VAN DER GRINTEN GALERIE



Sigmar Polke

Sigmar Polke, Works on Paper from 1999, 2002 and 2003

06.11.2024–11.01.2025

Van der Grinten Galerie
Ackerstraße 144
40233 Düsseldorf

VAN GRINTEN
DER GALERIE

Visitors to the exhibition will be aware that Sigmar Polke had a very unconventional approach to painting. The 9 works on paper that we are pleased to show here for the first time as a group are a wonderful example of this. Painted in the years 1999, 2002 and 2003, the works measure 100 x 70 cm, the paper format typically used by Polke.
Typical of the artist as well is the combination of various painting media, including spray paint, silkscreen, ink, watercolors and interference colors. These combinations unite disparate elements and provide the fundamental insight that the background of a painting and its motif can, indeed, work in divergent directions without causing the picture to fragment into isolated constituent parts or to collapse under the weight of mutually disruptive effects. Nevertheless, in each instance Polke always explores anew the broad scope of painting techniques and materials, allowing the viewer to participate in the process of play and discovery. This opportunity to participate is truly enriching.

In this group of works we find figurative as well as abstract motifs, and, of course, the combination of both. The abstract paintings are "pourings", a process, like his grids, both painted and sprayed, that Polke deploys to perfection in these works, although the paintings also appear to be quite spontaneous and almost ingenuous. Polke took a calculated tack to just letting things happen, although higher powers always have a hand in, too, at the very least. His critique of the painting consists of asserting its true nature as a magical event.

"*Polke's painting*", writes Benjamin Buchloh, "*disputes that painting has a right to celebrate itself, conceding, at best, its right to ask questions, those that can, in fact, only be posed in the language of form and symbol.*" Despite all the obvious irony Polke always takes a decidedly serious approach to the work.

•••

Sigmar Polke was born in 1941 in Oels/Silesia. After relocation to Düsseldorf in 1953 and an apprenticeship in glass painting, he studied art from 1961 to 1967 at the Staatlichen Kunstakademie Düsseldorf under Gerhard Hoehme and Karl-Otto Goetz. In 1963, together with Konrad Fischer-Lueg and Gerhard Richter, he founded the Capitalist Realism art movement. From 1977 until 1991 Poke was a professor at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg. Sigmar Polke died in Cologne in 2010. Among the numerous prizes and honors awarded him, Polke was the recipient of the Golden Lion at the 1986 Venice Biennale.