

For immediate release

NEO RAUCH

Rondo

October 4 – November 12, 2016

Private view: Tuesday, October 4, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with the artist in conversation with Martin Roth, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London: 10 AM



Der Brandmeister, 2016
Oil on plywood
15 3/4 x 15 3/4 inches (40 x 40 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Neo Rauch. On view at the gallery's London location, this marks the German artist's debut solo presentation in the UK. Widely recognized for his distinctive combination of figurative painting and surrealist abstraction, his work has been represented by David Zwirner since 2000.

Born in 1960 in Leipzig, Rauch spent his youth in the Eastern Bloc at a time when Socialist realism was the predominant aesthetic. As a reaction, he developed his own highly individual style, which came to symbolize a broader generational break with the existing canon. His enigmatic compositions employ a personal iconography of human characters, animals, and hybrids within familiar-looking but imaginary settings. They frequently incorporate references to the creative process, music, and manual labor, but ultimately eschew fixed meaning. The artist's treatment of scale is deliberately arbitrary and non-perspectival, and often seems to allude to different time zones or planes of existence.

This exhibition brings together large and small format paintings in which figures are depicted against backdrops of suburban architecture, industrial structures, and a dimly lit interior. While Rauch develops each work instinctively without a preconceived idea of the finished result, there is visual coherence to the overall group of paintings on view, both in their similar palettes of strong, complementary colors as well as in recurring subjects, such as fire, the seamless integration of organic and non-organic forms, and dramatic, saturated skies.

The multiple storylines that characterize the large-scale works in particular, combined with their striking use of light and emphasis on the human figure, evoke Old Master painting. In Rauch's case, however, the compositions emerge like self-contained fables, whose subjects are beyond immediate grasp. Episodes of repetition within a single work reinforce the impression of dreamlike narratives. One canvas, *Der Auftakt*, shows a winged man in a suit posing for an artist, while a percussionist, wearing a horned hat, appears three times; in *Der Störfall*, in which an immobile nude body is tended to, a boy with a torch can be seen twice. *Die Forderung* depicts the same modern-day building from slightly different perspectives, as several men in clothes from bygone times crowd the foreground; and numerous intersecting lines in *Zustrom* repeat the symbol of the cross within a sunny, pastoral setting. Defying a traditional sense of realism while retaining a degree of plausibility, these paintings create their own mythologies.

Neo Rauch lives and works in Leipzig, where he studied at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst. Since 2000, his work has been represented by David Zwirner. Previous solo exhibitions at the gallery in New York include *At the Well* (2014), *Heilstätten* (2011), *Neo Rauch* (2008), *Renegaten* (2005), *Neo Rauch* (2002), and *Neo Rauch* (2000), which marked his United States debut.

Rauch's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions internationally, most recently in 2013 at BOZAR – Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels. In 2010, his first major museum survey was co-hosted by the Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig and the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich. A version of this survey was shown at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw in 2011. Other venues which have presented solo exhibitions over the past decade include the Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Germany (2012); Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany; Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Austria (both 2011); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York;

Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague (both 2007); Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (both 2006); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2005); Albertina, Vienna (2004); and the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands (2002).

The Grafikstiftung Neo Rauch opened in June 2012 in the artist's hometown of Aschersleben, Germany. The foundation is dedicated to maintaining and preserving Rauch's entire graphic oeuvre.

Museum collections which hold works by the artist include the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Martin Roth has been Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum since 2011. He was formerly Director General of the Dresden State Art Collections (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden), overseeing twelve museums and galleries. From 1996 to 2001, Roth was a member of the senior management of the Expo 2000 in Hanover and Director of Thematic Exhibitions. He was President of the German Museums Association from 1995 to 2003, and a member of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Advisory Board in Berlin until his relocation to London in 2011.

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