

GAGOSIAN



GEORG BASELITZ

Years later

Opening reception: Thursday, May 21, 5–8pm

May 21–August 8, 2020

7/F Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

Georg Baselitz's studio, Ammersee, Germany, 2019. Artwork © Georg Baselitz. Photo: Ealan Wingate

May 8, 2020

Art is visceral and vulgar—it's an eruption.

—Georg Baselitz

Gagosian is pleased to present *Years later*, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Georg Baselitz. This is his first solo exhibition with the gallery in Hong Kong. Significantly, it is also the first exhibition to open to the public within our international network of galleries since the global COVID-19 lockdown. We are grateful to once again be able to present physical artworks in an exhibition conceived specifically for the Hong Kong gallery and its context, and we look forward to welcoming the public back to view and celebrate the work of a great living master.

An early pioneer of the Neo-Expressionist movement that had its origins in postwar Germany, Baselitz combines a vigorous and direct approach to art making with a sensitivity to art historical lineages. He counts Willem de Kooning and Philip Guston among his key influences, and is known for his uncompromising approach and critical stance. In 1969, he began to compose his images upside down to slow the processes of making, looking, and comprehending. Over the past fifty years, often referring to and reinterpreting his own body of work, he has further augmented his

visual language with a range of formal and historical allusions yet has consistently returned to the human figure as his central motif.

This exhibition is focused on a set of thirteen large oil paintings that Baselitz made using a “contact-printing” technique related to the one applied in his series, *What if...* (2019), which was exhibited at Gagosian San Francisco earlier this year. To create each new black-and-gold painting he uses a stencil to render inverted figures on blank canvas, painting just the panel’s background to generate bold negative silhouettes. Against this ground he presses a black canvas, lifting this second support to produce an image distinguished by a slightly softer look than those made more directly. The hybrid result not only stresses medium over image, but is also distinguished by an element of unpredictability that bespeaks freedom and vitality. In a single painting in pink, the figures are rendered without a stencil as positive images.

With part of their material substance surrendered to the transfer technique, the works in *Years later* incorporate a palpable sense of organic change and variation; they juxtapose traces of Baselitz’s haptic intervention with marks derived specifically from the contact-printing process. This lends their surfaces a specific tension, while the play of subtle similarities and differences from one panel to the next adds a dynamic rhythm to the series as a whole—a nod to the idea of the human frame in motion. As one image begets another, the figures become less and less distinct and gradually merge with their backgrounds, dissolving subject into context, humanity into reality at large. In these paintings, the dark, chaotic nature of this reality finds its full expression.

A fully illustrated catalogue with a foreword by Zeng Fanzhi and an essay by Lu Mingjun will accompany the exhibition.

Georg Baselitz was born in Deutschbaselitz, Germany, and lives and works between Ammersee, Germany; Basel, Switzerland; Imperia, Italy; and Salzburg, Austria. Collections include Tate, London; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Kunsthaus Zürich; Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Switzerland; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Recent exhibitions include the 56th Biennale di Venezia (2015); *The Heroes*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2016, traveled to Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome; and Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain, through 2017); *Preview with Review*, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest (2017); *Works on Paper*, Kunstmuseum Basel (2018); *Six Decades*, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Switzerland (2018, traveled to Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC); *Corpus Baselitz*, Musée Unterlinden, Colmar, France (2018); and *Academy*, Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice (2019). In 2019, Baselitz was elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in France. A major retrospective of Baselitz’s work will be presented at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in 2021.

#BaselitzYearsLater

A Note to Our Visitors

The gallery will reopen in compliance with the Hong Kong government’s health guidelines regarding social distancing and visitor and staff protection.

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