

Anton Kern Gallery

Georg Baselitz: *Drawings*

Opening January 13, extended hours from 6-8pm

Kindly note masks and proof of vaccination are required for entry.

For Immediate Release

A drawing is always naked. — Georg Baselitz

For the first time in its twenty-five-year history, Anton Kern Gallery is dedicating a solo exhibition to the work of Georg Baselitz. A painter, sculptor, printmaker and draughtsman, Georg Baselitz is one of Germany's most celebrated living artists, with a distinguished career spanning over sixty years.

Made from memory in one sitting over the summer of 2021, the thirteen experimental and dynamic compositions in red and black India ink reconsider past bodies of work in addition to specific, individual images. Some are loosely based on the seminal portrait of Baselitz's wife, *Portrait of Elke I* (1969), which marked the beginning of the artist's inversion of his images and was recently donated by the artist to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. His choice to rework *Elke* repeatedly over the years in the same familiar poses represents an ever-renewing declaration of love, as well as an intimate reflection on change and stability, on the inevitability of ageing, and on the function of portraiture. New self-portraits and depictions of Elke are on view alongside a drawing derived from the well-known painting *Schlafzimmer (Bedroom)* (1975).

Diverging from his recent black ink drawings, the vibrant flesh-red palette of many of the new works is inspired by Henri Rousseau's 1895 lithograph *La Guerre (The War)* and intensifies the fragility and sensuousness of these portraits.

These new works are a vivid reminder that drawing has always been at the core of Baselitz's practice, the line functioning as the seismograph of the artist's attitude towards image and motif. Taking a look back at ink works from the late 1950s and early 1960s, the profound influence of French poet, dramatist and visual artist Antonin Artaud, a kindred spirit of sorts, becomes instantly evident. It was out of this investigation that Baselitz developed his unique definition of the role of the artist in society, while simultaneously inventing a deeply original language of drawing and painting. These early motifs were drawn in bold, gnarly lines and high contrast ink washes, held together in bouncy yet slightly unsteady and restless compositions. Now, Baselitz directs the same existential rigor towards himself and his own oeuvre. The lines, drawn with an ink-wet brush and an almost weightless stroke, allow the liquid to pool and follow the pull of gravity or the blow of air, seemingly trailing an invisible compositional grid, substituting for any indication of background or space. Elke and Georg Baselitz appear and disappear out of the thicket of drawn ink, and even, in a dazzling use of color, to bleed in raw redness.



Georg Baselitz, *Ohne Titel*, 2021
Ink on paper
35 7/8 x 29 1/4 inches (91.1 x 74.3 cm)

The contours, the *disegno*, of the human figures are fragmentary, tremulous, but also, at times, fluid and very much alive. This new series is an uncompromising self-investigation of an artist in his 84th year. No outside existential spark is needed. It has been replaced by a lifetime of art making stripped bare.

For additional images and information, please contact: press@antonkerngallery.com.

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday
10am – 6pm

Press Inquiries

press@antonkerngallery.com

General Inquiries

info@antonkerngallery.com