocks of matter—is in constant flux. In hundreds of notebooks Polke explored ways to structure his universe, in near-cinematic runs of changing landscapes, jokes about respected modern artists, and Rorschach washes of gorgeous color. Spirals make frequent appearances, representing such things as ghosts (fig. 15), wisps of smoke, helical strands of genetic material, and tornadoes continuously approaching and receding; but the spiral, with no fixed end or beginning and no set direction, also stands in for the fluid creative powers of the artist, who often looped back to earlier ideas and was suspicious of any entirely linear route from one thing to another. With various tools—Geiger counter, magnifying glass, telescope, projector, telepathic sessions, horoscopes, hashish—Polke searched for what he called “human essence,” which in its elasticity and comprehensiveness would offer a more secure vision of our place and role in the world.³¹ Recognizing that no system of knowledge—not physics, botany, mathematics, philosophy, history, or art—sufficed, he looked to those artist-thinkers who combined them as freely and purposefully as he did his mediums. He was looking for an evolutionary life force, an energetic mix of body, mind, and spirit.

Polke found an amply synthetic approach in how Leonardo da Vinci brought together art and science to forge a new natural philosophy. The polymath’s prolific curiosity, like Polke’s, was most vividly and extensively presented in his copious notebooks, many with notations in a reversed, mirror-image cursive that was designed to preserve the secrecy of such discoveries as a flying machine, so they could not be misused for destructive purposes. The artists also shared an interest in optical devices, with Leonardo developing a machine for fabricating convex lenses and Polke a handmade lenticular substrate. In *Constructions around Leonardo da Vinci and Sigmar Polke (Konstruktionen um Leonardo da Vinci und Sigmar Polke)*, a collage from 1969 (cat. 96), Polke emphasized his close identification with Leonardo, mixing the dates of their lives to create, as he wrote on the work, a symbiosis of the two. This dry-seeming drawing, done on gridded paper and including a few accurate facts, has a semblance of scientific objectivity, but by inserting references to his own fifteenth-century

photographs of palm trees and to the introduction of cardboard into the periodic table, Polke makes clear his true intent: to spoof the intellectual rigor of Conceptual art just as it was being introduced to the German public. A topical riposte, the collage was published that same year in *Konzeption–Conception*, the catalogue that accompanied one of the first major exhibitions of the movement in Germany. But the fabrications that supplement the truths in this work perform another function: the ratios between fictions and facts follow the principles of the golden mean, a system of harmonious proportions used by philosophers as distinct as Aristotle and Confucius to describe an order of composure and moderation. Pythagoras, the sixth-century Greek world traveler and mystic, adopted the golden mean in his mathematical discoveries in the same century that the Buddha instructed his disciples to follow the Middle Way. Pythagoras’s work, in turn, heavily influenced the theories of Vitruvius, who posited that the divinely created proportions of man were the source of the geometric ideals of classical architecture. These ideas were later adapted by Leonardo in his iconic drawing of the Vitruvian Man, in which two superimposed images of a nude male are contained within a circle and square; he believed the symmetrical proportions of the body mirrored those of the universe, and so constituted a *cosmografia del minor mondo*, or cosmology of the microcosm. Polke attempted to embody the Vitruvian Man in *The Whole Body Feels Light and Wants to Fly . . . (Der ganze Körper fühlt sich leicht und möchte fliegen . . .)* (1969, fig. 14), a film collaboration with Christof Kohlhöfer, by mimicking the extended arms and legs of Leonardo’s figure, but any seriousness dissolves in the soundtrack of Polke laughing. Polke knew the Vitruvian geometries had symbolic import for his adored alchemists, who believed they represented the spiritual and material forces of the cosmos and Earth, just as he would have been aware of twentieth-century theories connecting the golden mean to aperiodic crystallography, fractals, and the human genome. Thus, Polke’s modest collage can be read as a near-encyclopedic index of the ideas that interested him and an augury of his retreat from a complete investment in them. Perhaps most important, Polke found in Leonardo a scientific mind that by letting consciousness wander discovered “diverse combats and figures in quick movement, and strange expressions of faces, and outlandish costumes, and an infinite number of things.”³²

The entwining and complications of sight and vision were the central preoccupations of Polke’s career. He turned inside out the notion of painting as a window onto the world—itself a kind of alibi—by understanding both the science of perspective and what this innovation signified. The painting *Seeing Things as They Are (Die Dinge sehen wie sie sind)* (1991, fig. 13), which expands on a twenty-year-old collage with the title cut from a newspaper headline, is a

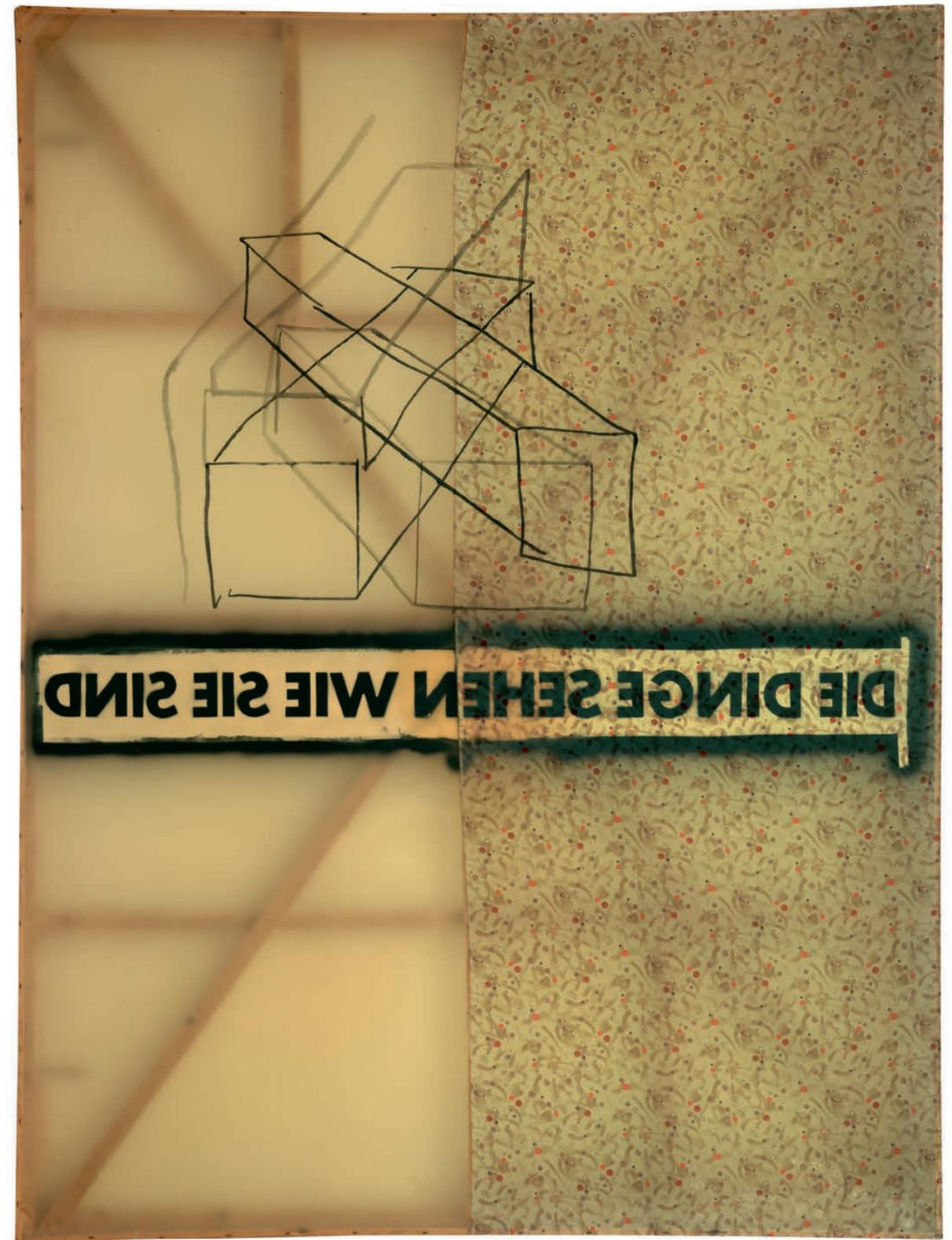


Fig. 13 *Seeing Things as They Are (Die Dinge sehen wie sie sind)*. 1991. Synthetic resin and lacquer on polyester, 9' 10 1/8" x 7' 4 7/8" (300 x 225 cm).
Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Sammlung Garnatz



Fig. 14 Untitled (detail). 1968–70/1990. One of twenty-six gelatin silver prints, 23 1/16 x 19 1/16" (60.5 x 50.7 cm). Private collection

prime example of Polke's exploration of how what we are able to perceive with our eyes is different from, and lesser than, the paranormal trance of vision. The work is two-sided and composed of two textiles, one transparent and the other printed with an opaque pattern of berries and leaves, loosely derived from nature. The transparency of the textile on the left allows the stretcher bars, which usually simply hold the surface taut, to be seen as part of the painting's language; Polke organized the wooden elements in a V, turning them into a perspectival diagram with a central vanishing point. This representation of three-dimensional space is, of course, an illusion, based on advances in science and mathematics whose origins were established in part by eleventh-century Islamic scholarship on the optical sciences. The desire to establish the subject within a three-dimensional world—to dare to create something more lifelike—was one of the concepts that posited mortals as separate from the divine, setting in motion the humanism of the Renaissance. Perspective was a powerful tool, instrumental to the shift that John Berger described as "[centering] everything on the eye of the beholder. It is like a beam from a lighthouse—only instead of light traveling outwards, appearances travel in. The conventions called those appearances *reality*. Perspective makes the single eye the centre of the visible world. Everything converges onto the eye as to the vanishing point of infinity. The visible world is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought to be arranged for God."³³ It's hard to imagine that Polke would not have been familiar with the perspective machine illustrated in Dürer's *Unterweisung der Messung (The Painter's Manual)* (1525), in which the artist imposes the order of his vision on the female body. But this new fidelity was as socially formed

and, consequently, deceptive as any earlier representational model. While perspective was a manifestation of the belief that rationality would allow man to control his universe, this belief, too, was soon understood to be a myth born of pride. Indeed, *Melencolia 1* (1514), one of Dürer's most famous prints, disturbingly depicts a despondent angel surrounded by abandoned tools of measurement and calculation, including an hourglass running out of sand. Dürer knew that reason was not enough to fully understand the world, and so did Polke.

Both the front and back of *Seeing Things as They Are* have roughly drawn crystalline forms, like a child might produce in trying to reproduce the roundness of an object. The shapes on the front of the painting retain the darkness of the mark and those on the back are slightly faded, as though occupying another dimension. The illusion of the diagram is reflected in the curious way the work's title is painted on the back, so that an observer standing in front can only read it in reverse. This is not the way we think things are. But the title reverberates in both the scientific and spiritual realms, profoundly and humorously suggesting that how we perceive, both literally and figuratively, may also be in constant flux. While most linguistic operations depend upon the left hemisphere of the brain, the ability to understand allusions, such as those involved in humor, reside in the right, where visual processing also takes place. Humor, it seems, requires both hemispheres of the brain to work together. Moreover, the mechanics of seeing is not how things are: information is processed as electric signals through the lens of the eye and projected upside down on the retina before traveling along the optic nerve to the brain, which interprets the information and restores the thing seen to its proper orientation. The science of perception works in mysterious ways, but it does not explain everything. A more potent form of apprehension is required.

Polke's library included several books on Buddhism, reflecting not only the widespread influence of Eastern thought on twentieth-century art but also ideas encountered on his travels and in his daughter's Buddhist practice, which began in 1988. It is no accident, then, that the source for the title *Seeing Things as They Are* is contained in the first practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, a central Buddhist text. In place of temporal perception, Buddha teaches that liberation and enlightenment require freeing oneself from attachments and illusion, acknowledging the impermanence of everything, and relinquishing the specialness of the self. Humans instinctively turn their perceptions of the world into concrete structures that are comforting but ultimately artificial. (This process of creating false structures, of course, is precisely the one by which an artwork evolves.) Of the difficulty of relinquishing such delusive constructions of the self, the Buddhist scholar Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche taught, "We may feel



Fig. 15 "Ghast" ("Geist"). 1966. Gouache on paper, 33 1/16 x 24" (85.5 x 61 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart

uncomfortable when our seemingly solid world becomes more transparent,” an idea also suggested by Polke’s repeated use of see-through textiles.³⁴ In the place of these deceits, Buddhists teach a practice of “right mindfulness,” which collapses the self and the other so that it is possible to experience yourself as not being alone. Here, the word “right” refers more to an ideal or wise way than a correct one. The clarity of vision that arises from this egoless state, when “I” is understood as a construction of the mind, creates complete openness and freedom from conditioning and preconceived notions. Narcissism, which depends upon the confusion of shame and guilt, is destroyed and empathy is restored. Polke likely would have seen this as akin to the clairvoyant eroticism of a hallucination.

Despite the positive assurance of its title, *Seeing Things as They Are* isn’t about certainty; rather, it suggests multiple ways of being. In demanding that the spectator participate in the construction of meaning, it places the viewer in the space of the maker, atomizing distinctions between the two. The work offers us myriad ways of experiencing it: as a fleeting unity of parts; as a representational model of perspective equivalent to the linguistic standard embodied in both the common headline and the spiritual text; as an alignment of the decorative impulse in abstraction with the natural forms of the textile’s all-over pattern; and as a sculptural drawing made from the partially revealed stretcher bars, creating a sense of virtual space beyond the painting and the architecture in which it hangs. The painting is about the ways art instructs us to see past the familiar; indeed, it is the metamorphosis of the materials of art—for example, the abstract spills of resin turning the synthetic surface transparent—that offers up a marvelous metaphor for the transcendental power of art (fig. 16). If we look long enough, we may learn from Polke to seize the present in order to quiet the past and refrain from being haunted by the future. Perhaps this is why the complexity of perception attracted Polke, who knew that many of his countrymen had answered their children’s questions with the most horrific alibi of all: “I didn’t see anything.”

I recall Polke’s words about resisting closure, about “not being able to defend yourself . . . or the desperate effort not to want to.”³⁵ This is something a curator must work through. I find myself most off-balance when Polke makes me think with both hands—when I have to simultaneously entertain contradictory ideas. And I can’t accept my inability to identify *the*’s versus *a*’s when describing his art or his recondite positions. Despite understanding intellectually that everything is in flux, I resist the fear that follows this awareness; I want the relief and command of clarity. Instead, Polke leaves me feeling that I am in the midst of a metaphysical earthquake in which beliefs can only be fragmentary, qualified, and inconclusive. Impure. But I stay engaged, move this way and that, performing in



Fig. 16 Untitled (*Mariette Altbau*). c. 1975. Gelatin silver print (red toned), 9 3/4 x 11 1/8" (23.5 x 30 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



Fig. 17 Untitled. 2000. Four images from a four-channel slide projection, 320 slides, dimensions variable. Private collection

front of one of his works in order to eventually grasp it. And it is by uncovering connections with others who have also resorted, in defining the man and his works, to words such as “unstable,” “layered,” “contingent,” “inconsistent,” “coincident,” and “dissolving,” that I begin to experience the gift of such abnormal fluidity. I am not alone.

Polke drew ghosts and wanted to believe in the paranormal; art hinted at how to resist the gravitational pull of the known and accepted. In his Leonardo collage he posits that although he could conceive of how to craft the fifteenth-century artist as “an immaterial work of art,” such an assignment could not be realized in his lifetime. A found quotation in a text cobbled together with Gerhard Richter for a 1966 exhibition at Galerie h, in Hannover, rapturously advances what both artists knew—as an accompanying photograph attests, showing them buffoonishly holding their breath—to be a ridiculous claim: “Some day we shall no longer need pictures: we shall just be happy. For we shall know what eternity is, and our knowledge will make us happy. Life after death will be explored and will set us an example of new modes of conduct.”³⁶ While Polke joked about seeing beyond the constraints of body and mind—past death—he also dared to imagine an ethics of vision that lifted him out of normal ways of proceeding in the here and now. He wasn’t interested in representing the great contaminated wash of what we see (fig. 17); he knew that was a fool’s delusional pursuit. He wanted to demonstrate how the unconscious, in combination with all other forms of knowledge, casts its shadow on how we imagine. By being aware of the fictive nature of the order we impose, by embracing ambiguity and letting go of certainty, we free ourselves of the need for—and the comfort of—a single authoritarian vision. We

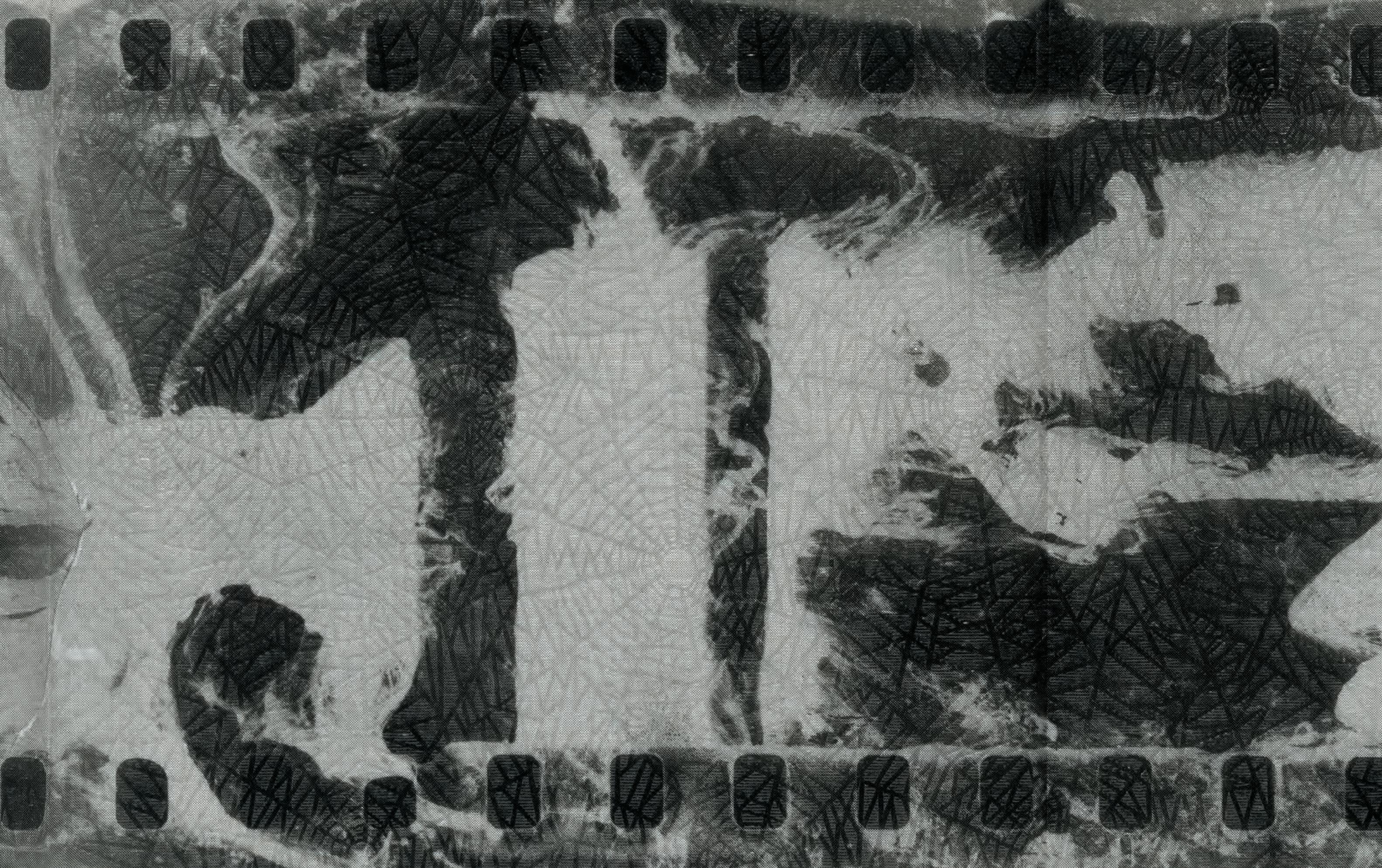
risk the vulnerability and alertness that accompanies a fully sentient life. This was Polke’s bequest and, perhaps, why he agreed to an exhibition that would potentially reveal so much about him. Adorno wrote that “normality is death,” and Polke avoided that.³⁷ The only normal thing he did was to die—much too early, at sixty-nine—on June 10, 2010. §

NOTES

1. Raymond Joseph Teller, quoted in Adam Green, “A Pickpocket’s Tale,” *New Yorker*, January 7, 2013, p. 38.
2. Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, *Comet* (New York: Random House, 1985), pp. 181–87.
3. Ian Stewart, *Life’s Other Secret: The New Mathematics of the Living World* (London: Penguin, 1999), pp. 167–69.
4. Kevin Power, “Sigmar Polke,” *Frieze*, no. 4 (April–May 1992): 28.
5. Neil Jeffrey Kessel, *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 121.
6. Bice Curiger, conversation with the author, December 5, 2011.
7. Slavoj Žižek, “The Christian-Hegelian Comedy,” in Jennifer Higgin, ed., *The Artist’s Joke* (London: Whitechapel, 2007), p. 218.
8. Michael Kimmelman, “Missionaries,” *New York Review of Books*, April 26, 2012.
9. Adolf Hitler, speech delivered at a meeting of the National Socialists German Workers’ Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), Salzburg, August 7 or 8, 1920. Reprinted in David Irving, *The War Path: Hitler’s Germany, 1933–1939* (London: Papermac, 1978), p. xxi.
10. Donald Kuspit, “Conflicting and Conflicted Identities: The Confusion of Self and Society; The Eighth Decade,” *A Critical History of 20th Century Art*, artnet website, www.artnet.com/magazine/features/kuspit/kuspit7-28-06.asp.
11. Polke, in Dieter Hülsmanns, “Kultur des Rasters: Ateliergespräch mit dem Maler Sigmar Polke,” *Rheinische Post*, May 10, 1966. Quoted in Martin Hentschel, “Solve et Coagula: On Sigmar Polke’s Work,” *Sigmar Polke: The Three Lies of Painting* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz, 1997), p. 54. Translation modified by Magnus Schaefer.
12. Clement Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (1930): 34–49.

13. Polke, in Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Polke und das große Triviale (mythisch oder pythisch?),” in Buchloh, ed., *Sigmar Polke: Bilder, Tücher, Objekte; Werkauswahl, 1962–1971* (Tübingen: Kunsthalle, 1976), p. 150. Translation by Fiona Elliott, amended by the author.
14. “When the youngest son was born, it was war again—World War II (1939–1945). When it started Hermann [August Polke] was ordered to the army physical. But he was already 35 years old and he had six children. Furthermore, he had never served in the military before. He was employed in a different way: he was conscripted to build military-related strategic facilities in Hundsfeld near Breslau. He never spoke about it, and he was also not allowed to say what the facilities served for. Was it an ordinance factory? In any case, Hermann did not have to go to war. He stayed at home throughout the war until 1945. He only had to go to Hundsfeld every day and perform his duties there.” Johannes Polke, Hartmut Schilgen, and Christian Polke, “Familienchronik: Polke & Raschford; Ursprung und Herkunft,” unpublished text, 2011. Translation by Magnus Schaefer.
15. Ibid.
16. Polke, in Martin Gayford, “A Weird Intelligence,” *Modern Painters*, Winter 2003, p. 78.
17. Ian Buruma, “Obsessions in Tokyo,” *New York Review of Books*, January 10, 2013.
18. Mariette Althaus, conversation with the author, December 1, 2012.
19. K. O. Götz, in Christine Mehring, “Television Art’s Abstract Starts: Europe circa 1944–1969,” *October*, no. 125 (Summer 2008): 33.
20. Ibid., p. 29–30.
21. Heinz Juncker, “Realität ist ganz anders: Polke in der Kunsthalle,” *Westdeutsche Zeitung*, April 22, 1976. Translation by Schaefer. The exhibition was organized for Kunsthalle Tübingen and then traveled in slightly different forms to Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, in Eindhoven.
22. Robert Hartmann, “Stillstand bei Pop-Art und Antikunst vor-demonstriert: Andy Warhol und Sigmar Polke in der Düsseldorfer Kunsthalle,” *Unsere Zeit: Die Zeitung der arbeitenden Menschen—Zeitung der DKP* 8, no. 95 (April 23, 1976): 10. Translation by Schaefer.
23. Ibid.
24. William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790). Quoted in a slightly different form in Hentschel, “Solve et Coagula,” p. 67.
25. Francis Picabia, “Manifeste Cannibale Dada,” *Dadaphone*, no. 7 (March 1920). Quoted in George Baker, “The Artwork Caught by the Tail,” *October*, no. 97 (Summer 2001): 51–90.

26. Jan Verwoert, “Secret Society: Cracking the Codes of Conceptual Art,” *Frieze*, no. 124 (June–August 2009): 135.
27. Margit Rowell, “Sigmar Polke: Strategems of Subversion,” in Rowell, ed., *Sigmar Polke: Works on Paper, 1963–1974* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), p. 13n8; Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (1947; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002).
28. Polke, conversation with the author, July 2, 2008.
29. Ibid; Johannes Meinhardt, *Ende der Malerei und Malerei nach dem Ende der Malerei* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz, 1997). Translation by Schaefer.
30. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Steven Tester (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), p. 113. Lichtenberg discovered the branching pattern of electric discharges, foreshadowing plasma physics.
31. Polke, conversation with the author.
32. Edward McGurday, *Leonardo Da Vinci’s Notebooks, Arranged and Rendered into English with Introductions* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), pp. 172–73.
33. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (1972; New York: Viking, 1973), p. 16.
34. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, quoted in Rigdzin Shikpo, *Never Turn Away: The Buddhist Path Beyond Hope and Fear* (Somerville, Mass.: Wisdom, 2007), p. 11.
35. Polke, “Presumably You Have a Hole in Your Head You Want to Fill with Art?,” in Petra Lange-Berndt and Dietmar Rübél, *Sigmar Polke: We Petty Bourgeois!; Comrades and Contemporaries, the 1970s* (Cologne: Walther König; New York: D.A.P., 2011), p. 219. Originally published in *Kunst-Nachrichten* 13, no. 6 (September 1977).
36. Polke and Gerhard Richter, “Text for Exhibition Catalogue, Galerie h, Hanover, 1966,” in *Gerhard Richter: The Daily Practice of Painting; Writings and Interviews, 1962–1993* ed. Hans-Ulrich Obrist, trans. David Brit (London: Anthony d’Offay Gallery; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), p. 52.
37. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951; London: Verso, 1978), p. 36.



Checklist of the Exhibition

Titles listed in quotation marks refer to inscriptions on drawings. Some films have multiple titles; those given titles for Polke's 1976 exhibition in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, are listed with the 1976 title first, followed by the title Polke later used.

Dates separated by a dash indicate a period of continuous working; those separated by a slash indicate that Polke reworked the piece at the later date.

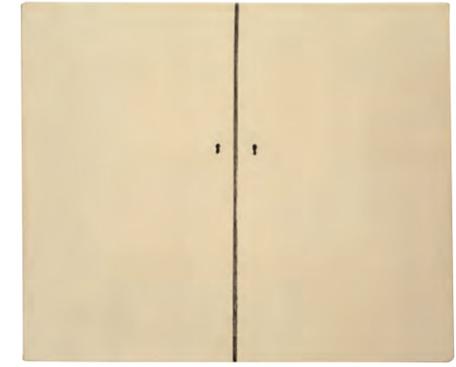
This checklist amply suggests the diversity of materials and supports, of both the fine-art and nonart varieties, that Polke incorporated into his practice. He used patterned fabrics as supports for his paintings, and was interested in materials and techniques from the domains of school and administrative supplies (such as lined notebook and graph paper) and office technologies (such as photocopying). A variety of ballpoint and colorful felt-tip pens appears frequently in his work; in the early 1960s such pens would have been recently introduced to the marketplace. Starting in the 1980s Polke experimented with natural materials ranging from orpiment—a poisonous golden pigment containing arsenic—to meteoric granulate. He made paintings with light-sensitive silver compounds such as silver bromide, which was used in the emulsion for gelatin silver prints. Polke also worked with synthetic materials such as acrylic resins, which turned relatively opaque textiles translucent. He employed large-format digital printing to create monumental works that he described as “machine paintings.” And in late works Polke experimented with handmade combed layers of structure gel—an acrylic resin that increases texture and transparency—to create hologramlike paintings.

The mediums identified here are occasionally the result of visual observation, but many are based on previously published references, information provided by lenders, and consultation with the Estate of Sigmar Polke. Thus it is possible that the same materials have been identified by alternate descriptions in different works. For example, Polke incorporated matte water-based paints in his works on paper from the 1960s. Paints with these characteristics would have been sold variously as gouache (opaque watercolor) when bought as fine-art supplies, or as poster paint (tempera) when bought as craft or children's art materials. It is likely that Polke used all of them, and the medium designations here reflect this variety. The terms “dispersion paint” and “synthetic polymer paint” are nonspecific, and they encompass many types of fine-art paint (such as acrylic) and nonart paint (including enamel, ordinary house paint, and others). These are all materials that appear in Polke's painted works.

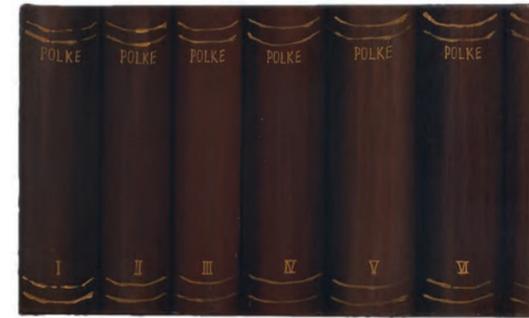
All works were shown at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, except where noted with an asterisk.



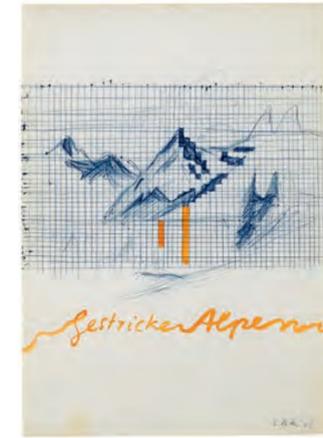
1. “The Apparition of the Swastika” (“Die Erscheinung des Hakenkreuzes”). c. 1963. Ballpoint pen and gouache on paper, 11 3/8 x 8 1/4” (29.5 x 20.9 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York



2. *Cabinet (Schrank)*. 1963. Enamel paint on canvas, 19 1/2 x 22 1/2” (49.5 x 57.5 cm). Private collection



3. *Goethe's Works (Goethes Werke)*. 1963. Oil and lacquer on canvas, 11 1/16 x 19 1/16” (30.4 x 50.4 cm). Udo und Anette Brandhorst Sammlung



4. “Knit Alps” (“Gestricke Alpen”). 1963. Ballpoint pen and watercolor on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4” (29.5 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



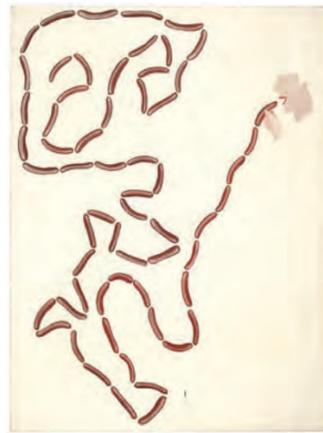
5. “Less Work, More Pay!” (“Weniger Arbeit, mehr Lohn!”). 1963. Ballpoint pen on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4” (29.5 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. Page 96



6. “Mona Lisa.” 1963. Ballpoint pen on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4” (29.5 x 21 cm). Wolfgang Wittrock, Berlin



7. *Raster Drawing (Portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald) (Rasterzeichnung [Porträt Lee Harvey Oswald])*. 1963. Poster paint and pencil on paper, 37 1/16 x 27 1/2" (94.8 x 69.8 cm). Private collection. Page 79



8. *The Sausage Eater (Der Wursteater)*. 1963. Dispersion paint on canvas, 6' 6 3/4" x 59 1/16" (200 x 150 cm). Friedrich Christian Flick Collection. Page 80



13. *Untitled (Dots [Punkte])*. 1963. Watercolor and gouache on paper, 24 1/16 x 20 1/4" (63 x 51.5 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



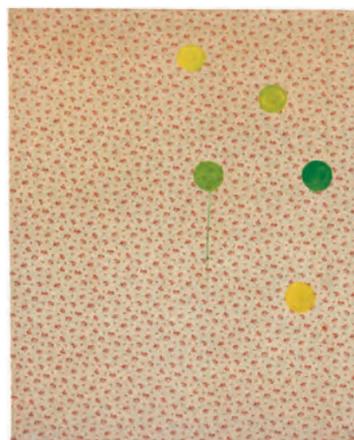
14. *"Young Man Come Back Soon!" ("Junge komm bald wieder!")*. 1963. Ballpoint pen and watercolor on paper, 11 1/4 x 8 1/2" (29.8 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift by exchange: Heinz Berggruen and Klaus Perls in memory of Frank Perls, Glickstein Foundation, and Mrs. Alfred P. Shaw



9. *"Shirts in All Colors" ("Hemden in allen Farben")*. 1963. Ballpoint pen, ink, and gouache on paper, 11 1/16 x 8 1/4" (29.7 x 21 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York



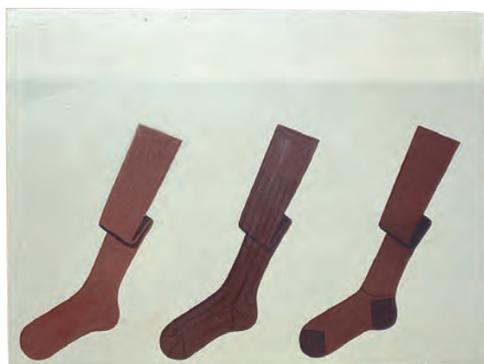
10. *"Soap" ("Seife")*. 1963. Ballpoint pen and gouache on paper, 11 1/16 x 8 3/16" (29.7 x 21.1 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York. Page 201



15. *5 Dots (5 Punkte)*. 1964. Dispersion paint on patterned fabric, 35 1/16 x 29 1/2" (90 x 75 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



16. *Biscuits (Kekse)*. 1964. Oil and lacquer on canvas, 31 1/2 x 29 1/2" (80 x 75 cm). Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich



11. *Socks (Socken)*. 1963. Enamel paint on canvas, 29 1/2 x 39 1/16" (75 x 99.5 cm). Private collection



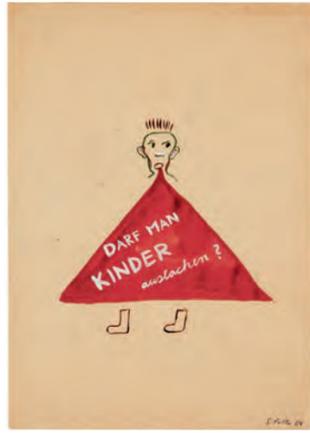
12. *Untitled (Dots [Punkte])*. 1963. Ballpoint pen and gouache on paper, 10 1/16 x 8 1/4" (27.2 x 21 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York



17. *Chocolate Painting (Schokoladenbild)*. 1964. Enamel paint on canvas, 35 1/4 x 39 1/4" (89.5 x 99.7 cm). Glenstone. Page 24



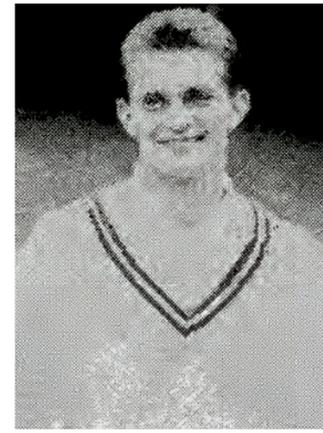
18. *Family I (Familie I)*. 1964. Dispersion paint on canvas, 63 x 49 1/16" (160 x 125 cm). Sammlung Elisabeth und Gerhard Soth in der Hamburger Kunsthalle



19. "May One Laugh at Children?" ("Darf man Kinder auslachen?"). 1964. Watercolor and gouache on paper, 11 3/8 x 8 1/4" (29.5 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



20. *The Palm Painting (Das Palmen-Bild)*. 1964. Dispersion paint on patterned fabric, 36 x 29 1/16" (91.5 x 75.4 cm). Private collection. Page 235



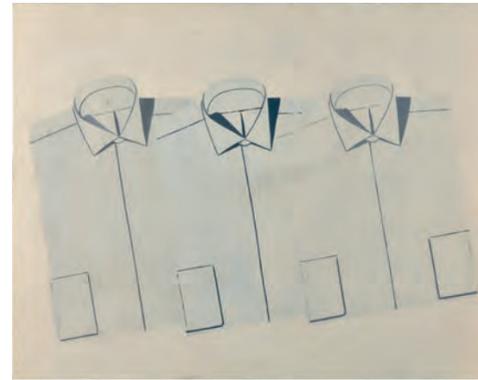
25. *Tennis Player (Tennispieler)*. 1964. Dispersion paint on canvas, 6' 6 1/2" x 59" (199.4 x 149.9 cm). Private collection



26. Untitled. 1964. Poster paint, felt-tip pen, and ink on paper, 39 3/16 x 29 1/16" (99.8 x 74.7 cm). Private collection



21. *Plastic Tubs (Plastik-Wannen)*. 1964. Oil on canvas, 37 3/8 x 47 1/4" (95 x 120 cm). Private collection, New York. Page 100



22. *Shirts (Hemden)*. 1964. Enamel paint on canvas, 39 1/2 x 48 3/16" (100.4 x 123 cm). Private collection



27. Untitled. 1964. Gouache on paper, 11 1/2 x 8 3/4" (29.2 x 21 cm). Kravis Collection



28. Untitled. 1964. Ballpoint pen and gouache on paper, 11 1/4 x 8 3/8" (29.8 x 21.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds provided by Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis



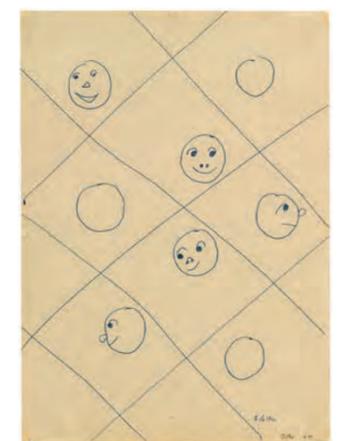
23. *Silver Brick (Silberner Ziegelstein)*. 1964. Dispersion paint on canvas, 23 3/8 x 17 1/16" (60 x 45.5 cm). Private collection



24. "Sparkling Wine for Everyone" ("Sekt für Alle"). 1964. Watercolor and ballpoint pen on paper, 11 1/16 x 8 1/4" (29.7 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



29. Untitled. c. 1964. Synthetic polymer paint on paper, 29 x 29 3/8" (73.5 x 74.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Anonymous fractional and promised gift



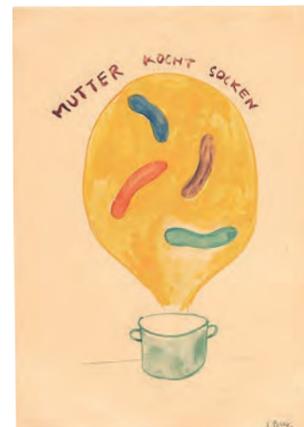
30. Untitled. 1964. Ballpoint pen on paper, 11 1/4 x 8 3/4" (29.8 x 21 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift (purchase, and gift, in part, of The Eileen and Michael Cohen Collection)



31. "We Want to Be as Free as the Fathers Were" ("Wir wollen frei sein wie die Väter waren"). 1964. Ballpoint pen on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4" (29.5 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. Page 22



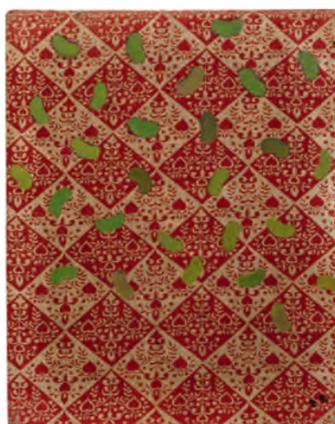
32. "Why Can't I Stop Smoking?". 1964. Dispersion paint and charcoal on canvas, 66 1/16 x 47 1/16" (170 x 120.5 cm). Saint Louis Art Museum. Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. Donald L. Bryant Jr., the Gary Wolff Family, Friends Fund, and Modern Art Purchase Fund; and gift of the Honorable and Mrs. Thomas F. Eagleton, by exchange



37. "Mother Is Cooking Socks" ("Mutter kocht Socken"). c. 1965. Watercolor on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4" (29.6 x 21 cm). Collection Edward Jaeger-Booth, courtesy McCaffrey Fine Art



38. "Raster Drawing (Interior)" (Rasterzeichnung [Interieur]). 1965. Poster paint on paper, 17 1/16 x 15 7/16" (43.3 x 40.3 cm). Private collection, Bonn



33. "Beans (Bohnen)". 1965. Casein paint on patterned fabric, 19 1/2 x 15 1/8" (49.6 x 39.1 cm). Private collection



34. "Doughnuts/Berliner (Bäckerblume)". 1965. Dispersion paint on canvas, 66 1/16 x 49 1/16" (170 x 125 cm). Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Sammlung Garnatz. Page 52



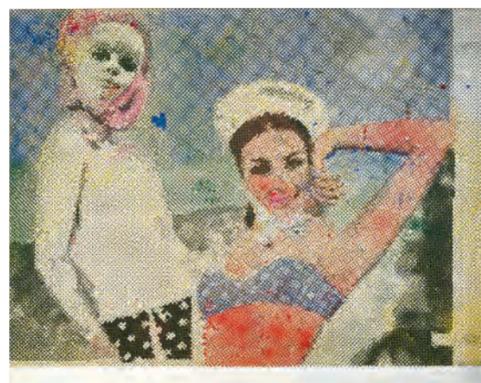
39. "Untitled". c. 1965. Watercolor in bound notebook, 186 pages, each: 8 1/16 x 5 1/16" (20.8 x 14.5 cm). Private collection



40. "Untitled (Phantom with Swastika [Spuk mit Hakenkreuz])". 1965. Gouache on paper, 11 1/16 x 8 1/4" (29.7 x 21 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York



35. "Flour in the Sausage" ("Mehl in der Würst"). 1965. Ballpoint pen, watercolor, and gouache on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4" (29.5 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



36. "Girlfriends (Freundinnen)". 1965/1966. Dispersion paint on canvas, 59 1/16 x 6' 2 1/16" (150 x 190 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. Page 163



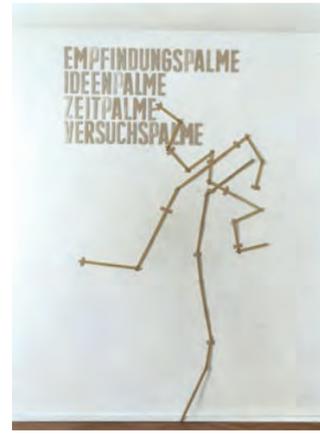
41. "Beach (Strand)". 1966/1968. Dispersion paint on canvas, 35 1/16 x 29 1/2" (89 x 75 cm). Private collection



42. "Female Head (Weiblicher Kopf)". 1966. Dispersion paint on canvas, 29 1/16 x 24 1/16" (76 x 61.5 cm). Private collection, Germany



43. *Flying Saucers (Fliegende Untertassen)*. 1966. Dispersion paint on canvas, 63 1/4 x 50" (161.9 x 127 cm). Private collection



44. *Folding-Ruler Palm (Zollstockpalme)*. 1966. Measuring stick, cardboard letters, and adhesive tape, 8' 2 7/16" x 51 1/16" x 1/16" (250 x 130 x 0.5 cm). Private collection



49. Untitled. 1966. Ballpoint pen on paper, approx. 11 1/4 x 8 1/16" (29.8 x 21.1 cm). Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München/ On permanent loan from the Collection Herzog Franz von Bayern, Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, München



*50. *Woman at the Mirror (Frau im Spiegel)*. 1966. Acrylic on patterned fabric, 49 1/16 x 31 1/2" (125 x 80 cm). Private collection, London



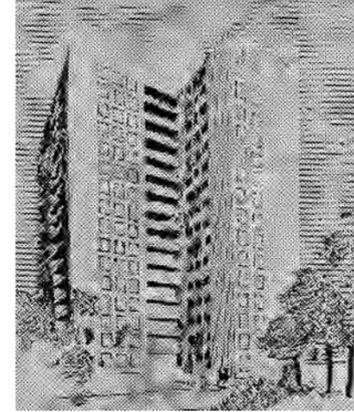
45. "Ghost" ("Geist"). 1966. Gouache on paper, 33 1/16 x 24" (85.5 x 61 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. *Page 89*



46. *Japanese Dancers (Japanische Tänzerinnen)*. 1966. Dispersion paint on canvas, 6' 6 3/4" x 66 1/16" (200 x 170 cm). Private collection



51. *Blanket (Decke)*. 1967. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/8 x 7" (23.1 x 17.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



52. *Front of the Housing Block (Häuserfront)*. 1967. Dispersion paint on canvas, 66 1/16 x 55 1/8" (170 x 140 cm). Sammlung Elisabeth und Gerhard Sohst in der Hamburger Kunsthalle. *Page 99*



47. Untitled. 1966. Ballpoint pen and gouache on paper, 11 3/8 x 8 1/4" (29.6 x 20.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Cosmopolitan Arts Foundation



48. Untitled. 1966. Gouache, pencil, and metallic paint on notebook paper, 8 3/4 x 5 1/16" (21 x 14.7 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York



53. *Girlfriends (Freundinnen)*. 1967. Gelatin silver print, 24 1/16 x 29 13/16" (63 x 75.7 cm). Ruth and Theodore Baum. *Page 161*



54. *Girlfriends I (Freundinnen I)*. 1967. Photolithograph, comp.: 18 3/16 x 23 1/4" (46.6 x 59 cm); sheet: 18 1/2 x 23 7/8" (47 x 60.7 cm). Publisher: Galerie h (August Haseke), Hannover. Edition: 150. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Richard A. Epstein Fund. *Pages 161, 162*



55. *Jewelry (Schmuck)*. 1967. Acrylic on fabric, 29 1/2 x 21" (74.9 x 53.3 cm). Collection Beth Swofford



56. *Lovers (Liebespaar)*. 1967. Ballpoint pen, felt-tip pen, and lacquer on canvas, 66 1/6 x 51 1/6" (170 x 130.5 cm). Rheingold Collection



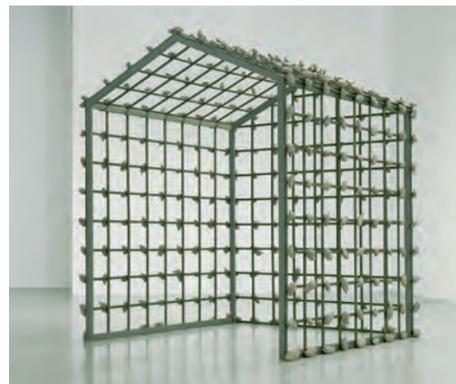
61. *Stripe Painting I (Streifenbild I)*. 1967. Dispersion paint on canvas, 6' 2 7/16" x 59 1/16" (189 x 150 cm). Nicolas Berggruen Charitable Foundation



62. *Untitled*. 1967. Ink, gouache, and ballpoint pen on paper, 11 x 8 1/4" (27.9 x 21 cm). Kravis Collection



57. "Paul Cézanne Bathers" ("Paul Cézanne Badende"). 1967. Ink and gouache on paper, 11 1/4 x 8 1/4" (29.8 x 21 cm). Kravis Collection



58. *Potato House (Kartoffelbaus)*. 1967. Painted wooden lattice and potatoes, 7' 10 1/2" x 6' 6 1/4" x 6' 6 1/4" (240 x 200 x 200 cm). Courtesy Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul, on loan to the Neues Museum in Nürnberg



63. *Untitled (Prayer [Die Andacht])*. 1967. Pencil, metallic paint, and gouache on paper, 11 1/16 x 8 7/16" (30.4 x 21.5 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



64. *Weekend House (Wochenendhaus)*, from *Graphics of Capitalist Realism (Grafik des Kapitalistischen Realismus)*. 1967. One from a portfolio of six screenprints, comp.: 20 1/2 x 32 15/16" (52 x 83.9 cm); sheet: 23 3/16 x 33 1/16" (59 x 83.9 cm). Publisher: René Block for Stolpe, Berlin. Edition: 80. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Linda Barth Goldstein Fund



59. *Snowdrops (Schneeglöckchen)*. 1967. Dispersion paint and metallic paint on plywood, 30 3/16 x 28 3/8" (77 x 72 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart

1	+	1	=	3
2	+	3	=	6
4	+	4	=	5
7	+	3	=	8
5	+	1	=	2
3	+	4	=	9
6	+	2	=	7
8	+	7	=	4
1	+	5	=	2

60. *Solutions V (Lösungen V)*. 1967. Lacquer on canvas, 59 1/16 x 49 1/16" (150 x 125.5 cm). Rheingold Collection



65. "When the Breads Burn" ("Wenn die Brote anbrennen"). 1967. Watercolor and ballpoint pen on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4" (29.5 x 21 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



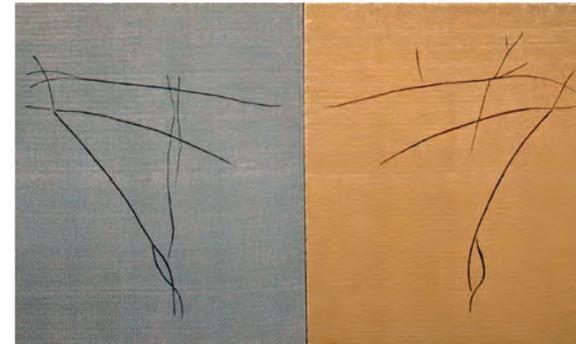
66. *Bamboo Pole Loves Folding-Ruler Star (Bamboostange liebt Zollstockstern)*. 1968-69. Fifteen gelatin silver prints, each: 23 7/8 x 19 1/16" (60.6 x 50.3 cm). Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund



67. *Cardboardology (Pappologie)*. 1968–69. Cardboard and nails, and ink, pencil, ballpoint pen, and felt-tip pen on graph paper, overall: 19 1/4 x 52 1/2" (48.9 x 133.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, Mimi Haas, and purchase. *Page 170*



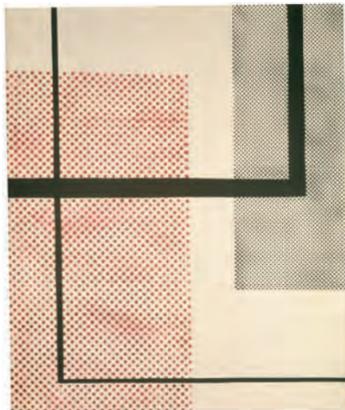
68. *City Painting II (NY) (Stadtbild II [NY])*. 1968. Dispersion paint on canvas, 59 1/2 x 49 1/16" (151 x 125.5 cm). Private collection, courtesy David Zwirner



73. *Hand Lines (Handlinien)*. 1968. Acrylic on two pieces of Lurex, each: 61 x 49 1/16" (155 x 125 cm). Kunstmuseum Bonn



74. *Heron Painting I (Reiberbild I)*. 1968. Acrylic on patterned flannel, 6' 2 1/16" x 59 1/16" (190 x 150 cm). Kunstmuseum Bonn



69. *Constructivist (Konstruktivistisch)*. 1968. Dispersion paint on canvas, 59 1/16 x 49 1/16" (150 x 125 cm). Pinakothek der Moderne/Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, München–Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, Sammlung Prinz Franz von Bayern. *Page 120*



70. "Eight Lines" ("Acht Striche"). 1968. Gouache and pencil on notebook paper, 8 1/4 x 5 7/8" (21 x 14.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift. *Page 126*



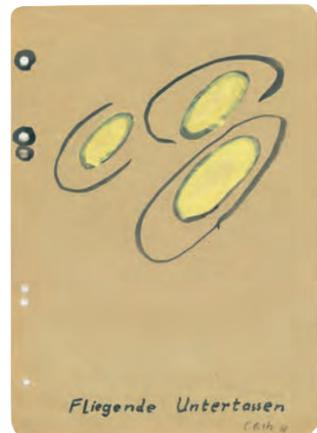
75. *Heron Painting II (Reiberbild II)*. 1968. Dispersion paint on patterned flannel, 6' 2 1/16" x 59 1/16" (190 x 150 cm). Daros Collection, Switzerland



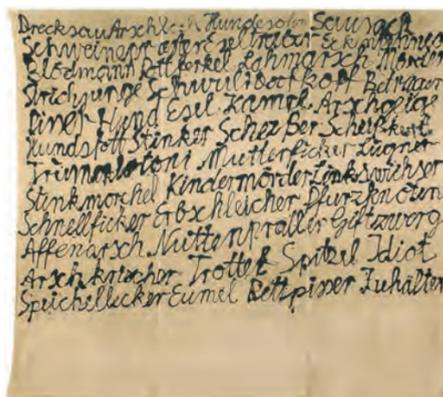
76. . . . *Higher Beings Ordain (. . . . Höhere Wesen befehlen)*. 1968, prints made 1966–68. Portfolio of fourteen photolithographs from photographs by Polke and Christof Kohlhöfer, sheet: 11 1/16 x 8 1/4" (29 x 20.9 cm). Publisher: Galerie René Block, Berlin. Edition: 50. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Associates of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books. *Pages 2, 103*



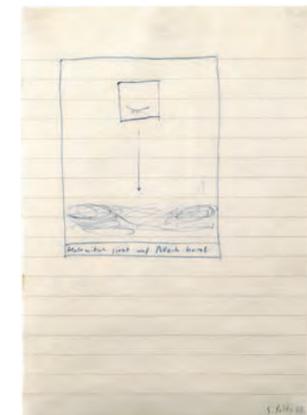
71. "Extension of the Planet System by a 10th Planet" ("Erweiterung des Planetensystems um einen 10. Planeten"). 1968. Ballpoint pen, ink, and watercolor on notebook paper, 11 1/16 x 8 3/16" (29.7 x 21.1 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York. *Page 177*



72. "Flying Saucers" ("Fliegende Untertassen"). 1968. Gouache on notebook paper, 8 1/4 x 5 3/4" (20.6 x 14.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift



77. *The Large Cloth of Abuse (Das große Schimpfpuoch)*. 1968. Dispersion paint on flannel, 13' 1 1/2" x 14' 7 1/16" (400 x 445 cm). Daros Collection, Switzerland. *Page 197*



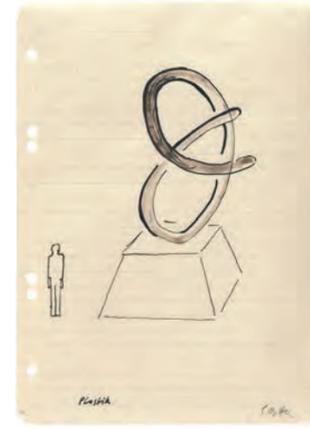
78. "Malevich Looks Down on Pollock" ("Malewitsch sieht auf Pollock herab"). 1968. Ballpoint pen and pencil on paper, 8 1/16 x 5 7/8" (20.5 x 15 cm). Sammlung Ciesielski, Kunstraum am Limes, courtesy Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne



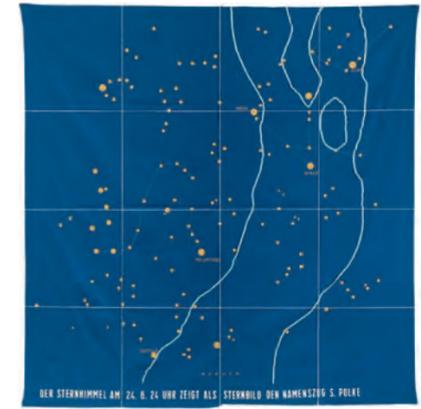
79. *Modern Art (Moderne Kunst)*. 1968. Acrylic and lacquer on canvas, 59 1/8 x 49 3/8 (150 x 125 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. *Page 119*



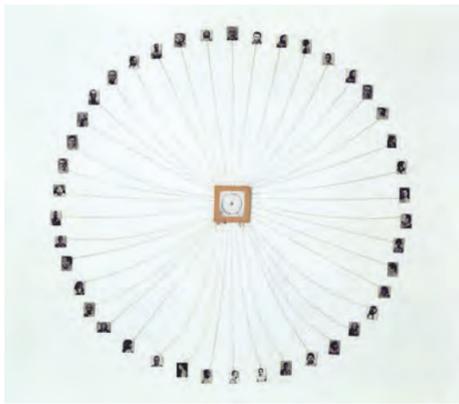
80. *Negro Sculpture (Negerplastik)*. 1968. Dispersion paint and Leukoplast medical tape on patterned fabric, 51 1/8 x 43 1/8 (130 x 110 cm). Kunstmuseum Bonn, permanent loan from private collection



85. *"Sculpture" ("Plastik")*. c. 1968. Ink and watercolor on notebook paper, 8 1/8 x 5 7/8 (20.6 x 14.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Per Skarstedt. *Page 123*



86. *Starry Heavens Cloth (Sternbimmel Tuch)*. 1968. Cords, cardboard disks, cardboard letters, silk ribbons, and crayon on cotton, 8' 3 1/8 x 7' 11 1/8 (252 x 243 cm). Private collection



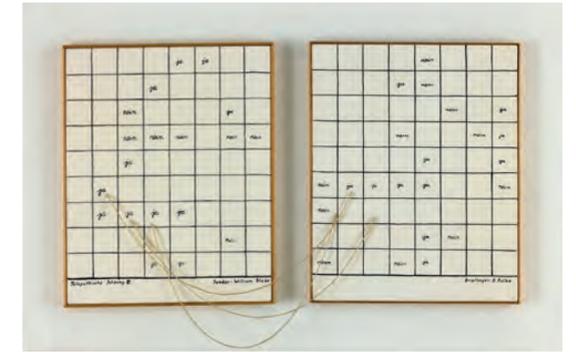
81. *People Circle (Photo Circle) I (Menschenkreis [Fotokreis] I)*. 1968. Forty-three gelatin silver prints, cardboard, and cord, 8' 2 1/8 (249.9 cm) diam. Glenstone



82. *Polke as Astronaut (Polke als Astronaut)*. 1968. Dispersion paint on patterned fabric, 35 1/8 x 29 1/2 (90 x 75 cm). Private collection, San Francisco. *Page 4*



87. *Stripe Painting IV (Streifenbild IV)*. 1968. Acrylic on canvas, 59 x 49 1/4 (149.9 x 125.1 cm). Kravis Collection. *Page 127*



88. *Telepathic Session II (William Blake-Sigmar Polke) (Telepathische Sitzung II [William Blake-Sigmar Polke])*. 1968. Lacquer on two canvases with cords, each: 19 1/8 x 16 1/8 (50 x 43 cm). Rheingold Collection. *Page 26*



83. *"Polke as Drug—Pulverized Polke in a Glass Pipe" ("Polke als Droge—Pulverisierter Polke im Glasröhrchen")*. 1968. Watercolor and ink on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/8 (29.5 x 20.5 cm). Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden



84. *Polke's Whip (Polkes Peitsche)*. 1968. Nine gelatin silver prints, paper, wood, cord, and adhesive tape, 27 1/8 x 18 1/8 (70 x 46 cm). IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Generalitat



89. *Untitled*. 1968. Gelatin silver print, 6 1/8 x 9 1/8 (16 x 23.2 cm) (irreg.). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



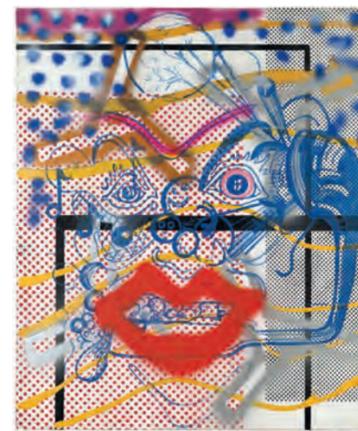
90. *Untitled*. 1968. Gelatin silver print, 4 1/8 x 6 1/8 (11.6 x 17.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



91. Untitled (*Collages [Collagen]*). c. 1968. Collage, watercolor, and felt-tip pen on 63 sheets of notebook paper, each: 8 1/4 x 5 1/2" (21 x 15 cm). Private collection



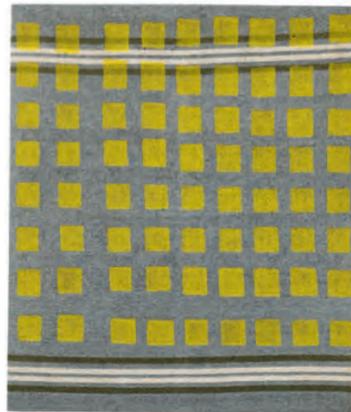
92. Untitled (*Leaves [Blätter]*). c. 1968. Pencil and watercolor on paper, 11 1/8 x 8 1/4" (29.6 x 21 cm). Private collection



97. *Dr. Berlin*. 1969–74. Dispersion paint, gouache, and spray paint on canvas, 59 1/16 x 47 1/4" (150 x 120 cm). Private collection



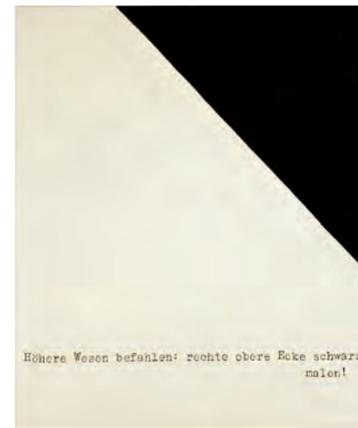
98. *Heron Painting IV (Reiberbild IV)*. 1969. Acrylic on patterned flannel, 6' 2 13/16" x 59 1/16" (190 x 150 cm). Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Sammlung Garnatz



93. *With Yellow Squares (Mit gelben Quadraten)*. 1968. Dispersion paint on wool, 59 1/16 x 44 3/4" (150 x 126 cm). Block Collection, in deposit of Neues Museum in Nürnberg



94. *Apparatus Whereby One Potato Can Orbit Another (Apparat, mit dem eine Kartoffel eine andere umkreisen kann)*. 1969. Wood, potatoes, batteries, wire, rubber band, and motor, 31 1/2 x 16 1/4 x 16 1/4" (80 x 41.3 x 41.3 cm). Publisher: Edition Staeck (Edition Tangente), Heidelberg. Edition: 30. Michael Werner Gallery, New York



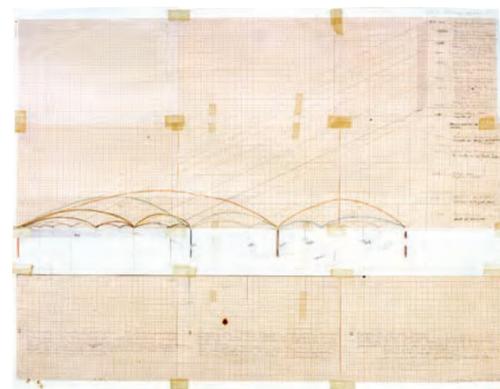
99. *Higher Beings Commanded: Paint the Upper-Right Corner Black! (Höhere Wesen befehlen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!)*. 1969. Lacquer on canvas, 59 1/16 x 49 1/16" (150 x 125.5 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. Page 28



100. *Polke's Collected Works (Polkes gesammelte Werke)*. 1969. Oil and lacquer on canvas, 15 1/4 x 59 1/16" (40 x 150 cm). Wilks Family Collection. Page 309



95. *The Berlin Window—Galerie Block (Das Berliner Fenster—Galerie Block)* (excerpt). 1969. Original telecast March 12, 1970. Video (black-and-white, sound), 3:45min. rbb media GmbH. Pages 175, 178



96. *Constructions around Leonardo da Vinci and Sigmar Polke (Konstruktionen um Leonardo da Vinci und Sigmar Polke)*. 1969. Ink on graph paper, 27 1/2 x 35 1/2" (69.9 x 90.2 cm). Dallas Museum of Art. Anonymous gift and the Contemporary Art Fund: Gift of Arlene and John Dayton, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon E. Faulconer, Mr. and Mrs. Bryant M. Hanley, Jr., Marguerite and Robert K. Hoffman, Cindy and Howard Rachofsky, Deedie and Rusty Rose, Gayle and Paul Stoffel, and two anonymous donors



101. *Potato Drawing (Kartoffelzeichnung)*. 1969–70. Watercolor on paper and potatoes mounted on wood, overall: 7' 10 1/4" x 11' x 3" (239.4 x 335.3 x 7.6 cm). Marieluisse Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York



102. *The Ride on the Eight of Infinity III (The Motorcycle Headlight) (Die Fahrt auf der Unendlichkeitsacht III [Die Motorradlampe])*. 1969–71. Coal, chalk, oil, and adhesive tape on paper, 10' 6" x 15' 9" (320 x 480 cm). Private collection. Page 105



103. *Sketchbook (Skizzenbuch)*. c. 1969. Watercolor in bound notebook, 64 pages, each: 8 1/4 x 5 1/2" (21 x 15 cm). Private collection



104. *Sketchbook No. 21 (Skizzenbuch Nr. 21)*. c. 1969. Watercolor and white gouache in bound notebook, 140 pages, each: 8 1/2 x 5 1/16" (20.7 x 14.7 cm). Kunstmuseum Bonn



109. *Dürer Hare (Dürer Hase)*. 1970. Elastic band and nails on fabric over particle board, 35 7/16 x 29 1/2" (90 x 75 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart. Page 46



110. *Hamburg*. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 6 1/16 x 9 3/8" (17.6 x 23.8 cm). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



105. *Untitled (Armchair [Sessel])*. 1969. Watercolor in bound notebook, 64 pages, each: 8 1/4 x 5 1/16" (21 x 14.5 cm). Private collection



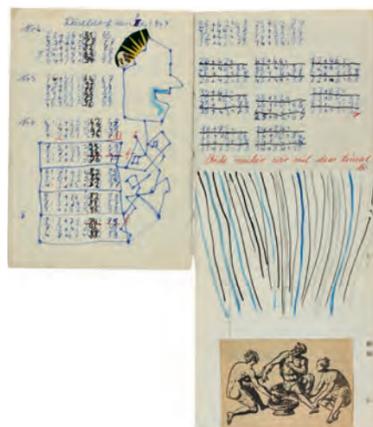
106. *Untitled (Sketchbook No. 20 [Skizzenbuch Nr. 20])*. 1969. Felt-tip pen in bound notebook, 64 pages, each: 8 1/4 x 5 7/8" (20.9 x 14.9 cm). Private collection



111. *Hamburg*. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 7 1/16 x 9 3/16" (17.9 x 23.7 cm). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



112. *Sceno-Test: Projective Method That, with the Help of Toys, Captures Unconscious Problems in Children and Adults (Sceno-Test: Projektives Verfahren, das mit Spielmaterial unbewusste Probleme bei Kindern und Erwachsenen erfasst)*. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 8 1/4 x 11 3/8" (21 x 29.5 cm). Friedrich Wolfram Heubach



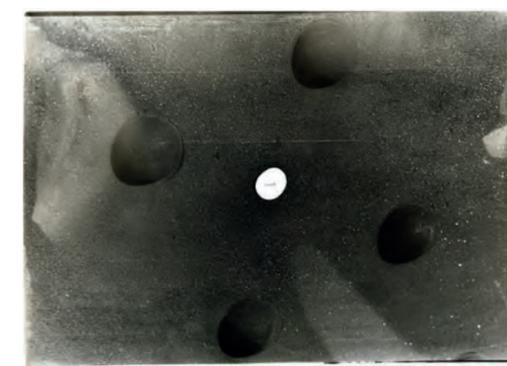
107. *Untitled ("We Make Our Lines with a Ruler" ["Striche machen wir mit dem Lineal"])*. c. 1969. Collage, watercolor, and ballpoint pen in bound notebook, 20 pages with two foldouts, page: 8 1/4 x 5 1/16" (21 x 14.7 cm); foldouts: 8 1/4 x 8 3/4" (21 x 21 cm) and 13 1/2 x 5 1/16" (34 x 14.7 cm). Private collection



108. Christof Kohlhöfer and Sigmar Polke. *The Whole Body Feels Light and Wants to Fly... (Der ganze Körper fühlt sich leicht und möchte fliegen...)*. 1969. 16mm film transferred to video (black-and-white and color, sound), 30 min. Courtesy Christof Kohlhöfer. Page 146



113. *Sceno-Test: Projective Method That, with the Help of Toys, Captures Unconscious Problems in Children and Adults (Sceno-Test: Projektives Verfahren, das mit Spielmaterial unbewusste Probleme bei Kindern und Erwachsenen erfasst)*. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 8 1/4 x 11 3/8" (21 x 29.5 cm). Friedrich Wolfram Heubach. Page 194



114. *Untitled*. c. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 4 3/16 x 6 7/8" (12.6 x 17.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



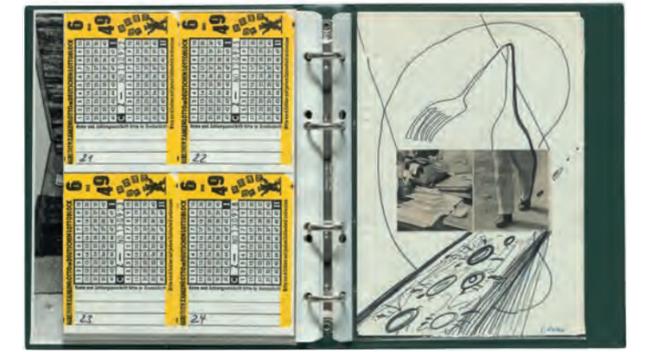
115. Untitled. c. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 8 7/8 x 11 1/8" (22.5 x 29.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



116. Untitled. c. 1970. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 6 1/16 x 5" (17.6 x 12.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



121. KP Brehmer, K. H. Hödicke, Konrad Lueg, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Wolf Vostell. *Graphics of Capitalist Realism (Grafik des Kapitalistischen Realismus)*. 1971. Six-print supplement to a book, each comp.: dimens. vary; sheet: 8 1/4 x 9 1/16" (21 x 23 cm). Publisher: Galerie René Block, Berlin. Edition: 120. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Seiden and de Cuevas Foundation Fund



122. *Hurray!!! 3 Correct (Hurra!!! 3 Richtige)*, from *En Bloc*. 1971. Multiple by Sigmar Polke and eighteen other artists. Plastic binder with photograph, forty-three lottery tickets, and drawing with collage, binder: 8 1/16 x 7 1/16 x 1 3/8" (22.7 x 18.3 x 3.5 cm). Publisher: Galerie René Block, Berlin. Edition: 20. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Christopher Gray



117. Untitled. c. 1970. Gelatin silver print with burned area, 7 x 9 7/16" (17.8 x 23.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



118. Untitled. c. 1970. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 7 1/16 x 9 7/16" (18 x 24 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



123. *Paris (Lamp Post) (Paris [Laternenpfahl])*. 1971. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/2 x 7 1/8" (24.1 x 18.1 cm). Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum



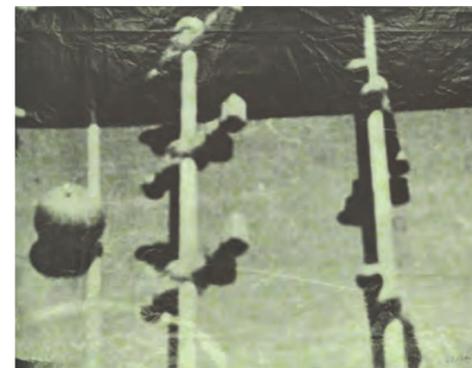
124. *Registro*. 1971-72. Ink on six sheets of graph paper, each: 11 1/16 x 8 1/16" (30 x 20.5 cm). Private collection



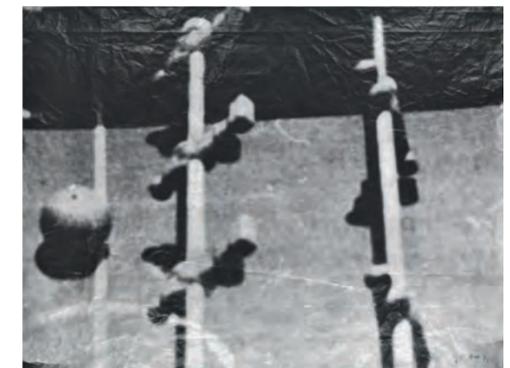
119. Untitled (*Anna Polke*). c. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 9 3/16 x 7 1/16" (23.7 x 18 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



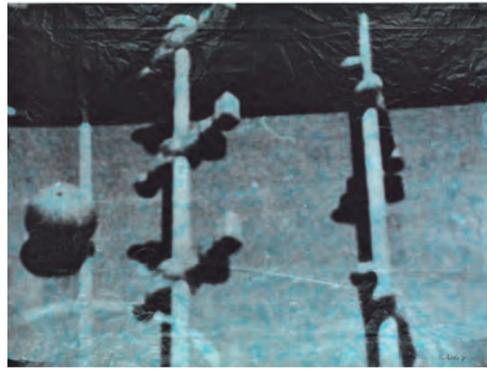
120. Untitled (*Michael Buthe*). c. 1970. Two gelatin silver prints with applied color, each: 6 1/16 x 8 1/2" (17.6 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



125. *TV Picture (Soccer Player) I (Fernsehbild [Kicker] I)*. 1971. Photolithograph, comp. and sheet: 25 3/16 x 32 1/16" (64 x 83.3 cm). Publisher: Griffelkunst-Vereinigung, Hamburg. Edition: 640 (120 on green paper). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Walter Bareiss Fund



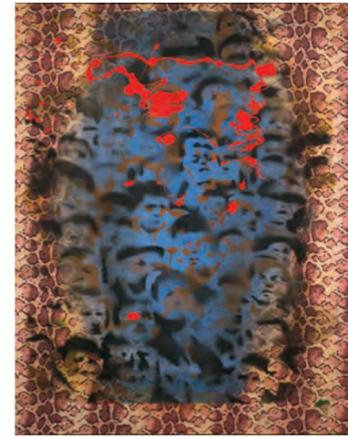
126. *TV Picture (Soccer Player) I (Fernsehbild [Kicker] I)*. 1971. Photolithograph, comp. and sheet: 25 3/16 x 33 1/16" (63.8 x 84 cm). Publisher: Griffelkunst-Vereinigung, Hamburg. Edition: 640 (237 on gray paper). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Linda Barth Goldstein Fund



127. *TV Picture (Soccer Player) I (Fernsehbild [Kicker] I)*. 1971. Photolithograph, comp. and sheet: 25 1/16 x 33 1/16" (64 x 84 cm). Publisher: Griffelkunst-Vereinigung, Hamburg. Edition: 640 (142 on blue paper). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Roxanne H. Frank Fund



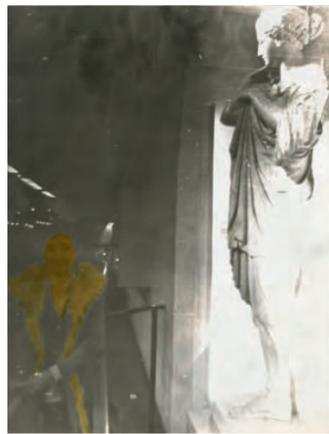
128. Untitled. 1971. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/16 x 11 5/8" (24 x 29.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



133. *Menschkin*. 1972. Synthetic polymer paint on patterned fabric, 39 1/2 x 31 1/2" (100.3 x 80 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Werner and Elaine Dannheisser



134. *Mushrooms (Pilze)*. 1972. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/16 x 8 1/4" (30 x 21 cm). Private collection



129. Untitled. 1971. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 9 1/16 x 7 1/16" (24 x 18 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



130. Untitled. 1971. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 7 1/16 x 9 1/16" (18 x 24 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



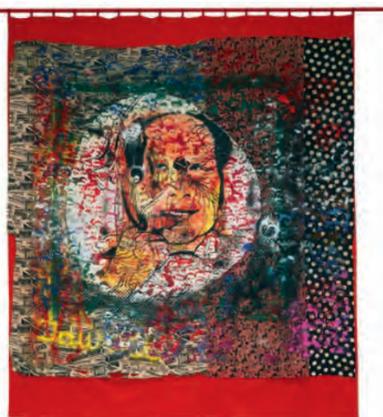
135. Untitled. 1972. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/16 x 7 1/16" (23.9 x 18 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



136. Untitled. c. 1972. Gelatin silver print with felt-tip pen, 9 1/8 x 7 1/16" (23.8 x 18 cm). Courtesy F. C. Gundlach Foundation, Hamburg



131. *Alice in Wonderland (Alice im Wunderland)*. 1972. Acrylic, spray paint, poster paint, and metallic paint on patterned fabric, 10' 2 1/4" x 9' 4 1/8" (310.5 x 286 cm). Private collection. *Page 209*



132. *Mao*. 1972. Synthetic polymer paint on patterned fabric mounted on felt with wooden dowel, overall: 12' 3" x 10' 3 1/2" (373.5 x 314 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Kay Sage Tanguy Fund



137. Untitled. c. 1972. Gelatin silver print with felt-tip pen, 9 1/16 x 7 1/16" (23.7 x 18.1 cm). Courtesy F. C. Gundlach Foundation, Hamburg



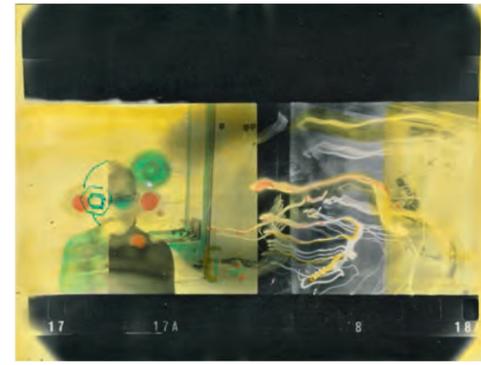
138. *Bowery*. 1973. Fourteen gelatin silver prints, in various dimens: 33 1/4 x 46 7/8" (84.5 x 119 cm); 33 1/4 x 49 1/8" (84.5 x 126 cm); 33 1/4 x 51 1/16" (84.5 x 130 cm); 33 1/4 x 51 1/16" (84.5 x 132 cm). Private collection. *Pages 181-83*



139. *How Long We Are Hesit/Looser*. c. 1973–76. 16mm film transferred to video (color, sound), 30:02 min. Private collection. *Pages 145, 153*



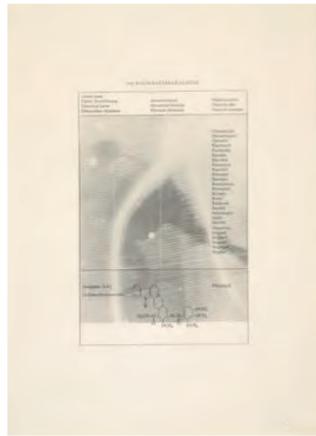
140. *Obelisk (Hieroglyphs) (Obelisk [Hieroglyphen])*. 1973. Photolithograph on marbled paper, comp.: 24 1/4 x 17 7/8" (62.8 x 45.4 cm); sheet: 24 7/16 x 17 7/8" (62 x 45.4 cm). Publisher: Griffelkunst-Vereinigung, Hamburg. Edition: 598. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase



145. Untitled. c. 1973. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 7 1/16 x 9 7/16" (18 x 23.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



146. Untitled. c. 1973. Gelatin silver print (gold toned), 11 1/4 x 9 7/16" (29.8 x 24 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



141. *TV Picture Ice Hockey (Rauwolfia alkaloid) (Fernsehbild Eisbockey [Rauwolfiaalkaloide])*. 1973. Photolithograph, comp.: 14 13/16 x 9 1/2" (38 x 24.1 cm); sheet: 24 7/16 x 17 7/8" (62 x 45.4 cm). Publisher: Griffelkunst-Vereinigung, Hamburg. Edition: 516. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Joshua Mack



142. Untitled. 1973. Ink and gouache on paper, 38 x 27" (96.5 x 68.6 cm). Courtesy Waldo Fernandez



147. Untitled. c. 1973. Two gelatin silver prints, each: 7 1/16 x 9 7/16" (18 x 23.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



148. *Gilbert and George (George)*. 1974. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 11 1/4 x 9 1/2" (29.8 x 24.1 cm). Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum



143. Untitled. 1973. Gouache on paper, 27 7/16 x 39 3/16" (70 x 99.5 cm). Kunstmuseum Bern, Sammlung Toni Gerber, Bern, Schenkung 1983, 1. Teil. *Page 34*



144. Untitled. 1973. Gouache on paper, 27 7/16 x 39 3/16" (69.5 x 99.5 cm). Kunstmuseum Bern, Sammlung Toni Gerber, Bern, Schenkung 1983, 1. Teil



149. *Gilbert and George (Gilbert)*. 1974. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 11 1/4 x 9 1/2" (29.8 x 24.1 cm). Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum



150. *New York Beggars (New Yorker Bettler)*. 1974. Photolithograph, comp. and sheet: 16 13/16 x 24" (43 x 61 cm). Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg. Edition: 100. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Riva Castleman Endowment Fund. *Page 186*



151. *Quetta*. 1974/1978. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 24 1/16 x 37 1/8" (63 x 95 cm). Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart



152. *Quetta, Pakistan*. 1974/1978. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 22 1/2 x 33 1/8" (57.2 x 86 cm). The Rachofsky Collection



157. *HFBK II/Hamburg Lerchenfeld*. c. 1975–89/2009. 16mm film transferred to video (color and black-and-white, sound), 44:29 min. Private collection



158. *In Search of Bobr-mann Brazil and Its Consequences (Auf der Suche nach Bobr-mann Brasilien und seine Folgen)/Brasil–São Paulo (Brasilien–São Paulo)*. c. 1975–76. 16mm film transferred to video (color, sound), 38 min. Private collection. Page 157



153. *Untitled (Quetta, Pakistan)*. 1974/1978. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 22 3/8 x 33 1/16" (56.9 x 85.9 cm). Glenstone. Page 36



154. *Quetta's Hazy Blue Sky (Quetta's blauer dunstiger Himmel)/Afghanistan–Pakistan*. c. 1974–76. 16mm film transferred to video (color, sound), 34:33 min. Private collection. Page 150



159. *Mu nieltnam netorruprup*. 1975. Collage, watercolor, dispersion paint, and gouache on gelatin silver print, 36 3/8 x 27 1/16" (93 x 70 cm). Private collection, Stuttgart



160. *Mu nieltnam netorruprup*. 1975. Photolithograph, comp.: 26 3/16 x 18 1/4" (66.5 x 47.7 cm); sheet: 27 1/2 x 19 1/16" (69.9 x 49.7 cm). Publisher: Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein, Kiel. Edition: artist's proof outside an edition of 75. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Johanna and Leslie J. Garfield Fund



155. *Day by Day*. 1975. Twenty collages of cut-and-pasted printed paper, typescript, and photographs with pencil, ballpoint pen, felt-tip pen, and spray paint, each: approx. 24 7/16 x 16 1/16" (62 x 43 cm). Private collection, Bonn, courtesy Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne. Page 193



156. Sigmar Polke with Achim Duchow, Astrid Heibach, and Katharina Steffen. *Day by Day . . . they take some brain away*. 1975. Artist's newspaper issued for the São Paulo Bienal, page: 16 1/8 x 11 1/8" (41 x 29.6 cm). Publisher: Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn. Edition: 800. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Linda Barth Goldstein Fund. Page 189



161. *Mu nieltnam netorruprup*. 1975. Offset print on poster, 27 1/16 x 19 1/16" (70 x 50 cm). Collection Katharina Steffen, Zurich. Page 75



162. *Telephone Drawing (Telefonzeichnung)*. 1975. Gouache, ballpoint pen, and felt-tip pen on stained paper with cutouts, 27 1/2 x 39 3/16" (69.8 x 99.8 cm). Kunstmuseum Bern, Sammlung Toni Gerber, Bern, Schenkung 1983, 1. Teil. Page 33



163. Untitled. 1975. Gelatin silver print, framed: 37 1/2 x 27" (95.3 x 68.6 cm). Collection Marie and John Becker



164. Untitled. 1975. Photographic emulsion with acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 15 1/4 x 19 1/16" (40 x 50 cm). ACT Art Collection, Germany



169. Untitled (*Fly Agaric [Fliegenpilz]*). 1975. Eight gelatin silver prints, each: 16 1/16 x 11 1/16" (42 x 29.5 cm). Kroeller-Mueller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands. Formerly in the Visser Collection, purchased with support from the Mondriaan Foundation



170. Untitled (*Fly Agaric [Fliegenpilz]*). 1975. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 35 1/4 x 35 1/16" (90.8 x 89.2 cm). Private collection



165. Untitled. 1975. Gelatin silver print, 34 7/8 x 32 1/8" (88.6 x 81.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder



166. Untitled. c. 1975. Cut-and-printed paper inserted into stamp album, 32 pages, each: 11 1/16 x 8 1/16" (29.7 x 22 cm). Private collection



171. Untitled (*Mafia Wedding et al. [Mafiaboehzeit et al.]*). c. 1975–83/2009. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 33:38 min. Private collection



172. Untitled (*Willich, Canvas [Willich, Leinwand]*). 1975. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/16 x 8 1/4" (30 x 21 cm). Collection Katharina Steffen, Zurich



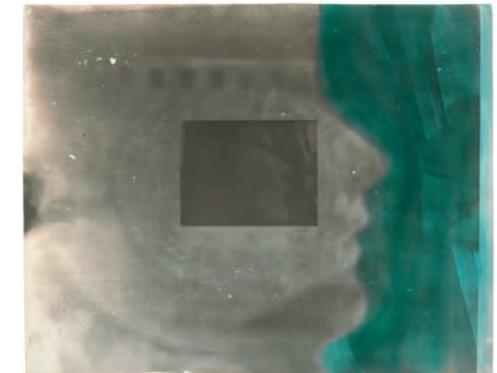
167. Untitled. c. 1975. Cut-and-pasted printed paper in bound notebook, 24 pages, each: 8 1/16 x 5 1/16" (20.8 x 14.7 cm). Private collection



168. Untitled (*Federal Horticultural Show et al. [Bundesgartenschau et al.]*). c. 1975–80/2009. 16mm film transferred to video (color and black-and-white, silent), 39:51 min. Private collection



173. Untitled. c. 1975. Gelatin silver print, 7 1/16 x 9 1/16" (18 x 23.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder. *Page 32*



174. Untitled. c. 1975. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 9 1/16 x 11 1/16" (24 x 29.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



175. Untitled. c. 1975. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/16 x 9 1/4" (30 x 23.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



176. Untitled. c. 1975. Gelatin silver print, 6 3/4 x 8 1/16" (17.1 x 22.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



181. *Against the Two Superpowers—For a Red Switzerland*, (*Gegen die zwei Supermächte—für eine rote Schweiz*). 1976. Spray paint and newsprint on canvas, 8' 4 3/8" x 10' 4 1/16" (255 x 316 cm). Annette and Peter Nobel Collection, Zurich. Page 32



182. *Deistler-Forge* (*Deistler-Schmiede*). c. 1976–79. 16mm film transferred to video (black-and-white, silent), 18:34 min. Private collection



177. Untitled. c. 1975. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 9 7/16 x 11 1/16" (24 x 30 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



178. Untitled. c. 1975. Gelatin silver print, 9 7/16 x 11" (24 x 28 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



183. *Supermarkets*. 1976. Gouache; metallic, enamel, and acrylic paints; felt-tip pen; and collage on nine sheets of paper on canvas, overall: 6' 8 3/16" x 9' 6 1/16" (204 x 292 cm). Liebelt Collection, Hamburg



184. Untitled (*Willich in Summer et al.* [*Willich im Sommer et al.*]). c. 1977–79. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 34:36 min. Private collection



179. Untitled (*Mariette Althaus*). c. 1975. Gelatin silver print (red toned), 9 1/4 x 11 1/16" (23.5 x 30 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder. Page 91



180. Untitled (*Zürich*). c. 1975. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 9 7/16 x 7 1/16" (23.9 x 18 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Edgar Wachenheim III and Ronald S. Lauder



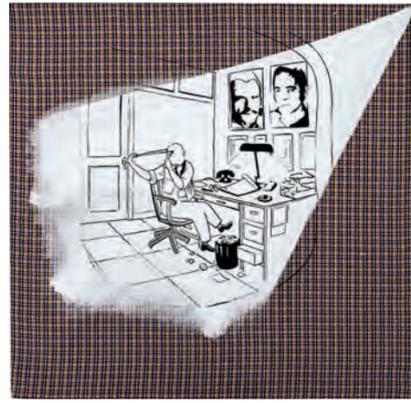
185. Untitled (*Im Laubegg, Zürich*). 1977. Gelatin silver print, 8 1/4 x 11 1/16" (21 x 30 cm). Collection Katharina Steffen, Zurich



186. Untitled. Before 1978. Cord, spray paint, dispersion paint, and poster paint on gauze, 19 1/16 x 15 1/4" (50 x 40 cm). Private collection



187. Untitled (*Color Experiment [Farbprobe]*). 1978. Mixed mediums on canvas, 19 1/16 x 15 1/16" (50 x 39.5 cm). Udo und Anette Brandhorst Sammlung



188. Untitled (*Dr. Bonn*). 1978. Casein paint on patterned wool, 51 1/16 x 51 1/16" (130 x 130.5 cm). Groninger Museum. Page 38



193. *Lump of Gold (Goldklumpen)*. 1982. Orpiment and Schweinfurt green paints on canvas, 8' 6 1/16" x 6' 6 1/4" (259.9 x 200.2 cm). Collection Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven



194. *Negative Value I (Alkor) (Negativwert I [Alkor])*. 1982. Dispersion paint, red lead ground, resin, pigment, and enamel paint on canvas, 8' 7 1/8" x 6' 7 1/8" (262 x 201 cm). Private collection. Page 130



189. *NDR I + II*. 1979. Acrylic on two pieces of patterned fabric, 27 1/16 x 35 1/16" (70 x 90 cm) and 19 1/16 x 15 1/16" (50 x 40 cm). Private collection



190. *Papua*. 1980–81. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 28:33 min. Private collection



195. *Negative Value II (Mizar) (Negativwert II [Mizar])*. 1982. Dispersion paint, resin, and pigment on canvas, 8' 7 1/8" x 6' 7 1/8" (262 x 201 cm). Private collection. Page 129



196. *Negative Value III (Aldebaran) (Negativwert III [Aldebaran])*. 1982. Dispersion paint, resin, and pigment on canvas, 8' 7 1/8" x 6' 7 1/8" (262 x 201 cm). Private collection. Page 131



191. *Paganini*. 1981–83. Dispersion paint, aluminum paint, and pencil on patterned fabric, 7' 3 1/16" x 16' 6 1/16" (223 x 504 cm). Daros Collection, Switzerland. Page 42



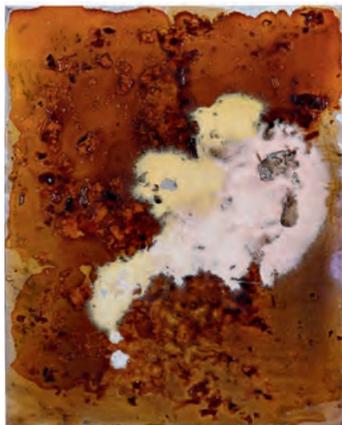
192. *Leporello Template/Original for Parkett No. 2*. 1982/1984. Bound gelatin silver prints, unfolded: 6 1/16" x 18' 4 1/2" (17 x 560 cm). Maja Hoffmann/LUMA Foundation



*197. *Scissors (Die Schere)*. 1982. Acrylic and iron mica on patterned fabric, 9' 6 1/16" x 9' 6 1/16" (290 x 290 cm). Private collection



198. Untitled (*Color Experiment [Farbprobe]*). 1982. Mixed mediums on canvas, 19 1/16 x 15 1/16" (50 x 40 cm). Udo und Anette Brandhorst Sammlung



199. Untitled (*Color Experiment [Farbprobe]*). c. 1982. Acrylic, varnish, and pigment on canvas, 19 1/8 x 15 1/8" (50.5 x 40.3 cm). Private collection



200. Untitled (*Color Experiment [Farbprobe]*). c. 1982. Acrylic, varnish, and pigment on canvas, 19 1/8 x 15 1/8" (50.4 x 40 cm). Private collection



205. Untitled (*Swastika*). After 1982. Colored ink in album, 120 pages, each: 10 1/8 x 7 1/8" (26.3 x 18.7 cm). Private collection. *Page 68*



206. Untitled (*"Weak Signals" ["Schwache Signale"]*). After 1982. Collage and felt-tip pen on paper, 8 1/8 x 5 1/8" (20.8 x 14.7 cm). Private collection



201. Untitled (*Color Experiment [Farbprobe]*). c. 1982. Damar resin on canvas, 23 1/8 x 19 1/8" (60 x 50.5 cm). Private collection



202. Untitled (*Color Experiment [Farbprobe]*). 1982. Azurite and Schweinfurt green on canvas, 19 1/8 x 15 1/8" (50 x 40 cm). Private collection



207. *The Living Stink and the Dead Are Not Present (Die Lebenden stinken und die Toten sind nicht amwesend)*. 1983. Acrylic on patterned fabric, 9' 2 1/4" x 11' 9 3/4" (280 x 360 cm). Collection of the Estates of Emily and Jerry Spiegel. *Page 84*



208. Untitled. 1983. Acrylic, lacquer, and spray paint on patterned fabric, 59 1/4 x 70 1/8" (150.5 x 180 cm). Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York



203. Untitled (*"Reagan"*). After 1982. Collage and felt-tip pen on paper, 8 1/8 x 5 1/8" (20.8 x 14.7 cm). Private collection. *Page 217*



204. Untitled (*"Sloppy in Detail" ["Huddel en détail"]*). After 1982. Collage and felt-tip pen on paper, 8 1/8 x 5 1/8" (20.8 x 14.7 cm). Private collection. *Page 213*



209. *Desastres and Other Sheer Miracles I (Desastres und andere bare Wunder I)*. 1984. Photocopied mock-up for leporello edition with drawn additions. Ballpoint pen on bound photocopies, unfolded: 6 7/8" x 17' 4 1/8" (17.5 x 530 cm). Maja Hoffmann/LUMA Foundation



210. *Desastres and Other Sheer Miracles I (Desastres und andere bare Wunder I)*. 1984. Photolithograph, unfolded: 6 7/8" x 16' 4 1/8" (17.5 x 510 cm). Made for *Parkett* no. 2 (1984). Publisher: Parkett Verlag, Zurich. Edition: unknown. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. Pages 14–19, 64–65, 158–59, 250–51, 298–99, 310–11



211. *Hunting Tower (Hochstand)*. 1984. Silver nitrate and damar resin on canvas, 9' 10 1/2" x 7' 4 1/16" (300 x 225 cm). Private collection. *Page 224*



212. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. c. 1984. Damar resin, silver, and silver leaf on canvas, 23 1/16" x 19 1/16" (59.8 x 50.5 cm). Private collection



217. *Watchtower II (Hochsitz II)*. 1984–85. Silver, silver oxide, and synthetic resin on canvas, 9' 11 1/2" x 7' 4 1/4" (303.8 x 225.4 cm). Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. William R. Scott, Jr. Fund. *Page 219*



218. *Watchtower (Bufo Tenin) (Hochsitz [Bufo Tenin])*. 1984. Silver, silver bromide, and natural resins on canvas, 9' 9 1/2" x 7' 4 1/2" (298.8 x 224.8 cm). Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. *Page 223*



213. *Untitled (Hands and Kitchen Utensils)*, from the Raster series. 1984. Gelatin silver print, 49" x 9' 6" (124.5 x 289.6 cm). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Accessions Committee Fund: gift of Doris and Donald Fisher, Evelyn Haas, Byron R. Meyer, Madeleine H. Russell, and Judy C. Webb. *Page 113*



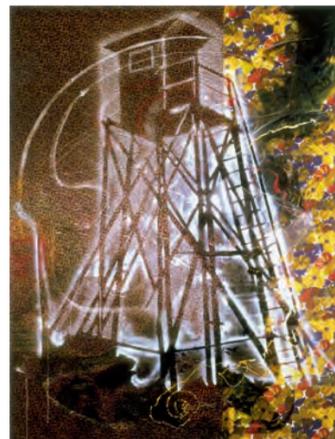
214. *Untitled (Hands and Stains)*, from the Raster series. 1984. Gelatin silver print, 41 1/4" x 8' 2 1/2" (104.8 x 249.2 cm). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Accessions Committee Fund: gift of Barbara and Gerson Bakar, Frances and John Bowes, Collectors Forum, Mimi and Peter Haas, and Leanne B. Roberts



219. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. 1985. Dispersion paint on felt, 19 1/16" x 15 1/4" (50 x 40 cm). Inge Rodenstock, Grünwald



220. *Color (Farbe)*. c. 1986–92. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 60:03 min. Private collection. *Pages 8, 133*



215. *Watchtower (Hochsitz)*. 1984. Synthetic polymer paints and dry pigment on fabric, 9' 10" x 7' 4 1/2" (300 x 224.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fractional and promised gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder. *Page 220*



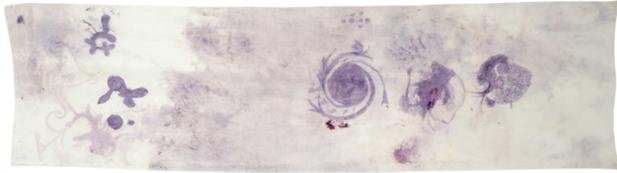
216. *Watchtower (Hochsitz)*. 1984. Enamel paint on bubble wrap, 9' 10 1/2" x 7' 4 1/16" (300 x 225 cm). IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Generalitat. *Page 221*



221. *Police Pig (Polizeischwein)*. 1986. Acrylic on canvas, 9' 10 1/8" x 7' 4 1/16" (302 x 225 cm). Private collection



222. *Printing Error (Druckfehler)*. 1986. Mixed mediums on fabric, 59 1/2" x 51 1/4" (151.1 x 130.2 cm). Nicolas Berggruen Charitable Trust



223. *Purple (Purpur)*. 1986. Tyrian purple on silk, 35 1/16" x 10' 7 1/16" (90 x 324 cm). Private collection. Pages 108–09



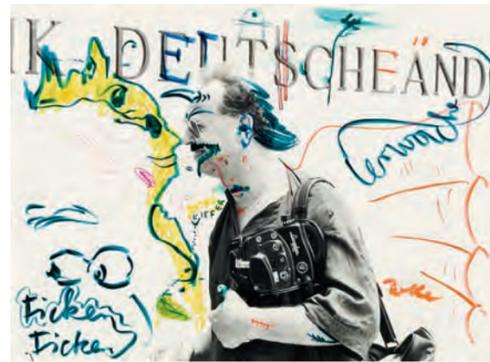
224. *Untitled*. 1986. Synthetic resin and pigment on canvas, 27 1/16" x 19 1/16" (69 x 50 cm). Collection Lauscher, Contemporary Art, Germany



229. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. 1986. Graphite in spirit lacquer on canvas, 19 7/8" x 15 3/4" (50.5 x 40 cm). Private collection, courtesy LEVY Galerie, Hamburg



230. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. 1986. Synthetic resin and pigment on canvas, 19 1/16" x 15 3/4" (50 x 40 cm). Collection Jürgen Becker



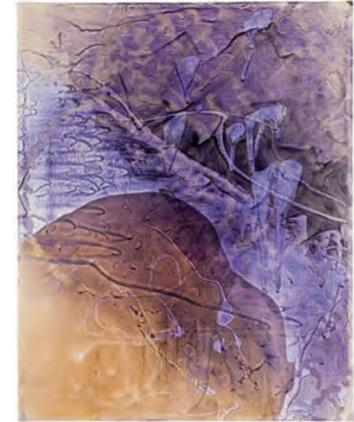
225. *Untitled (Biennale)*. 1986. Gelatin silver print with applied color, 11 1/16" x 16 1/8" (30 x 41 cm). Alison and Alan Schwartz, Toronto. Page 6



226. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. c. 1986. Acrylic, fluorescent paint, and resin on canvas, 19 1/16" x 15 3/4" (50 x 40 cm). Private collection



231. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. 1986. Synthetic resin, enamel, acrylic, and pigment on canvas, 19 1/16" x 15 3/4" (50 x 40 cm). Private collection



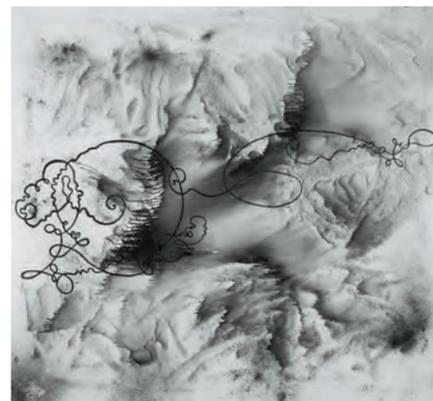
232. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. 1986. Synthetic resin and enamel coating on canvas, 19 1/16" x 15 3/4" (50 x 40 cm). Collection Susanna Hegewisch-Becker



227. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. 1986. Synthetic resin, pigment, and gloss paint on canvas, 19 3/4" x 16 1/4" (50.2 x 42.5 cm). Imago Holdings LLC



228. *Untitled (Color Experiment [Farbprobe])*. c. 1986. Red lead, resin, and silver on canvas, 23 1/16" x 19 1/16" (60.5 x 50 cm). Private collection



233. *Velocitas-Firmitudo*. 1986. Graphite, silver oxide, and damar resin on canvas, 7' 10 1/2" x 8' 6 1/2" (240 x 260.4 cm). The Charles Lafitte Foundation. Page 138



234. *Venice (Stemmler Chisels et al. [Stemmler stemmt et al.])*. 1986. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 42:08 min. Private collection



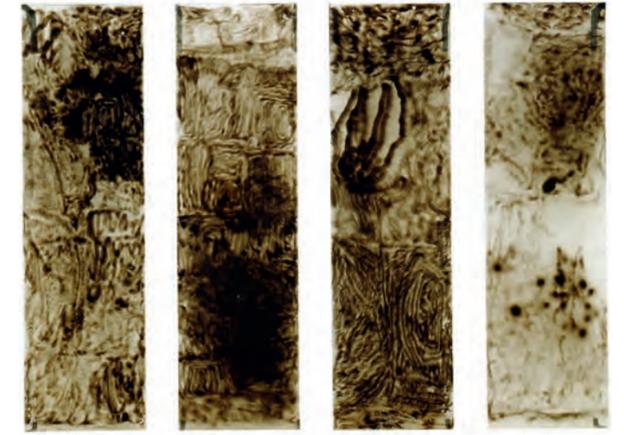
235. *Venice Biennale (Biennale Venedig)*. 1986. Gelatin silver print, 17 x 21" (43.2 x 53.3 cm). Collection Gordon VeneKlasen. *Page 45*



236. *Watchtower with Geese (Hochsitz mit Gänsen)*. 1987–88. Resin and acrylic on mixed fabrics, 9' 6 1/8" x 9' 6 1/8" (290 x 290 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Restricted gift in memory of Marshall Frankel; Wilson L. Mead Fund. *Page 227*



241. *Soot Paintings (Rußbilder)*. 1990. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 42:12 min. Private collection



242. Untitled. 1990. Soot on four glass panels, each: 11' 9 3/4" x 41 1/8" (360 x 104.9 cm). Private collection



237. *The Spirits That Lend Strength Are Invisible II (Meteor Extraterrestrial Material)*. 1988. Meteoric granulate and resin on canvas, 13' 1" x 9' 8" (398.8 x 244.6 cm). The Doris and Donald Fisher Collection. *Page 137*



238. *The Spirits That Lend Strength Are Invisible V (Otter Creek)*. 1988. Silver leaf, Neolithic tools, and synthetic resin on canvas, 9' 10 1/8" x 13' 1 1/2" (300 x 400 cm). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Purchase through a gift of Phyllis Watis and a gift of Frances and John Bowes



243. *Mrs. Autumn and Her Two Daughters (Frau Herbst und ihre zwei Töchter)*. 1991. Synthetic resin and acrylic on synthetic fabric, 9' 10" x 16' 4 1/8" (300 x 500 cm). Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Gift of Ann and Barrie Birks, Joan and Gary Capen, Judy and Kenneth Dayton, Joanne and Philip Von Blon, Penny and Mike Winton, with additional funds from the T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund



244. *Seeing Things as They Are (Die Dinge sehen wie sie sind)*. 1991. Synthetic resin and lacquer on polyester, 9' 10 1/8" x 7' 4 1/8" (300 x 225 cm). Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, Sammlung Garnatz. *Page 87*



239. Untitled. 1989. Video (color, sound), 4:02 min. Camera: Torsten Klein. Commissioned by Kunstkanal. Original telecast October 8, 1989, RTLplus. ZKM|Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Video collection



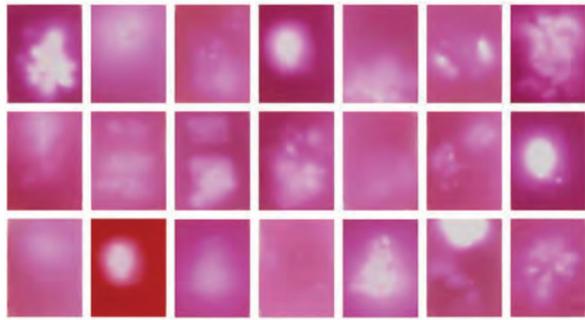
*240. *Britta's Pigs (Brittas Schweine)*. 1990. Digital print with acrylic on canvas, 10' 1/8" x 14' 3 1/4" (307 x 435 cm). Private collection



245. *Golden Mirror (Goldener Spiegel)*. 1992. Iron mica, pigment, and synthetic resin on canvas, 19 1/8" x 15 3/4" (50 x 40 cm). Private collection



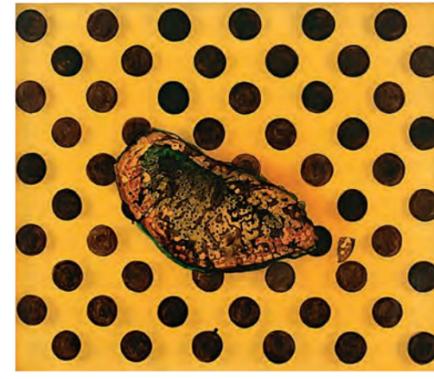
246. Untitled (*Sfumato*). 1992. Four-page insert in *Sigmar Polke: Sfumato*, catalogue for an exhibition at Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, page: 11 1/8" x 9 13/16" (28.1 x 24.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. *Page 110*



247. *Uranium (Pink) (Urangestein [Rosa])*. 1992. Twenty-one chromogenic color prints, each: 23 1/16 x 17 1/16" (59.2 x 44.9 cm). zL Zellweger Luwa Collection of Photography, Switzerland. *Page 54*



248. *Bulletproof Holidays (Kugelsichere Ferien)*. 1995. Artist's book with seventeen photolithographs, page: 11 1/16 x 8 1/16" (29.6 x 22.1 cm); spread: 11 3/8 x 17 3/4" (29.6 x 44.2 cm). Created for *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, no. 46 (November 17, 1965). Publisher: Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin, Munich. Edition: unknown. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Haus der Kunst. *Pages 52, 53*



253. *Salamander Stone (Salamanderstein)*. 1997. Enamel and thermal enamel on polyester, 51 1/16 x 59 1/16" (130 x 150 cm). Private collection, courtesy Michael Werner Gallery, New York. *Page 111*



254. *Untitled (Rorsebach)*. c. 1999. Colored ink in bound notebook, 192 pages, each: 11 3/8 x 8 1/16" (29.5 x 20.5 cm). Private collection



249. *The First Cut (Der erste Schnitt)*. 1995. Screenprint, comp.: 17 1/16 x 23 13/16" (43.3 x 60.5 cm); sheet: 21 1/8 x 29 1/2" (54.8 x 74.9 cm). Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg. Edition: 60. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Riva Castleman Endowment Fund



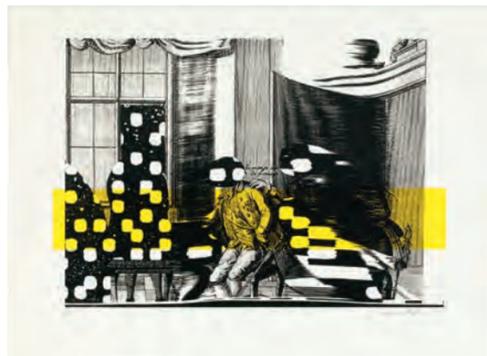
250. *The Second Fall (Der zweite Fall)*. 1995. Screenprint, comp.: 14 13/16 x 23 13/16" (38 x 60.8 cm); sheet: 21 1/8 x 29 1/2" (55 x 75 cm). Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg. Edition: 60. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Riva Castleman Endowment Fund



255. *Irradiated (Verstrahlt)*. 2000. Gouache on paper, 6' 6 3/4" x 59 1/16" (200 x 150 cm). Rheingold Collection. *Page 12*



256. *The Young Acrobat (Der junge Akrobat)*. 2000. Thirty photocopies, each: 16 1/4 x 11 1/4" (42.6 x 29.9 cm). Fergus McCaffrey, New York



251. *The Third Estate (Der dritte Stand)*. 1995. Screenprint, comp.: 16 1/8 x 24" (41.6 x 60.9 cm); sheet: 21 1/8 x 29 1/2" (54.9 x 75 cm). Publisher: Edition Staeck, Heidelberg. Edition: 60. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Riva Castleman Endowment Fund



*252. *Fear-Black Man (Furcht-schwarzer Mann)*. 1997. Synthetic resin and lacquer on polyester, 16' 4 7/8" x 9' 10 1/8" (500 x 300 cm). Private collection, London



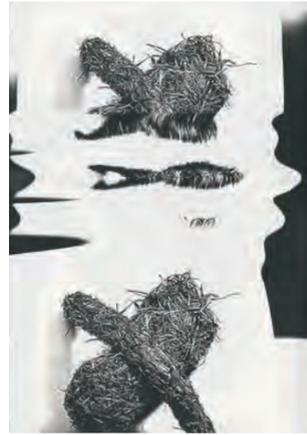
257. *Untitled*. 2000. Four-channel slide projection, 320 slides, dimens. variable. Private collection. *Pages 92, 93*



258. *The Hunt for the Taliban and Al Qaeda (Die Jagd auf die Taliban und Al Qaida)*. 2002. Digital print on tarpaulin, 21' 4 3/16" x 16' 1 1/8" (651 x 490.5 cm). Private collection. *Page 56*



259. *Season's Hottest Trend*. 2003. Mixed fabrics, 9' 10 1/8" x 16' 4 7/8" (300 x 500 cm). Private collection. Page 236



260. *Daphne (ΔΑΦΝΗ)*. 2004. Artist's book, page: 16 1/16 x 11 7/16" (41.5 x 29 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. Page 233



265. *Untitled*. c. 2009-10. Ink in bound notebook, 380 pages, each: 11 5/8 x 7 1/16" (29.5 x 20.2 cm). Private collection



261. *Untitled*. 2006. Lacquer on paper, 6' 6 3/4" x 59" (200 x 149.9 cm). Private collection



262. *The Illusionist (Der Illusionist)*. 2007. Gel medium and acrylic on fabric, 7' 2 1/2" x 9' 10 1/2" (220 x 300 cm). Jennifer and John Eagle and The Rachofsky Collection. Page 72

WORKS BY OTHER ARTISTS



266. Lutz Mommartz. *The Beautiful Signar (Der schöne Signar)*. 1971. 8mm film transferred to video (color, sound), 25 min. Courtesy the artist



267. Bernd Jansen. *Willich (Polke in Python Skin) (Willich [Polke in Pythonhaut])*. 1973. Seven gelatin silver prints, each: 14 1/8 x 9 1/16" (36.5 x 25 cm). Joint loan of Beatrice von Bismarck, Dorothee Böhm, Petra Lange-Berndt, Kathrin Rottmann, Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Michael Liebelt, and Dietmar Rübel. Page 71



263. *Seeing Rays (Strahlen Sehen)*. 2007. Gel medium and acrylic on fabric, 47 1/4 x 53 1/16" (120 x 137 cm). The Lambrecht-Schadeberg Collection/Winners of the Rubens Prize of the City of Siegen in the Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen. Page 58



*264. *Untitled*. 2007. Acrylic and interference color on four canvases, each: 7' 10 1/2" x 6' 6 1/4" (240 x 200 cm). Cranford Collection, London. Page 142



268. Britta Zöllner with Astrid Heibach. *The Rainbow Serpent: Entering a New Inner Space, a New Inner Time*. 1980-81/2013. 8mm film transferred to video (color, silent), approx. 60 min. Courtesy Britta Zöllner



269. Jacqueline Burckhardt and Bice Curiger. *Signar Polke—Windows for the Grossmünster in Zurich (Signar Polke—Fenster für das Grossmünster in Zürich)*. 2014. Digital slide show. Commissioned by The Museum of Modern Art, New York



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