

Petzel

GEORG HEROLD

November 6 – December 20, 2019

Opening Reception: Wednesday, November 6th, 6–8pm

35 East 67th Street

Petzel Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of paintings and sculptures by German artist Georg Herold from the late 1980's, in many cases on view for the first time in New York. The exhibition will run from November 6 to December 21 and marks the artist's third solo show at Petzel and his first at the gallery's Upper East Side location.

Rejecting traditional materials, Herold creates sculptures, assemblages and wall-based 'drawings' using commonplace items such as bricks, baking powder, wood lath, vodka bottles, buttons, electrical cords, underwear and mattresses usually altering them very little, if at all. As Herold said in 1988, "my choice of materials is not subject to any conscious esthetic criteria. The materials must merely be able to absorb and transport my ideas. I do not use materials that speak their own language as a matter of principle. This is why I seek out 'stupid, unplanned' material that does not raise any questions."

Herold has maintained a deeply irreverent approach to art throughout his 40 year career, what *The New Yorker* called in 2009, "slapstick formalism." Often political, his work engages with socio-cultural issues and art history yet denies any simple reading. Be it an empty frame holding not a canvas but rather latticed with wooden strips bearing Cyrillic inscriptions and the title *Russische Schweiz (Russian Switzerland)* stamped on the top stretcher; or a painting titled *G.O.E.L.R.O.* (initials of the Russian name for Lenin's 1920 plan for the electrification of Russia) made up of two yellow extension cords haphazardly attached to an unworking electrical socket—his work quite purposefully defies categorization and challenges the artistic status quo.

It has often been said that finding a single interpretation or mood in Herold's work is nearly impossible, remaining intentionally ambiguous at all times. A risky maneuver, the efforts could all too quickly be rendered meaningless but it is in this tension between minimalism and absurdity that his work makes its impact. The use of materials, mixed with sharp wit, humor, and clear deliberation embeds the work with a refreshing tone of honesty. As curator John Caldwell once noted, "we look at Herold's work as if traveling with him to the edge of the abyss, and then, reassured by laughter as well as his obvious seriousness and skill, rediscover that the ground, though crumbling, is still under our feet" (San Francisco Museum of Art, 1990).

Georg Herold was born in Jena, Germany in 1947. In the mid and late 70s he studied at the Academy of Fine Art in Munich and at the Academy of Fine Art in Hamburg. He began studying under Sigmar Polke in Hamburg and, while there, became friends and collaborators with Werner Büttner, Martin Kippenberger and Albert Oehlen, among others, cultivating an "art punk" ethos. He has held a professorship at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf since 1999. Herold currently lives and works in Cologne.

His most recent solo exhibitions include Galerie Bärbel Grässlin, Frankfurt (2019, on view through November 2nd); Gerhardsen Gerner, Oslo (2019); Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin (2018); Kunstmuseum Bonn (2017); Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2012); Floating Lab, Kunstverein, Freiburg (2011); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2007) and the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent (2007). Works by Herold are to be found in a number of private and public collections.

Petzel Gallery is located on the third floor of 35 East 67th Street between Madison and Park Avenues, New York. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.