
Potsdam, July 3, 2017

Museum Barberini exhibits abstract works by Gerhard Richter from the 1960s to the present in 2018

Exhibition

Gerhard Richter: Abstraction

June 30 to October 7, 2018

The exhibition *Gerhard Richter: Abstraction* examines for the first time the abstract strategies and processes found in the complete works of the artist. The show was inspired by a work held by the Museum Barberini and brings together around 80 pieces from international museums and private collections.

Since the 1960s, Gerhard Richter has understood painting to be a continuum, a framework to hold together the disruptions of the 20th century. Abstraction and realism divided East and West during the Cold War. Richter, who was confronted with the parameters set by Social Realism during his studies in Dresden, became acquainted with the tradition of abstract painting and the renunciation of painting in the Fluxus movement and performance art at the Düsseldorf art academy after moving to West Germany.

Already in his early work during the 1960s, Gerhard Richter had begun to call painting into question, an exploration that continues to occupy him to this day. He transformed documents from his family history, as well as contemporary documents and the latest newspaper images into black and white paintings. In his series of gray paintings in the 1970s, he reacted to the rejection of painting in monochromatic works. He viewed the color gray also as an opportunity to address political themes without depicting them in an idealized manner.

In his "Inpainting" series from the 1970s, Richter made the application of paint and brushstrokes the subject of his images. In other works, he photographed small details from his palette and transferred them in a photorealist manner to large canvases. In his color charts from the 1970s he left the proximity of the colors to chance and subjected painting to an objective process. Since 1976, Richter has created a group of abstract works by applying paint with brush, scraper, and palette knife in an alternating process of conscious decision-making and random chance. These works now form the majority of his oeuvre.

This exhibition is being held in cooperation with the Gerhard Richter Archive of the Dresden State Art Collections. Exhibition curators are Dietmar Elger, Gerhard Richter Archive, and Ortrud Westheider, Museum Barberini.

On November 29, 2017 the Museum Barberini will hold its fifth conference to prepare the exhibition catalogue. Contributors include Hubertus Butin, Dietmar Elger, and Ortrud Westheider.

Museum Barberini

The Museum Barberini opened in January 2017 to major public interest. By May 28, 2017, 320,000 visitors had viewed the opening exhibitions on Impressionism and Modern Art Classics.

From 2013 to 2016, the Hasso Plattner Stiftung reconstructed the Barberini Palace, which houses the museum, in the historic center of Potsdam.

Under its director Dr. Ortrud Westheider, the Museum Barberini shows exhibitions which focus on individual themes, artists, and eras in cooperation with international art institutes.

The point of departure for presentations ranging from the Old Masters into the 21st century is the collection of SAP co-founder Prof. Dr. h.c. mult. Hasso Plattner. The collection consists of art from the former East Germany and painting after 1989, as well as art historical masterpieces. Impressionist works by Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir are represented alongside modern art classics and American abstract art, with paintings by artists such as Max Liebermann, Edward Munch, Joan Mitchell, and Gerhard Richter.

Current exhibition

From Hopper to Rothko: America's Road to Modern Art

In cooperation with The Phillips Collection, Washington, D. C. the Museum Barberini is presenting its first international project, which is on display through October 3, 2017. The exhibition *From Hopper to Rothko: America's Road to Modern Art* examines the development of American art from Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism. For this exhibition, The Phillips Collection has sent 68 works of early American modernism to Germany for the first time.

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