

## Arnulf Rainer

### *Res Arcana*

10 May - 13 July 2023

Exhibition opening on Wednesday 10 May at 6pm

Librairie - 13 rue de Téhéran  
75008 Paris



*Knicke*, 1989-2023  
Engraving, 25 copies 53 x 65 cm  
© Arnulf Rainer / Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

After turning his back on surrealism at the end of the 1940s, the Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer, born in 1929, moved towards a style of painting that took the radicalism and violence of expressionism and pushed them to the extreme. Considered a pioneer of the Art Informel movement (Informalism), at the turn of the 1960s he developed a practice that was to become his "signature": Übermalung (overpainting or overcovering).

The process he uses in creating his engravings, for instance, is part and parcel of this approach of annihilation and overcovering. In a process suggestive of a kind of alchemical mysticism, the artist uses his body to alter the metal plate. He attacks the varnished copper (on which an image was sometimes transferred) with drypoint, then bites it with acid. The operation could be repeated several times, resulting in increasingly re-covered engraving states. Arnulf Rainer's work bears the stigmata of this mechanical ritual and uses its specific qualities to deliver a work that the artist himself defines as "complex and ambiguous". However, between the lacerations, the artist leaves gaps of white to break through; a breath that sublimates the frenzy of the overcovering.

His latest "Überradierungen" (over-engravings), published by Lelong Editions, will be exhibited at the bookshop alongside some unique works on paper and a selection of older engravings. It is a way for the artist to confront us with the unspeakable: it is up to us to try to detect what is hidden in them.

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