KARL HORST HÖDICKE
BILDER AUS DEM DESSAUER TURM

KÖNIG GALERIE | VAULT
13 NOVEMBER 2026 – 21 JANUARY 2027

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present the exhibition BILDER AUS DEM DESSAUER TURM by Karl Horst Hödicke in the Vault at St. Agnes. This is the artist's seventh exhibition at the gallery.

The exhibition title refers to the nickname Hödicke once gave to the building on Dessauer Straße in Berlin, where he lived and worked for decades. Located near Potsdamer Platz, close to the Wall, it was for a long time the only remaining building in the area, standing like a tower amid an otherwise desolate urban landscape.

It was here that Hödicke created the portraits of Berlin for which he is best known: paintings of the city's nightlife, with its dazzling characters and glowing neon signs, its ever-present construction sites and iconic buildings. Few artists have captured Berlin, with its scars as well as its unmistakable vitality, through a visual language as distinctive as Hödicke's.

The exhibition in the Vault now focuses on paintings that turn the viewer's gaze toward the interior life of the "tower". These works also reflect Hödicke's approach to painting, which he once described as depicting everything that came "right under his nose". With this statement, he underscored his rejection of postwar abstraction, a stance that ultimately established him as one of the most significant and pioneering artists of the New Figuration movement in Germany. He wanted to bring real life, often mundane and unfiltered, onto the canvas. As a result, he found subjects worthy of painting not only in the city but also in his domestic surroundings, with his family, and while traveling. These subjects hold an equally important place in his oeuvre. He scoured his surroundings for motifs and portrayed the world radically as he saw it in everyday life. As such, the exhibition includes paintings from the 2001 series "Küche und Klo", in which the subject matter could hardly be more ordinary or mundane: a collander and a fried egg are depicted in bold colors. These works convey a humorous sense of lightness and affection for the everyday.

The exhibition also features floral paintings, including yellow tulips against a black background, a motif Hödicke explored in several versions throughout his career. Here, the painter also engages with purely painterly concerns, such as the contrast between black and yellow.

Hödicke was an extraordinarily prolific painter. He worked quickly and in order to make this pace of creation possible financially, particularly at the beginning of his career, he initially used homemade binder paints instead of oil paints, later turning to commercially available acrylic and polyester resin paints from hardware stores. This approach is also evident in his brushwork, which is expressive and energetic. His paintings radiate a powerful sense of vitality and force. A work that illustrates this particularly well is "der Sohn des Artisten + der Elvira (für Elvira)". The large-format painting is rendered in a limited palette of warm orange and brown tones. Part of the canvas has been left white, revealing running paint and splatters. The painting depicts a woman lying on her back, balancing her child on the soles of her feet, which are raised in the air. The title tells us that the figures are Hödicke's wife, Elvira, and their son, Jonas. The baby looks out of the painting toward the viewer, or toward the painter, his father. With rapid brushstrokes, the painting captures this fleeting, intimate, and playful moment.

The same motif appears several times throughout Hödicke's oeuvre, including in his sculptures. A small bronze example is also included in the exhibition.

A third medium represented in the exhibition is gouache. This body of work is extensive and was the subject of a retrospective exhibition organized by the Staatliche Graphische Sammlungen in Munich in 2020, followed by an exhibition at the Palais Populaire in Berlin.

KÖNIG GALERIE

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OPENING TIMES
Tuesday – Sunday 11 am – 6 pm
and by appointment

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