

Michael Werner 4 East 77 New York New York 10075

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POLKE - BERNSTEIN - AMBER
7 November 2006 to 13 January 2007

Michael Werner Gallery is pleased to announce "Polke - Bernstein - Amber", opening 7 November 2006. The first gallery exhibition of Sigmar Polke since 1998, "Polke - Bernstein - Amber" (bernstein, the German word for amber) is a rare opportunity to see new works by this important artist. Organized in cooperation with Kunstammer Georg Laue Munich, this special exhibition pairs new paintings by Sigmar Polke with exquisite Renaissance and Baroque amber objects to transform the gallery into a modern *Wunderkammer*.

Literally meaning "rooms of wonder", *Wunderkammern* were collections of rarities and curious objects assembled by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century nobility and practitioners of science. These collections typically contained a mix of natural and man-made objects, the more unusual and exotic the better. Today such collections are considered to be the precursors to modern museums. The installation of Sigmar Polke's paintings together with historical amber objects provides a modern interpretation of the *Wunderkammer*, and charts the artist's long enchantment with the traditional arts and sciences associated with amber.

Sigmar Polke (b. 1941, Oels, Silesia) has for many years been deeply interested in science and alchemy, as evidenced by his ongoing experiments with uncommon pigments, elementary materials, and alchemical processes in painting. The paintings in "Polke - Bernstein - Amber" make specific connections to the various physical and metaphorical qualities identified with amber. The works are painted on both sides, often over a period of years, giving the illusion that their imagery is suspended in the resinous surface. Indeed, close inspection of the paintings reveals matter entombed in the artist's viscous pigment, as if trapped in naturally occurring amber itself.

The amber objects featured in "Polke - Bernstein - Amber" comprise a range of fascinatingly unusual, finely crafted decorative and functional items dating from the late 16th to early 18th centuries and originating in Northern Germany. Many were previously exhibited at the renowned Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, in 2005.

"Polke - Bernstein - Amber" is on view from 7 November 2006 to 13 January 2007. The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color catalogue with a text by Faya Causey, National Gallery of Art.

Gallery hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 AM until 6 PM. The gallery is closed 24 December 2006 through 1 January 2007.

For more information, please contact the gallery.

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