

Media release

Georg Baselitz

January 21 – April 29, 2018

The Fondation Beyeler is devoting its first exhibition in 2018 to the German painter, printmaker and sculptor Georg Baselitz (b. 1938 in Deutschbaselitz, Saxony), whose work occupies a central position in the art of our time. The exhibition, marking the artist's eightieth birthday, takes the form of an extensive retrospective, comprising many of the most important paintings and sculptures created by Baselitz over the past six decades. These include loans from renowned public and private collections in Europe and the USA, some of which have not been seen in public for many years. The exhibition begins at the end of January 2018 at the Fondation Beyeler and will be shown in the summer in a modified form at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. Baselitz exhibitions are rare events in Switzerland and the USA. The last monographic exhibition of Baselitz's work in Switzerland took place in 1990 at the Kunsthaus Zürich. In the USA, the present exhibition will be the first North American retrospective since the major show in 1995 at the Guggenheim Museum, which subsequently traveled to the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, and to further venues.

The focus of the exhibition is on Baselitz as an artist who is deeply rooted in the history of European and American painting, and who is seen as the originator of an outstandingly inventive pictorial language. His artistic idiom, which he has continued to develop and refine throughout his career, draws on a rich repertoire of iconographic and stylistic models, appropriated in ways that translate these disparate elements into multi-layered and ambivalent structures of meaning. Baselitz's artistic cosmos is like a hall of mirrors in which remembered and imagined images continually blend with art-historical models and precedents to form new compositions. In a world of digital and projected images, Baselitz is especially concerned with the sensuous quality of the work of art. Since his beginnings in the early 1960s, his work has consistently testified to the importance and affective power of painting. This is one of the reasons why his art has retained its freshness and contemporary appeal through the past decades.

The exhibition has been organized in close cooperation with the artist. In the choice of works and the manner of presentation, the guiding aim is to make visible the essence of Baselitz's oeuvre, through the juxtaposition of paintings and sculptures from every phase of his artistic development. The unique scope of his formal and thematic inventiveness becomes strikingly apparent in the chronological sequence of the works selected for the exhibition, bringing together visual worlds that may appear heterogeneous at first glance but exercise a collective fascination that keeps the viewer under an incessant spell. This experience plays a key part in ensuring that Baselitz's multifaceted art—even in the case of works created thirty or forty years ago—continues to pose an aesthetic and intellectual challenge.

The exhibition, devised for the Fondation Beyeler by Martin Schwander, curator at large, assembles some ninety paintings and twelve sculptures from the years 1959 to 2017. Key works from the 1960s are featured, with a selection of the *Hero* and *Fracture* paintings, such as *Various Signs*, together with examples of the inverted images—including *Portrait of Elke I*—for which Baselitz became famous in the 1970s. In addition to large-format wood sculptures, such as *Women of Dresden* and painted reliefs, the selection includes a number of pictures from the *Remix* series. Paintings and outdoor and indoor sculptures from the last two decades complete the survey of the work of a supremely original contemporary artist. The exhibition itinerary concludes with a new group of works created in the fall of 2017 and publicly displayed here for the first time.

The exhibition catalogue, published in German and English, reflects a range of perspectives on Baselitz's richly varied work, with new academic contributions from distinguished European and American authors.

In addition, the well-known German film-maker and author Alexander Kluge (b. 1932 in Halberstadt, Saxony-Anhalt) has created a film tribute to his artist friend Georg Baselitz, which will be receiving its premiere in our exhibition. A fifteen-minute film by Heinz Peter Schwerfel, made in the fall of 2017 and also shown for the first time in the exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler, provides insights into Baselitz's way of thinking and working.

In conjunction with the exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler, the Kunstmuseum Basel is presenting a selection of Baselitz's drawings.

#BaselitzBasel

The exhibition "Georg Baselitz" is supported by:

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Press images: are available for download at www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/media/press-images

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Fondation Beyeler opening hours: Monday to Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.