ALMINE RECH

Konferenz
Baselitz, Immendorff, Lüpertz, Penck

on view from 16 May 2026 | Kunstmuseum Schloss Derneburg, Holle, Germany

Comprised of over 50 significant works by Georg Baselitz, Jörg Immendorff, Markus Lüpertz and A.R. Penck, the exhibition joins four celebrated post-war German artists with unique and groundbreaking methods of exploring national identity during a time of political fracture. Critically intertwined after a period of simultaneous representation by gallerist Michael Werner, each artist rejected any fidelity to a specific style, and together offer a broad understanding of generational concerns in the decades prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Konferenz... includes work from Baselitz's former collection of his contemporaries, supplemented with archival photographs by Edward Quinn taken during his visits to Baselitz in the 1980s when the artist lived and worked at Schloss Derneburg.

In his work, Jörg Immendorff often incorporated recognizable portraits of friends and colleagues, as well as historical figures, as a means of confronting authority both geopolitical and within the art world. The communal settings of his paintings – in theaters, cafés, galleries – gathered figures in active debate and suggests a worldview that required meeting together around a table. In the painting Konferenz über Plastik oder Anarchie in der Galerie (1985), Immendorff paints himself twice (seated and in the act of making sculpture) alongside Baselitz, Penck, and Werner. Made prior to a one-time collaborative event at Werner's gallery in 1989, Immendorff's painting represents a manifestation yet to be realized. In four Untitled drawings made by Immendorff the following year, each artist is symbolized as a different season (Immendorff as Spring, Lüpertz as Summer, Baselitz as Fall, and Penck as Winter).

During the 1980s, Georg Baselitz continued his pursuit of new images, breaking from the representational portraits and landscapes made in the previous decade. Within Immendorff's portraits, Baselitz is often depicted with an open palm holding a miniature sculpture turned on its head, a reference to Baselitz's iconic compositional and conceptual innovation of inverting his motifs, an approach that defied ideological allegiance to any one style. In the painting Ciao America II (1988), yellow birds painted in limited strokes are seemingly contained only by the structure of the image, filling the canvas to its margins between horizontal crosshatched bands in black suggestive of an aviary. Baselitz's interpretation strays in color and form, pursuing an all-over image with no dominant focal point, central motif or sense of depth. The selection of Baselitz's work will include landscape, portraiture and still life from the same period, some of which were created and first presented at Schloss Derneburg, Baselitz's home and studio for thirty years.

Markus Lüpertz, who Immendorff often depicted in harlequin-patterned clothing, built an early iconography around a poetic symbolism of helmets, railways, and tree stumps. His earliest paintings embraced a flattened pictorial space partially due to economically available dispersion paint. By the 1980s Lüpertz was working more often in oil, but with an eye towards European modernism. Sechs Bilder aus dem Leben eines Dichters: IV. Ohne Titel (1981) is a still life that displays a cubist sense of composition and collage, while the title suggests a continuation of the artist's passion for poetry. The painting is presented alongside a rarely exhibited group of drawings from the same period that highlight Lüpertz's innovation towards forms within a surreal landscape.

Since A.R. Penck emigrated from East Germany in 1980, he was an occasional guest at Schloss Derneburg. Like his colleagues, Penck was drawn early to a combination of figuration and abstraction as a conceptual means of addressing Germany's national divide. Baselitz and Lüpertz both met Penck early, while Werner helped smuggle his work from Dresden to be exhibited and sold. When Penck later met Immendorff, the two often collaborated with a focus on the cultural climate of the Cold War, and in Immendorff's portraits, Penck is routinely depicted with an iceberg. On the occasion of this exhibition, Penck's monumental wood totem Idol für Deutschland (1982) returns to Schloss Derneburg, where it was displayed in the building's entryway for many years during Baselitz's ownership. His large-scale sculptures symbolize a period when all four artists were celebrated and routinely exhibited together, collaboratively defining the zeitgeist both within Germany and internationally.