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Gerhard Richter: Abstraction

First exhibition of a contemporary artist in Museum Barberini

June 30 to October 21, 2018

Gerhard Richter's work has been honored in major retrospectives: in 2002 the Museum of Modern Art, New York, dedicated a solo exhibition to him. In 2011, the Tate Modern, London, the New National Gallery of the National Museums in Berlin, and the Centre Pompidou, Paris, showed a presentation that in its title *Panorama* already named the broad view of Richter's life's work. Like these exhibitions, *Gerhard Richter: Abstraction* in the Barberini Museum, she covers the great arc from the 1960s to new works. For the first time, it is devoted to a central theme for Richter's painting: abstract strategies and procedures in the artist's oeuvre as a whole.

The show is based on a work from the collection of the Barberini Museum and brings together over 90 works, some of which have not yet been exhibited, from international museum and private collections. It shows Richter's development from the black-and-white photographic images and color plates to the cut-outs, the grey images, and the painting on to the abstract images, as Richter often called his paintings from the late 1970s with their brush, squeegee, and spatula traces in the application of paint. In the range of variations of the most diverse groups of works, elements become recognizable that run through the entire work.

"Abstraction is a red thread through Richter's painting. As erratic and multiform as it seemed to some contemporaries when switching between different work phases, his work developed consistently as a constant continuation and transformation of abstraction," explains Ortrud Westheider, director of the Museum Barberini. "Through the calculated inclusion of chance, Richter takes back the conscious control of the painting process. He works with raster structures, behind which the creative takes a backseat, or he uses a squeegee to move across the entire picture surface. He avoids creative pathos and meanings that lie outside the realm of art; the pictures thus work through themselves.

The exhibition, curated by Dietmar Elger, director of the Gerhard Richter Archive at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, was created in close collaboration with Gerhard Richter. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive programme of events and information, including lectures, guided tours, concerts and films.

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