

Munich, 20. October 2020

GERMAN POP – THOMAS BAYRLE, K.H. HÖDICKE, JÖRG IMMENDORFF, SIGMAR POLKE, GERHARD RICHTER

3 November 2020 - 30 April 2022, Ground Level

K.H. Hödicke, who along with Jörg Immendorff, Sigmar Polke, Georg Baselitz and Gerhard Richter is one of the most important representatives of German post-war painting, is honoring Munich museums with major donation. A five-part work is going to the Sammlung Moderne Kunst in the Pinakothek der Moderne and can be seen there immediately. Six other works are going to Museum Brandhorst, which is now showing them as part of the exhibition "Spot On: German Pop."

Born in Nuremberg in 1938, Karl Horst Hödicke is at the center of post-war German painting: he played a formative role from his beginnings in gestural abstraction in the 1950s to his involvement with Pop Art, his conceptual pictorial designs in the 1970s and right up to his neo-expressive phase. Since moving to Berlin in 1957, Hödicke has experienced at first hand Berlin's eventful history – the building of the Berlin Wall, the Cold War, and reunification – and incorporated it into his paintings. Before that, he spent the formative years of his childhood and youth in Munich. He is now honoring the museums of the city of his childhood with the donation of key works.

"I spent important years of my childhood and youth in Munich," the artist explains. "Here, the rush of colors of the 'Blaue Reiter' group impressed me during many visits to the Lenbachhaus. In addition, I was also thrilled by the painterly freedom of the old masters in the Pinakothek. The experiences from Munich always accompanied my own artistic work, and so I am very pleased now to be able to supplement the outstanding inventory of German painting in the Munich collections with some of my works."

The Modern Art Collection at the Pinakothek der Moderne will receive the five-part work "Jäger und Gejagter im deutschen Wald" ("Hunter and Hunted in the German Forest") from 1972, which is one of K. H. Hödicke's major works. Painted in 1972, the monumental work unites key features of his artistic oeuvre as a whole: the simultaneity of the sublime and the banal, of humor and profound seriousness. Deliberate references to Abstract Expressionism, Op Art, or Andy Warhol's cult of superficiality are unmistakable. The ironic exaggeration is reminiscent of the laconic pictorial wit of Sigmar Polke. He painted the polyptych in his thirties, under the impression of a conflict-ridden atmosphere in Germany, which was characterized by the guilt-ridden silence of an older generation and the vociferous criticism of imperialism and authority structures by a younger one. Within a few years, the student protest movement developed into the "armed struggle" of radicalized groups. In Hödicke's painting, "hunter" and "hunted" hide from each other in a camouflage forest, barely tangible, barely distinguishable. The military tarpaulin that bears the picture, cut up and glued together anew, is like a conundrum – an entirety and a fragment in equal measure.

Bernhard Maaz, the General Director of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Painting Collections), expressed his deep gratitude to K.H. Hödicke for the donation, which fits perfectly into the collection, emphasizing: "With 'Jäger und Gejagter im deutschen Wald,' this great work by Karl Horst Hödicke oscillates between forest idyll and 'Republikflucht' trauma. It joins a group of significant works in the Modern Art Collection that touch on 20th century history and violence:

Georg Baselitz's 'Adler,' Gerhard Richter's 'Stukas,' or Eugen Schönebeck's 'Rotarmisten' revolve around war and struggle as experiences of life and suffering."

Over the past decades, outstanding works of "German Pop" have been acquired for the Museum Brandhorst collection. The most recent examples are Jörg Immendorff's "Teine Tunst mache" and Thomas Bayrle's "Vasarely" (both 1965). The group of six early paintings by K.H. Hödicke fits perfectly into this environment. The artist is donating to Museum Brandhorst the works "Reportage" from 1961, "6,90 reine Wolle" from 1965, "Hinterhof (Himmel über Schöneberg)" from 1973, "Die Ampel steht auf Rot (Rote Pfütze)" from 1975, "Karfunkelstein" from 1973, and "U-Bahn" from 1964. All of K.H. Hödicke's works are now on display at Museum Brandhorst as part of "Spot On: German Pop" from October 20, 2020 to April 30, 2022.

One example is the painting "U-Bahn," created in Berlin in 1964. After his abstract early work, it marks the "desperate attempt to become representational." Around the centrally placed blue and white subway sign are crowded impressions of urban bustle that Hödicke collected on his walks near the Kurfürstendamm. We see the door of a passing subway car, excerpts of store signs ("Automaten-Buffet") and barriers. As if to also underscore materially the industrialization of the everyday world, Hödicke has glued shiny strips of aluminum paper into the picture. The mixture of drawing, painting, and assemblage thus adds up to an "action collage" of Berlin city life between fascination and alienation.

The generous donation is also a tribute to the city of Munich, as Michael Hering, director of the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, points out: "In the context of the recent exhibition 'K.H. Hödicke – A Retrospective' at the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, the artist's important donation to the Munich Collections of Modern Art once again represents a 'homecoming' for Karl Horst Hödicke. Munich is the city where Hödicke spent a happy childhood and youth after the Second World War, before he was drawn to Berlin in 1959. Here, as one of the spokesmen of a small group of youthful lateral thinkers at the university there, he was to revolutionize academic painting and become one of the leading painterly figures of his generation."

#MBGermanPop
#MuseumBrandhorst

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