ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While some have imagined modernism as a march that progresses inevitably toward greater purity, a more protean choreography suggests itself at the end of the century when political and disciplinary boundaries blur and chaos is embraced as a scientific structure. Sigmar Polke is a great artist of the 20th century whose fabulous paintings, photographs, prints, and drawings help us picture the next. Like Picasso before him, he has reinvented art-making by multiplying its sources, possibilities, and materials. No style is either too high or too low to be sacrificed by Polke, and no urgent invention of picture-making escapes his intellectual radar or technical command.

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KATHY HALBREICH, DIRECTOR

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Because Sigmar Polke's work deliberately defies easy categorization or summary descriptive analysis, most discussions of it talk around the images rather than about them. In the paintings, prints, photographs, and sculpture, logical analysis is undermined at each step, exclusionary vision is fogged, and layering of image and meaning becomes so dense as to appear visually opaque. Yet, like Shakespeare's fools, Polke leads us to complex considerations of critical problems in a way both clairvoyant and seemingly obvious. If the complexity of his style has any meaning at all, it is about the challenging of facile viewing and the undermining of accepted notions about art. He told us as much in 1969 when he painted a black triangular area in the upper-right corner of an otherwise blank canvas and then stenciled in at the bottom Higher Beings Command: Paint the Upper Right Corner Black! (Höhere Wesen befehlen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!). Artistic inspiration or the muses or divine afflatus may command, but the end result is merely a meaningless black patch, a corner sliced out of the blankness of the picture surface that was looking to be filled, not emptied. At the same time that Polke wittily bursts the bubble of artistic inspiration, he pokes fun at Minimalist art by connecting its rigidly geometric forms based on logic and intellect with the romantic notion of higher beings. Nothing is sacred, not romantic and revered ideas about sources for artistic activity, not new art which itself wished to undermine the hegemony of such notions. Both old and new theories establish boundaries that are unacceptable to Polke, whose work has always taken accepted popular shibboleths about artistic activity and wryly stood them on their heads.

From the first of his prints, made in 1967, Polke's works in that medium have had an utterly anonymous and pedestrian surface quality about them, quite unlike the hyped-up advertising style that defined Pop art, to which they are sometimes compared. Nor are his subjects comparable to the cult personalities, sensationalistic tabloid pictures, or international cartoons of early American Pop. Rather, Polke chooses quite prosaic subject matter for much of his work in prints. Even the techniques Polke uses are mundane; from his first print in 1967 Polke's output, for the most part, has utilized offset of a resolutely quotidian variety, as if to elide any possibility of dealing with the images in aesthetic terms. There seems to be no difference between anonymous, mass-produced popular images and Polke's prints. Yet within the anonymity of offset Polke utilizes an unusual arsenal of artistic devices to transform his selected images, even if we immediately fail to see his "hand" at work. A brief and inevitably incomplete catalogue of Polke's quite deliberate manipulative processes might be helpful in understanding his prints:

1. Enlargement and degradation of the raster screen so that the image seems to fade in and out like an out-of-focus television picture, as in *Girlfriends* of 1967;

2. Freeing the dots of the raster screen from any image at all so that they provide yet another surface over the paper on which yet further markings appear, as in his untitled screenprint of 1989;

3. Overlapping of images or sandwiching negatives so that they cancel one another out or establish an unresolvable conflict about surface and space, as in *Weekend House, At the Opera, or Housefronts*;

4. Blurring, solarizing, over- or underexposing, or overworking the photographic film so that legibility is definitively compromised, as in his own self-portrait of 1971, his portrait of Günther Brus, or the Cologne beggar prints;

5. Ambiguous and inconsistent use of captions so that one is not clear whether they belong to the appropriated image or are an addition, meaningful or not, by Polke himself, as in the portfolio *Higher Beings Command or Hands*;
6. Photographing a photograph that has been wrinkled so the abstract texture of the surface and the resulting light reflections provide a visual distraction as powerful as the presented image itself, as in *Television Picture*;

7. Printing the image on a patterned sheet so that once again there are two equally compelling and conflicted surface forms to decipher and then to unite, both visually and conceptually, as in most of the prints from 1973;

8. Printing the image on dark ink on a dark ground so that one can never feel confident about having seen the whole image, as in *At the Opera* or *Günther Brus*;

9. Use of blindstamps or stencils so that the image is ghostly, virtually not there, as in *School Print* or *Samson and Delilah*, where the further complication of sandwiched sheets is added;

10. Printing as finished plates images that give every appearance of being studies, as if the first draft and subsequent corrections are all equally important and as if there really were no end in sight, as in *8 Measuring Stick Stars* or virtually any of the works made for exhibition catalogues.

A comparable synopsis of the sources for Polke’s images (not for his artistic strategies) would provide a further sense of meanings spinning out of control by their sheer variety and apparent randomness. Polke’s appropriation and invention of images, like that of his sometime collaborator Gerhard Richter, seem totally free of premeditation. These chance encounters with immediately compelling figural or compositional forms are divorced from any need for consistent dialogue or development from one print to another; some are loaded with associative possibilities, others seem utterly bland. Whether Polke utilizes images from the media, including newspapers, pulp magazines, girlie magazines, and television, or his own snapshot photographs, made in what is apparently compulsive and continuous activity with the camera, the images have the same scattered quality when viewed as a whole. If one were to select randomly four or five prints from Polke’s total output, it would be very hard to read them as the product of the same artistic personality unless one already knew his work well. By constantly changing his images through shifts in style and technique, Polke undermines a number of conventional critical approaches to establishing quality in works of art (or even to discussing an artistic career): determining a distinctive style with a clear trajectory of development; detailing a consistent personal, mythological, or political content that would at least provide a message, even if not real meaning; transferring the discussion from the works of art to the personality of the artist, so that a biographical psychodrama stands as proxy for an explanation of the work; conferring status through discussion of a refined craft. It is as if he is forcing us to invent a completely new critical language by having to admit that old ones are no longer adequate to discuss his work. Even new critical approaches that deal with such issues as appropriation don’t quite catch the elusive Polke in their net. Polke’s art simply doesn’t behave, doesn’t conform. On the other hand, Polke’s content is not totally random, although discovering it may involve a labyrinthine journey through the very process of artistic creativity, a journey that itself is as least part of the meaning of his work.
Very early in the history of his printmaking, Polke included himself in his images. In the extraordinary portfolio of 14 prints from 1966–68 called *Higher Beings Command*, Polke depicted himself in at least five of the prints and perhaps even in a sixth. In one he appears (dressed only in his underdrawers) as a palm tree with paper leaves extending from his neck, rather like a Ziegfeld mannequin in drag. In the tenth print in this set (front cover) Polke appears again, this time very properly clothed, as if standing for a school picture; that he called this image *The Double* gives some indication of the contradictory meanings we might expect to find within a given print or set of prints. Polke as palm tree is all theater, illusion, double image; Polke as double image is all seriousness, rectitude, and business. Both images are of Polke; both are true. He seems to wish to slip from the noose of critical (psychological, biographical, or artistic) categorization. Polke played a similar evasive game in a pseudo-autobiography he provided for the catalogue of a 1976 exhibition at Tübingen, describing his fascination with the palm tree:

[The Palmin Albums I had as a child] were heavy green volumes in which one would glue pictures that came with cocoa butter packages, the subjects of which were so varied: starry skies, lots of South Seas, reptiles, too — coasts, bridges, and ocean monsters, also things like windsocks, strange peoples, balls of lightning and so forth, and practically all animals, at least the funnier ones . . . .

It is precisely the Palmin Album I thank especially. It inspired on the one hand an interest in natural science that gained increasing meaning in my later works . . . but above all else it was the trade mark of this pure cocoa butter, that impressed itself permanently on the receptive disposition of the growing boy: the palm tree . . . .

Everything in me called out for it, I thought only about coconuteness, aggravated everyone, swore off all victuals and nourished myself only on coconut flakes . . . on Palm Sunday the great crisis (they had to call the family doctor), afterwards a certain calmness, but then again the frantic nights on the palm mat. Soon chalet raw on my whole body I fail to recognize anyone: call everyone "my dear Cocoschinski". . . . finally I stand for hours on a coconut, naked, shivering-blue from the cold: "Polke, you must become a palm tree!" To be a palm among palms — I could think of nothing else.

But alas, it was a love without transfiguration: never did a leaf sprout from me, never did the plumed calf of its frond show itself on me, that serene fruitfulness of its nut, the elastic uprightness of its trunk: — Nothing! I finally fell from the nut and remained what I was named: Polke.²

So much for romantic notions of transformation or transfiguration.

In the 11th print of *Higher Beings Command* (right), Polke presents his own left hand with its main palm lines corrected into a rigid triangle. Is he “correcting” nature, particularly his own, perhaps in a way parallel to the way he transformed himself in one or both of the self-portraits? Aren’t artists taught, after all, to perfect nature through compositional means in art school? Yet this exercise Polke has performed on his own hand is patently silly. But why any sillier than Leonardo’s Vitruvian man, whose arms also extend across the composition and whose body conforms to classicizing conceptions of
geometrical perfection? There is another resonant echo in this print, namely that of El Lissitzky's own photomontage self-portrait of 1924, *The Constructor*; in this visual manifesto of Constructivism, Lissitzky's extended hand holds a compass that has just inscribed a partial circle. Clearly Polke stands opposed to all the notions of the transformative and idealizing power of art that Leonardo and Lissitzky stood for. In this instance it is useful to remember that Polke grew up in Silesia under the political system for which Lissitzky had designed; it is not surprising that Polke would reject all proscriptive artistic systems, given the perversions of Lissitzky's anticipated new social order that Polke himself had seen. Interestingly, Polke returned to the image of the hand in a print of 1973, where, like Lissitzky, he shows the hand superimposed on other images and semitransparent, but here the hand can't even seem to tell up from down, let alone describe a new social order.

In the 12th print in *Higher Beings Command* (above left), Polke again shows himself, this time perched in a tree, where for two and one-half hours he picked the leaves from its branches. That action by the artist could also be considered a transformation of nature, but hardly one that fits romantic ideals about man in the landscape. Transforming the line of his hand into a perfect geometrical shape may seem absurd: changing the form of the tree seems sinister, particularly in 1968 when talk of defoliation in another part of the world meant Agent Orange and the destruction of millions of acres of rain forest. That such a mundane activity provokes such a devastating recollection lies at the heart of Polke's work. Even the most innocent images can lead to the most serious of concerns. In the print immediately following this one in the portfolio, Polke shows himself cradled in the hollow of a tree trunk, as if the tree would protect him regardless of what he had done to it. But in the table of contents for the portfolio he indicates that the relationship is an illusion, again introducing a threatening gloss to the visual image.

In the last print of the series, *Whip* (back cover), Polke places photographs taken of himself as the five scourges of the whip. In each of these photographs Polke makes a different contorted facial expression, as if he himself were being flogged—a curious suggestion of art as self-flagellation, especially after a rather comforting earlier image in the portfolio of a blanket. Polke states in the caption under *Blanket* (below left) that the wrinkles in the coverlet form a female figure, but if one looks closely and is not taken in by the artist's words, one can see that the wrinkles really form both a male and a female figure, with the latter's hand placed suggestively over the genital area of the former. Interestingly, the apparition of the male is disposed frontally like the "double" image of Polke that immediately follows it in the portfolio. In *Blanket*, we are faced with another kind of double image.

Three years after the *Higher Beings Command* portfolio, Polke again made a self-portrait, but one in which the artist is all but unrecognizable because of the manipulation of the photographic negative. One can only know it is Polke because he tells us so; title, not image, provides the meaning. The print recalls the familiar illustration used in textbooks on perception in which the stem of a goblet can also be read as the negative space between two facing profile heads. Duchamp, Dali, and Johns all used this form to talk about double images—things not being what they first appear or having two utterly disconnected meanings at the same time. Perhaps Polke intends his *Self-Portrait* of 1971 as a metaphor for his work, the artist/content hidden behind the transformed or manipulated image. Polke is both allusive and elusive at the same time.
UNTITLED
1989
Close attention to Polke’s best prints is always rewarding both visually and conceptually, despite their reticent appearances. In *Cologne Beggars II*, for example, one-legged men stand in front of a shoe store where pairs of shoes appear in the window. In *Cologne Beggars I* and *III*, the beggars are propped against garbage bins. In the *New York Beggars*, the four postcard views of street life are printed atop an image of the Statue of Liberty, whose promise of bounty for the “tired... huddled masses” seems sadly out of sync with the facts recorded in these pictures of street life. Such readings are perhaps embarrassingly traditional, yet they are undoubtedly part of the images. The same could be said for an interpretation of these prints that would remark on the difficulty of reading the Cologne beggar images: it is almost as if the figures are seen in peripheral vision, not quite clear and on the border of perceived existence. Understanding the New York beggars as some perverse set of scrapbook images, like Polke’s childhood Palmi Albums, pasted down on a page to recall a trip to the United States, would also fall into conventional modes of interpretation, as would seeing the female nude in *Hallo Shiva*... as some modern-day Danaé. It seems that Polke is only opposed to convention when it impedes a sympathetic viewing and exploration of what the eye sees.

In *Mu niellum uoturrupru* of 1975, Polke is at his elusive best. Made after his trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1974, the print, like his paintings and photographs from this time, shows an enlarged (phallic) mushroom at center surrounded by Indians from the North American plains (right). Clearly the image is meant to suggest some form of ritual worship. The print is related to a series of photographs from this same year, although it is reversed and excludes overlapping images contained in those photographs. The print differs from the photographs in one critical way: the central image of the mushroom is different. The mushroom in the photographs has a near-spherical cap and clearly shows a hand holding it. This hand provides a clue to the hitherto unknown original source of both mushroom images (not photographs by Polke as the catalogues state) and thus to an interpretation of the print. The photographs originally appeared in a well-known book by R. Gordon Wasson titled *Soma*, about a psychotropic mushroom of the same name (*Amanita muscaria* or fly-agaric) that grows, among other places, in the mountainous areas of northern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The *Soma* (a god as well as a mushroom and the flowing juice of that mushroom) is continually alluded to in the *Rg Veda*, a collection of verses nearly 3,000 years old, where hymn after hymn sings of possession by the god Soma. Perhaps the *Mu* of the print’s title is a sly reference to *muscaria*. What is certainly true is that the print reproduces the brilliant red of the mushroom cap shown in the book illustration; when Polke uses the same image in his painting he solarizes the photograph so that the mushroom appears silvery, as it does at night in its natural habitat, as the *Rg Veda* notes.
If the print is seen in the context of photographs Polke took on this trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan, which show opium dens and old men in drug-induced spasms, it seems clear that Polke was interested in the hallucinogenic properties of the mushroom. Yet, tellingly, in his own work he does not place the mushroom in any contemporary or anecdotal setting. Rather, he shows what appear to be Plains Indians either seated prayerfully before the colossal mushroom or gesturing toward it in a sign of acceptance. Polke did not appropriate the photograph from Wasson’s book merely as some vague reference to late-’60s or early-’70s drugged-out mysticism, but for what it says about the religious and cultic history of the people he visited.

The title of the print at first seems completely made-up, perhaps a fanciful European invention imitating the sounds of a South Asian language. However, the nonsense words derive from the words of a German children’s rhyme which Polke has written in reverse.

Ein Männlein steht im Wald
ganz still und stumm.
Es hat von lauter Purpur
ein Mäntelein um.
Sag wer mag das Männlein sein
daß da steht im Wald allein,
mit dem purpurroten Mäntelein.

A little man stands in the forest
very still and mum.
He has a coat of pure red on.
Tell me who that little man may be,
who is standing in the forest alone
with the crimson coat on.

The “little man” referred to in the rhyme is a poisonous bright red mushroom with white dots, native to German forests. The ditty is intended as an instructional warning to children about such dangerous mushrooms. Yet the hallucinogenic properties of the Soma mushroom are supposedly salutary and lethal, claims Polke seems to be challenging by his reference to the children’s cautionary rhyme in his title. In the print the Männlein, or “little man,” is larger than the other men represented, reversing the sense of the word just as Polke reversed the order of the letters in his title. This gross inversion or distortion of scale seems appropriate, however, as a depiction of the hallucinogenic vision induced by the Soma. The mock playfulness of the rhyme parallels both the strategies of Polke’s work and the seriousness of content which often lies beneath his apparent whimsy. In the title *M n i e l t a m n o t o r r u p r u p*, for example, “nietnam” comes suspiciously close to “Vietnam,” giving the print a particularly ominous quality by transforming the mushroom into an overarching mushroom cloud. The reference may be purely fortuitous, but in 1975 when Polke made the print such a homophone could hardly go unnoticed, especially since it is so similar to the play of Männlein/Mantelein of the German rhyme.

Polke’s art is difficult not because of the vagaries and dead ends of its stylistic paths, nor because of the vertiginous variety of imagery he employs, but because it is dense in its structure and serious in its content and because any search for meaning can lead down strange and accidental avenues. In the descriptive title of his fantastical autobiography of 1976 previously quoted, Polke clearly states the conundrum that characterizes all of his art: “Does meaning create relationships or do relationships create meaning?” For the inclusive Polke, that answer would have to be “all of the above.” Polke’s art is about finding values in unlikely places and about seeing connections between disparate aspects of a single culture or between different cultures, as in the Cologne or New York beggars or the Vedic Indian and American Indian divinization of Nature. In short, Polke’s art, by its rupturing of boundaries, is about the possibility of universal meaning and about freedom.
"David Nolan of the Nolan Eckman Gallery, New York, assisted in the original preparation of this article. His generous support and informed criticism helped immeasurably in giving shape to my ideas.


2 "— frühe Einflüsse, späte Folgen oder Wie kamen die Affen in mein Schlafzimmer? und andere ikonographische Fragen," Sigmar Polke: Bilder, Teiche, Objekte, Kunsthalle, Tübingen, 1976, pp. 127–34; the translation in the text was provided by Lawrence Shapiro.

3 R. Gordon Wasson, Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality, New York, 1968, plate IV, where the reference is to the sun in the Rg Veda IX 1374bc: "He has made the sun to shine," and plate XI, where the reference is to the Rg Veda IX 1096a. I am indebted to my colleague Phillip Wagoner for pointing out this book to me.

4 For Polke's photographic essays on the Soma see Sigmar Polke: Fotografien, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden/Stuttgart, Edition Cantz, 1990, pp. 144–47, nos. 109a–h; this exhibition catalogue with its essays by Jochen Puetter and Nice Curiger is the first systematic view of Polke's work in photography. For his photographs of the opium smokers see pp. 136–42.

5 I am grateful to Gideon Strauss for kindly informing me of the source of Polke's title and of the rhyme's reference to native German mushrooms.

6 "— frühe Einflüsse...," pp. 127–34.
CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted, all works are in the collection of the Walker Art Center.
T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1994

FREUNDINNEN
GIRLFRIENDS 1967 offset lithograph on paper; edition 25/150 18 x 24 in.
Published by Edition h, Hannover

WOCHENENDHAUS
WEEKEND HOUSE 1967 screenprint on paper; edition 73/80 23 1/8 x 33 in.
Published by Edition René Block, Berlin

HÖHERE WESEN BEFEHLEN
HIGHER BEINGS COMMAND 1968 portfolio of 14 photolithographs on paper; edition 40/50 11 1/8 x 8 1/4 in. each
Published by Edition René Block, Berlin

Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter
UMWANDLUNG
TRANSFORMATION 1968 offset lithograph on paper; edition 93/200 18 5/8 x 26 1/4 in.
Published by Edition René Block, Berlin

KARTOFFELMASCHINE
POTATO MACHINE 1969 wood, batteries, wire, screws, rubber band, battery-driven motor; edition 9/30 31 3/8 x 16 1/8 x 16 1/8 in.
Published by Edition Staech, Heidelberg

ZOLLSTOCKSTERNE
8 MEASURING STICK STARS 1970 offset lithograph on paper; edition 181/250 17 1/8 x 12 1/8 in.
Published by Edition René Block, Berlin

Tisch mit Umgekippter Kanne
TABLE WITH OVERTURNED MUG 1970 offset lithograph on paper; edition 11/100 23 1/8 x 23 1/8 in.
Published by Kunstverein, Bonn

FERNSEH-BILD (KICHER)
TELEVISION PICTURE (KICHER) 1971 four offset lithographs on paper; from variable edition sizes, unnumbered 25 1/8 x 33 in.
Published by Edition Grifflle Kunst, Hamburg

SELBSTBILDNIS
SELF-PORTRAIT 1971 offset lithograph on paper; edition of 120, unnumbered 8 1/8 x 9 1/8 in.
Published by Rolf Haged, Essen

BIZARRE
1972 offset lithograph on paper, Mylar, plastic binder clip; edition 22/50 8 1/8 x 11 1/8 x 9 1/8 in.
Published by Edition Staech, Heidelberg

EINE BILDSGESCHICHTE
PICTURE STORY 1972 offset lithograph on paper; from an edition of 1,000, unnumbered 8 1/8 x 6 1/8 x 1/4 in.
Published by Interkunstverlag, F. W. Heubach, Cologne, and Rolf Haged, Essen (insert in Interkunstverlag No. 9, 1972)

KÖLNER BETTLER I-IV
COLOGNE Beggars I-IV 1972 series of four offset lithographs on paper; edition 78/100 16 3/4 x 24 in. each
Published by Edition Staech, Heidelberg

SCHULDURCK
SCHOOL PRINT 1972 screenprint, embossing on paper with screenprint on velum collaged to reverse; glitter hand additions; unlimited edition, unnumbered 19 1/8 x 25 1/8 in.
Published by Kultusministerium NRW, Düsseldorf

WEEKEND I-III 1972 series of three offset lithographs on paper; edition 79/95 18 x 24 1/8 in. each
Published by Edition René Block, Berlin

FERNSEH-BILDER EISHOCKEY
RAUWOLFIAALKALOID
TELEVISION PICTURE ICE HOCKEY 1973 offset lithograph on paper; edition of 516, unnumbered 24 1/8 x 17 1/8 in.
Published by Edition Grifflle Kunst, Hamburg

FIGUR MIT HAN
FIGURE WITH HAND 1973 offset lithograph in red, embossing on paper; edition of 100, unnumbered 24 1/8 x 17 1/8 in.
Published by Edition Grifflle Kunst, Hamburg

FIGUR MIT HAN
FIGURE WITH HAND 1973 offset lithograph in blue, embossing on paper; edition of 300, unnumbered 24 1/8 x 17 1/8 in.
Published by Edition Grifflle Kunst, Hamburg

GÜTHER BRUS
1973 offset lithograph on paper; edition 157/175 11 1/8 x 9 1/8 in.
Published by Galerie Erhard Klein, Bonn

HANDE (DIE VERMUTLUNG ZWISCHEN DEM OBEBEN UND DEM UNTEREN)
HANDES (THE ADJUSTMENT BETWEEN UPPER AND LOWER) 1973 offset lithograph on paper; edition of 610, unnumbered 18 x 24 in.
Published by Edition Grifflle Kunst, Hamburg

POTATO MACHINE 1969
HALLO SHIVA... HELLO SHIVA... 1974
offset lithograph on paper;
artist’s proof
15 ⅛ x 21 ⅜ in.
Published by Galerie Erhard Klein,
Bonn

NEW YORKER BETTLER NEW YORK BEGGARS 1974
offset lithograph on paper;
edition of 100, unnumbered
16 ⅛ x 24 in.
Published by Edition Staek,
Heidelberg

DAY BY DAY... THEY TAKE SOME BRAIN AWAY 1975
offset catalogue of 28 pages
for the São Paulo Bienal;
edition of 600, unnumbered
16 ⅛ x 23 ⅛ in.
Published on the occasion of the São Paulo Bienal

MU NIETNAM NETORRUPUP 1975
offset lithograph on paper; proof
27 ⅛ x 19 ⅜ in.
Published by Schleswig-Holsteinischer Kunstverein, Kiel
Sigmar Polke and Achim Duchow

ARMORY 1976
offset lithograph on paper;
unnumbered
24 x 33 ⅜ in.
Published by Freunde des Kölnischen Stadtmuseums

OHNE TITEL UNTITLED FROM SALTOARTE 1976
offset lithograph on paper;
edition 69/100
14 x 10 ⅝ in.
Published by Saltoarte

OHNE TITEL (KÜNSTLER KÄMPFEN)
UNTITLED (ARTISTS FIGHT) 1979/1980
offset lithograph, ink on paper
11 ⅛ x 16 ⅜ in.
Published by Galerie Erhard Klein,
Bonn

KÖLNER DOM
COLOGNE CATHEDRAL 1978/1984
black-and-white photograph;
edition 8/50
12 ⅛ x 15 ⅜ in.
Published by Kölnischer Kunstverein

DESASTRES UND ANDERE
BARE WUNDER
DISASTERS AND OTHER FULL WONDERS 1982/1984
manipulated black-and-white photographs
on paper from an edition of 60 unique photographs
11 ⅛ x 15 ⅜ in.
Published by Parkett Publishers,
Zurich (included in deluxe edition of
Parkett No. 2, 1984)
Additional two photographs
courtesy Parkett Publishers, Zurich.

DESASTRES UND ANDERE
BARE WUNDER
DISASTERS AND OTHER FULL WONDERS 1982/1984
offset, printed on accordion-pleated
spiderweb-patterned paper.
Published by Parkett Publishers,
Zurich
Collection Walker Art Center Library
Snapshots of Polke working on
Parkett No. 2 special edition
courtesy Parkett Publishers, Zurich

Sigmund Polke 1983
offset lithograph on paper, velum
Published by Städtisches Museum
Abteiberg Mönchengladbach
8 ¼ x 5 ⅛ in.
Collection Walker Art Center
Gift of Jürgen Becker, 1994

LERNEN SIE UNSERE KLEINSTEN MITARBEITER
GET TO KNOW OUR SMALLEST CONTRIBUTORS 1983
6 offset sheets printed on both sides,
bound in exhibition catalogue for
Sigmar Polke, Museum Beymans
van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1983

OHNE TITEL UNTITLED 1984
offset lithograph, paint on paper;
edition 8/30
25 ⅝ x 36 ⅛ in.
Published by Museumverein
Mönchengladbach

OHNE TITEL UNTITLED 1984
black-and-white photograph from an
edition of 20 unique photographs
12 ¼ x 15 ⅜ in.
Published by Edition Kröps
OHNE TITEL
UNTITLED 1984
offset lithograph on paper
23 3/4 x 17 3/4 in.
Published by Galerie Erhard Klein, Bonn

WERKGRUPPE VON SIEben
ARBEITEN
ACTION GROUP WITH SEVEN WORKS 1984
color photograph on paper;
edition 2/10
15 3/4 x 23 3/4 in.
Published by Galerie Erhard Klein, Bonn

OHNE TITEL (MIT HAND)
UNTITLED (WITH HAND) 1985
offset lithograph on paper;
edition 115/120
19 1/4 x 27 1/2 in.
Published by Edition Staeck, Heidelberg

OHNE TITEL
UNTITLED 1987
screenprint, lacquer on paper;
edition 16/30
39 1/2 x 27 1/2 in.
Published by Museumsverein Mönchengladbach

SAMSON UND DELILAH
SAMSON AND DELILAH
from the portfolio KINDERSTERN
CHILDSTAR 1989
two sheets with screenprint, offset lithograph on paper, one with cut stencil superimposed on the other;
edition of 100 22 3/4 x 29 5/8 in.
Published by Edition Domberger, Cologne

OHNE TITEL
UNTITLED 1990
offset lithograph, lacquer on paper
23 3/4 x 17 3/4 in.
Published by Edition Galerie Erhard Klein, Bonn

DER PABSCHT HET Z’SCHPÆZ
SCHUPÄCHTBSCHTECK Z’SCHPAT
BSCHTCUT
THE POPE ORDERED THE
BACON CUTLERY IN SPIEZ
TOO LATE 1991
acrylic lacquer on vinyl, stretcher;
edition 67/100
25 1/2 x 24 1/2 in.
Published by Parkett Publishers, Zurich (edition for Parkett No. 30, 1991)

PARKETT NO. 30 1991
offset on paper
Published by Parkett Publishers, Zurich
Collection Walker Art Center Library

LEAVE THE LAB AND ENTER THE OFFICE 1991
offset lithograph on vellum;
edition 52/100
23 3/4 x 23 3/4 in.
Published by the Brooklyn Museum

OHNE TITEL I
UNTITLED I 1992
screenprint on paper;
edition 17/70
29 3/4 x 22 3/4 in.
Published by Edition Domberger, Cologne

OHNE TITEL II
UNTITLED II 1992
screenprint on paper;
edition 17/70
29 3/4 x 22 3/4 in.
Published by Edition Domberger, Cologne

SCHIEFERPINSEL-RASSEL
SLATE BRUSH RATTLE 1994
glass, slate, brush, cord, blue felt, wood box;
edition 20
18 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 9 in.
Courtesy Jürgen Becker

DIE DREI LÖGEN DER MALERI
THE THREE LIES OF PAINTING 1995
edition 75
23 x 33 3/4 in.
Published by Edition Staeck, Heidelberg
Courtesy Edition Staeck, Heidelberg

ENTARTETE KUNST
DEGENERATE ART 1995
offset lithograph on paper
editions of 35
Published by Edition Staeck, Heidelberg
Courtesy Edition Staeck, Heidelberg