

Georg Baselitz Black Out Paintings

September 2 – November 28, 2015

McCabe Fine Art
Artillerigatan 40
114 45 Stockholm
Sweden

McCabe Fine Art is proud to present its first exhibition of work by German artist Georg Baselitz. Having gained notoriety and critical attention in the 1960s, Baselitz (b. 1938) is among the most successful artists to come out of Germany. Influenced by folk art as well as German Expressionism, Baselitz incorporates elements of both styles into a unique blend of figuration and abstraction. His Neo-Expressionist paintings, which often depict discombobulated or upside down figures, reflect complex and disorienting themes surrounding German identity in the post-World War II era. In particular, Baselitz himself is concerned with what it means to be a contemporary German artist.

The paintings to be on view at McCabe Fine Art are from Baselitz's "Collusion" series ("Verdunkelung," in German), which the artist began in 2008. The title of this series refers to the wartime practice of blacking out windows as a means of protection against enemy airstrikes. In each painting a sketchy white figure appears frail and ghostlike against a dark murky background. Drips and splatters of runny white paint erupt from these male nudes, recalling one of Baselitz's earliest and most well-known paintings: *The Big Night Down the Drain* (1962/63.) When exhibited as part of the artist's first solo show, this seminal work depicting a topless man holding his disproportionately large penis in his hand was deemed obscene. The painting was confiscated by the authorities, and Baselitz and his two dealers were fined. Typical of Baselitz's oeuvre, which includes paintings, sculptures and prints, the "Collusion" paintings conflate history (most often, as in this case, the darkness, despair, and vileness of World War II) with a reference to his own personal history.

Given Baselitz's strong connections to Nordic art and artists, it is important that a solo exhibition of his work is being held in Stockholm. Baselitz's subject matter, which features soldiers, forests, woodsman and animals, relates directly to traditional Nordic painting. Specifically, several late 19th century/early 20th century Nordic painters have had a great influence on the German artist. Foremost is Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Baselitz's great appreciation for whom is evidenced in his expressionistic style and haunting treatment of psychological themes. Baselitz's deep fascination with Munch has even manifested itself in the form of several portraits. In addition, Swedish artists from the same generation such as Carl Fredrik Hill (1849– 1911), Ernst Josephson (1851–1906), and August Strindberg (1849–1912) are important references for Baselitz. Since the beginning of his career Baselitz has returned again and again to paintings by Scandinavian artists for inspiration.

Georg Baselitz

Baselitz lives and work in Germany. Major retrospectives of his work have been held worldwide, including at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1983; traveled to Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and Kunsthalle Basel); Centre Pompidou, Paris (1993); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1995; traveled to Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, and Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1996); and Royal Academy of Arts, London (2007). Baselitz has represented Germany at the Venice Biennale (1980) and participated in Documenta 7 in Kassel, Germany (1982). Eight new large-scale works by Baselitz, which comprise his series titled *Fällt von der Wand nicht* (Doesn't Fall From the Wall), are exhibited at the Arsenale at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). He is also a professor at the Hochschule der Künste art academy in Berlin.

McCabe Fine Art

Noted art advisor, dealer and collector, Paul Frank McCabe, opened McCabe Fine Art in Stockholm, Sweden in 2013. An extension of his eighteen years of art market experience and connoisseurship, the beautifully renovated showroom in central Östermalm presents works by modern and contemporary masters as well as emerging talents. Through a program of curated, thematic and monographic exhibitions, McCabe Fine Art brings new voices to Scandinavia's dynamic international art scene.

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