

A.R. PENCK: PAINTINGS FROM THE EIGHTIES

Michael Werner Gallery is pleased to present A.R. Penck: Paintings from the Eighties, a selection of the artist's works created in the years immediately following his emigration to the West.

Throughout his career as an artist, A.R. Penck has continued to pursue an intense interest in systems, structures and the forces that govern them. The works in A.R. Penck: Paintings from the Eighties demonstrate the artist's ongoing search for a vital and contemporary visual expression of the social contradictions present in German society during that time. A.R. Penck addresses the relationships between individuals and society through his own deeply symbolic pictorial language, examining with wit, humor and painterly inventiveness the political and social structures that control them.

Through the use of a complex language of abstract forms and representational pictographs, painted with dispatch, the artist investigates systems of communication and information. The expressive, often primitive appearance of A.R. Penck's pictorial language masks his paintings' conceptual underpinnings. Information theories and behavioral sciences, cybernetics and science fiction, political and social philosophies—all are among the many subjects that fascinate A.R. Penck and drive his work in painting, drawing and sculpture.

Born Ralf Winkler in Dresden in 1938, A.R. Penck continued to live in East Germany until 1980. He has become one of the most influential artists of his generation, one whose prolific work in sculpture, painting, drawing, writing and music has drawn him international renown. A.R. Penck has numerous museum and gallery exhibitions to his credit and is represented in public and private collections throughout the United States and Europe. Last year, a major retrospective of his paintings, sculptures and artist's books was presented by Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Kunsthalle Kiel and the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris. An important group of early Standard paintings and sculptures will be included in a major exhibition of post-war German art, Art of Two Germanys/Cold War Cultures, opening in January 2009 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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