

Press Release

Georg Baselitz

adler barfuß

3 September—9 November 2024

Thaddaeus Ropac
Seoul Fort Hill
1F, 122-1, Dokseodang-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul



Georg Baselitz, *Welten, die es nicht gab, mit, Filzhut*, 2023.
Oil on canvas. 200 x 120 cm (78.74 x 47.24 in).
© Georg Baselitz. Photo: Ulrich Ghezzi.

The exhibition *adler barfuß* at Thaddaeus Ropac Seoul presents works from a new series of paintings and ink drawings featuring eagles, a motif that has resurfaced in Georg Baselitz's oeuvre throughout his life. Since the 1960s, Baselitz has consistently renewed his practice through innovative formal developments, often responding to art history and his own extensive oeuvre.

After the artist's first-ever solo exhibition in Korea at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea in 2007, Baselitz's works were shown at Thaddaeus Ropac Seoul in 2021 for the gallery's inaugural exhibition. This exhibition of new works is now the third solo presentation of the artist's work in Korea.

Depicted in tactile, multicoloured impasto, the works feature eagles rendered in gestural strokes, larger than life, hovering in an undefined space. Seemingly weightless, the eagles seem to float against backgrounds of varying shades of blue, evoking the tones found in the portraits of Lucas Cranach the Elder or in Picasso's surrealist beach paintings of the late 1920s and 1930s.

Perched in front of this blue, delineated in two to three colours, always including black, the eagles convey a sense of the vigour with which they were painted. Baselitz uses spatulas rather than paint brushes, producing marks that recall middle and late period Rembrandt and, even more so, pen and ink drawings by Hokusai. 'In Baselitz's pictures the eagles are fully awake, as if electrified by painting that is wholly present, as if the bird had only just, in this very moment, materialised on the canvas [...] Filigree and powerful at once: a typical Baselitz paradox.' writes Andreas Zimmermann, curator of the celebrated exhibition *Georg Baselitz: Naked Masters (2023)* at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, in the catalogue accompanying this exhibition.



Georg Baselitz, *Die Seine, die Seine, die Seine*, 2023.
Oil on canvas. 250 x 150 cm (98.43 x 59.06 in).
© Georg Baselitz. Photo: Ulrich Ghezzi.



Pablo Picasso, *On the Beach*, February 12, 1937.
Oil, conté crayon, and chalk on canvas, 129.1 x 194 cm (50 13/16 x 76 3/8 in). The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, 1976. © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

I found the excuse for painting eagles in my own past, my early past, by digging out children's drawings and finding the eagle watercolour.

— Georg Baselitz, 2024

In several of the pen and ink drawings, the birds are portrayed against a backdrop of mountain ranges, directly referencing the artist's first exploration of this subject. At the age of fifteen, Baselitz painted one of his earliest works, which also depicted two eagles flying over mountains. As Andreas Zimmermann observes, 'the importance Baselitz attaches to this early work, done when he was still a schoolboy, is evident from the fact that over the decades he has repeatedly returned to it.' Primarily realised in a palette of vivid reds, these works on paper engage in a dialogue between ink-drawn lines, washes of colour and undefined space.



Hans-Georg Kern [Georg Baselitz], *Adler*, 1953.
Pencil and watercolour on paper. 27.7 x 38.1 cm (10.91 x 15 in).
© Georg Baselitz.

While Baselitz's painting technique has been subject to constant transformation, his thematic vocabulary revolves around a number of key subjects that run through his oeuvre like a golden thread and notably include portraits of Elke. The return to the highly symbolic motif of the eagle in this most recent series integrates a wide range of historical and art-historical references into his work, including Rembrandt's iconic depiction of Ganymede, in the collection of the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden, which Baselitz was familiar with from a young age. 'The eagle embodies qualities that have fuelled the human imagination for thousands of years,' writes Zimmermann, and its great significance as a heraldic symbol in German history further plays into the backdrop of Baselitz's repeated examination of this subject.

Baselitz's works can almost always be tied to his experiences and impressions during his childhood in Dresden and the ensuing formative years he spent in Berlin. By revisiting the motifs of his past, Baselitz offers a reflection on the significance of painting itself. Asked about this self-referentiality, he stated: 'I kept sinking into myself, and everything I do is being pulled out of myself.'

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.



Georg Baselitz, *Ohne Titel*, 2024.
Red ink on paper. 66 x 50.3 cm (25.98 x 19.8 in).
© Georg Baselitz. Photo: Ulrich Ghezzi.



Portrait Georg Baselitz, 2024. Photo: Martin Müller, Berlin.

About the artist

Georg Baselitz, who has worked with the gallery for over 20 years, lives between Lake Ammersee in Bavaria, Salzburg, and Imperia in Liguria, Italy. Early in his career, his work was included in documenta 5 (1972) and 7 (1982). Following the 1980 Venice Biennale, he participated in a series of influential exhibitions: *A New Spirit in Painting* (1981) and *German Art in the Twentieth Century* (1985) at the Royal Academy of Arts, London; and *Zeitgeist* (1982) at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, presented his first comprehensive retrospective in the United States in 1995, which toured to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C. and Nationalgalerie, Berlin. Further significant retrospectives were organised by the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, in 1996, and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 2007. In 2006 and 2007, the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, and the Albertina, Vienna, were the first to present his *Remix* cycle.

A retrospective of Baselitz's sculptures was held at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2011–12) and his *Avignon* series was presented at the Venice Biennale in 2015. His *Heldenbilder* (Hero Paintings) and *Neue Typen* (New Types) were shown at the Städel Museum,

Frankfurt (2016), traveling to the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome; and Guggenheim Bilbao. To mark the artist's 80th birthday in 2018, comprehensive solo exhibitions were held at the Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; and Musée Unterlinden, Colmar, France. In 2019, he was elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris and became the first living artist to have an exhibition at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. This was followed by his largest retrospective to date at the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 2021–22.

In 2023, numerous exhibitions were held at prestigious institutions internationally in celebration of the artist's 85th birthday. Among them are a six-decade retrospective of his drawings at The Morgan Library, New York, which travelled to the Albertina, Vienna; an exhibition of Baselitz's works presented alongside those of Anselm Kiefer at the Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg (the first exhibition to present a visual dialogue between the two artists since the Venice Biennale in 1980); and individual presentations at the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Museum Würth 2, Künzelsau; and Serpentine Galleries, London.

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