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EXHIBITION: DIETRICH ORTH - Paintings and Works on Paper

DATES: March 16th - April 23, 1994

Opening on March 16th, the gallery will present an exhibition of work by the German artist Dietrich Orth. The show, spanning work between 1987 and the present, is Mr. Orth's first one person exhibition in the United States.

Orth's work is situated in the area that is presently being generalized as "outsider art". Shortly after finishing high school with a straight A average, Orth was diagnosed with a clinical psychosis. For the last twelve years he has been in and out of a variety of psychiatric clinics. At one of these clinics, Orth was introduced to painting as part of his therapy. Orth, who is entirely self taught, has since created a highly unusual body of work. Contrary to many works created by so-called "outsiders", Orth's work is neither expressive, vehement nor naive. Rather his paintings are carefully planned, deeply psychological compositions. In his work, Orth investigates a variety of subjects including his own body language, the effects of his prescribed psycho-pharmaceuticals and particular mental/emotional states like rage or dignity. The control with which Orth produces his work, as well as its psychological depth, position Orth outside of the "outside".

All of the work incorporates texts in the form of short statements written onto areas of the canvas. The texts function as title and introduction to the specific works. Sometimes Orth himself calls these texts passage "instructional". For Orth the act of painting is therapeutic, but furthermore he sees his paintings as vehicles of therapy for the viewer.

We find that the area where Orth's intentions as an "outsider" and the intentions and concerns of many so-called "normal" artists overlap to be of specific interest.

"My paintings do not need additional interpretation. They are blueprints for the imagination of the viewer."

*Dietrich Orth
(translated from German)*