

Between Abstract and Figurative Art.

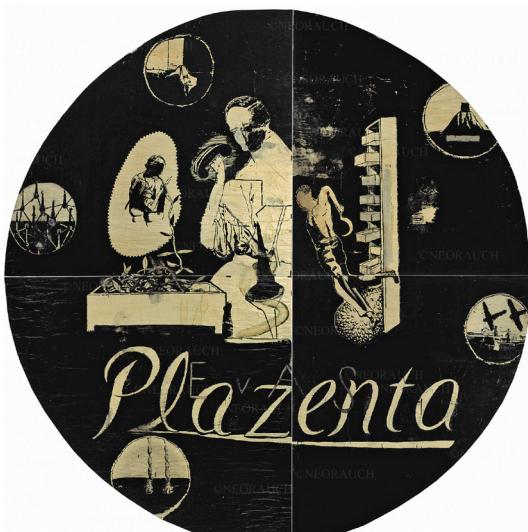
Neo Rauch's Pictorial Style before and after the Peaceful Revolution of 1989: A Question of Authenticity?

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A phenomenon of contemporary art history that has received scant attention to date is the authentication and de-authentication by an artist of his own early work. The best-known case of the attempt by an artist to define his own oeuvre, and to bracket out works that are immature, of dubious quality or otherwise unwanted, is that of German star painter Gerhard Richter. With a few exceptions, Richter recognizes as authentic only those works that he produced from around 1962 onwards, i.e. the year after his flight from the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).¹ A similar de-authentication of parts of his early oeuvre can also be observed in the case of Neo Rauch, who may be counted as one of the most successful worldwide among the contemporary artists of his generation. Both this success and its genesis offer intriguing insights into the functioning of the market for contemporary art – while the marketing of older art naturally functions without these mechanisms of de-authentication.

The career of the painter Neo Rauch, born in Leipzig in 1960, has unfolded across the most gripping chapters of the history of German art in the late twentieth century. For Rauch's life and work have been divided between two art systems that could hardly be more different. When Rauch completed his training in the painting class at Leipzig's Academy of Visual Arts, the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (HGB), from 1981 to 1990, both Leipzig and the HGB were still part of the German Democratic Republic. The Hochschule was renowned for the solid training it provided its students and as the focal point of the Leipzig School², whose success was not confined to East Germany. The leading GDR painters of these years were Willi Sitte (1921–2013), Werner Tübke (1929–2004), Wolfgang Mattheuer (1927–2004) and Bernhard Heisig (1925–2011). Neo Rauch studied directly under Heisig and Arno Rink (1940–2017) at the HGB, and by the end of the 1980s was considered a promising young talent in East German painting, as April Eisman was able to show.³

A small exhibition held in spring 1989 to mark the 225th anniversary of the HGB arrived at just this conclusion. Thus Renate Hartleb, for example, in her essay in the accompanying catalogue, situated the then 29-year-old



1 Neo Rauch, *Plazenta* ('Placenta'), 1993, Oil on paper, diameter 340 cm, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg



2 Neo Rauch, *Großküche* ('Canteen Kitchen'), 1995, Oil on paper on canvas, 177 x 183 cm, Leipzig, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst

Rauch at the end of a long and interesting genealogy of successful painters of the "Leipzig School". This lineage also included, in Hartleb's portrayal, Elisabeth Voigt (1893–1977), Bernhard Heisig, Wolfgang Mattheuer, Werner Tübke, Volker Stelzmann (b. 1940), Arno Rink, Hartwig Ebersbach, Ulrich Hachulla (b. 1943) Walter Libuda (b. 1950) and Werner Liebmann (b. 1951). Rauch is hereby compared above all with Walter Libuda and Werner Liebmann and praised for his expressivity and his adherence to the human figure.⁴ By way of a final chord, Hartleb's essay concludes with an oil painting by Rauch of 1987, *Die Band* ('The Band'), a work today almost unknown but to which we shall return later.⁵

Disregarded by art-historical scholarship up till now, moreover, is the fact that, in this same essay, Renate Hartleb not only identifies a line of tradition running from the earlier to the more recent Leipzig painters, from the old to the new Leipzig School, but also seeks to characterize the artist generation up to Neo Rauch in terms of a "Neue Leipziger Schule"⁶ (New Leipzig School) – a name that only became fashionable as from 2004. Indeed, the author even anticipates later controversies when she expressly rejects attempts "to construct a 'New Leipzig School' that replaces a 'Leipzig School' that is wished dead."⁷ Just a few months after this positioning of the old and the new Leipzig School, the framework conditions for artistic production in the previously divided Germany changed radically. The Peaceful Revolution in November 1989 brought down not just the Wall but also the entire East German art system, whose exponents were now no longer considered artists. Suddenly everything was utterly different. Rarely before in the history of art had the criteria upon which art was judged been overturned more or less overnight, and with them the bases of artistic careers.

The first, East German phase of Neo Rauch's career came to an end, of course, in 1990, with the reunification of Germany. In the period that followed, Rauch had to reposition himself within



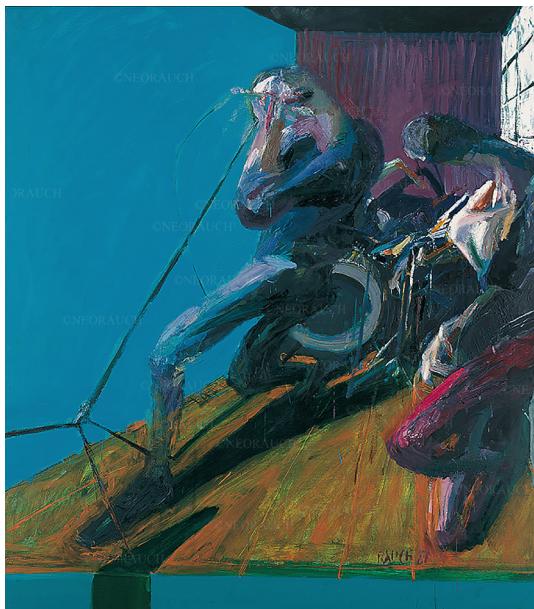
3 Neo Rauch, *Der Rückzug* ('The Retreat'), 2006, Oil on canvas, 300 x 420 cm, Basel, Fondation Beyeler

a different art system. This repositioning involved some interesting manoeuvring with regard to the authentication of his oeuvre. In this article I would like to examine these manoeuvres more closely, reconstruct Rauch's early oeuvre and offer an assessment of the influence of the art market on the authentication of contemporary art.

Neo Rauch is known above all for his monumental paintings of the past two decades, but his surviving oeuvre includes works dating right back to 1982. These are omitted from the official catalogue of Neo Rauch works compiled by the Galerie Eigen + Art, however, and until very recently rights to reproduce any such early works were not granted (in fact, this is the first scholarly article to reproduce a significant number of the artist's early works).⁸ Instead, the start of Rauch's oeuvre had been magically reset to the year 1993.⁹ Autograph works produced before this date have consequently suffered a de-authentication, in the sense that their authenticity is not officially certified. This redrawing of the boundaries of Rauch's oeuvre emerges explicitly in 2000 in the essay *Flurbereinigung* – literally 'reparcelling' – by Harald Kunde.¹⁰ This reparcelling was then definitively validated by the *Randgebiet* exhibition of Rauch's works that ran from December 2000 to August 2001, first in Leipzig and then in Munich and Zurich¹¹, and by another show at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht in 2002.¹²

In the recent monographs and exhibition catalogues, meanwhile, even the bibliographical information relating to Neo Rauch's early phase is missing in most cases.¹³ This restrictive definition of what constitutes Rauch's authentic oeuvre is noteworthy above all because those who have contributed to it include publicly funded museums that are strictly speaking indebted to a different, namely independent ethic of behaviour.

What is thus officially considered to be Rauch's authentic oeuvre falls, roughly speaking, into three phases, the first commencing, as we have seen, in 1993. Rauch's paintings of this period are



4 Neo Rauch, *Die Band* ('The Band'), 1987, Oil on hard fiber, 171 × 151, Leipzig, Kunsthalle der Sparkasse

strange figures who seem to be doing strange things. Rauch's titles frequently suggest to us, as viewers, that we are looking at narratives that can be interpreted. A case in point is *Der Rückzug* ('The Retreat', Basel, Fondation Beyeler; fig. 3), an oil-on-canvas painting of 2006.¹⁵ The multi-figural scene is playing out against the backdrop of a burning manor-house complex on the left and a pavilion on the right. A firing squad can be made out in the left-hand background, and in the foreground a number of people, an animal and a handcart full of petrol drums. The pavilion, which has the air of a dilapidated temple of art, houses a man and a woman who appear to be studying two large-format pictures by Neo Rauch himself, namely his 1993 tondi *Plazenta* and *Saum*.

In citing *Plazenta* and *Saum*, *Der Rückzug* makes a twofold reference – probably not without a tinge of irony¹⁶ – to what is deemed the artist's authentic early oeuvre. The viewers inside and outside the picture are looking at the new beginning of Rauch's painting in 1993. Everything Neo Rauch painted prior to this date has to be tracked down with the aid of older exhibition catalogues¹⁷, the online databases of the international art trade, and the results of the ongoing research project *Bilderatlas: Kunst in der DDR*, which compiles an "atlas of images" of art produced in the German Democratic Republic. With the aid of these tools, researching Neo Rauch's early oeuvre is both possible and highly enjoyable, and enables us to see that the early paintings that Rauch produced as from 1982 – and thus while still a student at the Academy of Visual Arts (HGB) in Leipzig – orient themselves towards neo-expressionist protagonists of East German painting such as Bernhard Heisig, his colleague Arno Rink, the Neue Wilden of the 1980s, Francis Bacon and other exponents of the "New Spirit in Painting".¹⁸ Neo Rauch's stylistic references to these artists are manifold, as is only to be expected in an early oeuvre.

Amongst these works inspired by neo-expressionism, with their at times somewhat coarse handling of paint, are the tall-format *Die Kreuzung* ('The Intersection')¹⁹ of 1984 as well as the floral still life *Rotblatt* ('Red-leaf')²⁰ and *Stadtlandschaft* ('Urban Landscape')²¹ of 1985. By 1987, Rauch's search

characterized by tonal colour fields that are strewn, in seemingly random fashion, with shapes, ciphers, figures and numbers, along with letters that occasionally combine to give the picture its title. Typical of this first phase are paintings such as *Dromos* and *Lingua* of 1993, and the tondi *Plazenta* ('Placenta'; fig. 1) and *Saum* ('Seam') of the same year, which are developed into the figural sphere. Around 1995 Rauch moved into a second phase that saw him generally adopting a brighter tonality and palette and rendering pictorial space and human figures in greater clarity. Examples of this evolution include the paintings *Großküche* ('Canteen Kitchen', Leipzig, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst; fig. 2) and *Die Kanone* ('The Cannon').¹⁴

Rauch's painting entered a third phase shortly after the millennium and is today characterized by monumental formats, by settings and landscapes with a surreal air and by

for a personal style was finding expression in compositions such as *Die Band*, a painting clearly in the neo-expressionist figurative tradition (fig. 4).²² Alongside their general expressive signature, all of these paintings are characterized by a powerful palette occasionally tending towards opaque planes. Aside from this primacy of colour, the works of the years 1982 to 1987 also show the artist firmly maintaining a figural idiom. This also applies, for example, to the painting entitled *Gokenheimer*, which was shown in 1987 at the 'X. Kunstaustellung' of the GDR in Dresden in 1987 and purchased shortly afterwards by the West German collector Peter Ludwig. The designation *Gokenheimer* alludes to the art critic and gallerist Peter Lang, who was important for Rauch's early career and who bore the nickname *Gokenheimer* (actually 'Gurkenheimer', cucumber man).²³ Like the painting *The Band*, Rauch's portrait of Peter Lang is also characterized by an expressive application of colour and a certain dynamic.

Soon afterwards, a tendency towards an alienation of the figural elements of his compositions began to make itself felt, accompanied by a loosening of ties to objective representation. Rauch's painting as a whole moved slowly in the direction of abstraction and Art Informel. Two examples of this period of experimentation can be seen in the 1988 oil paintings *Stilleben* ('Still Life')²⁴ and *Männchen vor Industrielandschaft* ('Little Man in Industrial Landscape'; fig. 5).²⁵ Strictly speaking, therefore, a first, odd shift can be recognized in Neo Rauch's style in the works he produced between 1987 and 1988 – assuming our reconstruction of his early oeuvre, for all its inevitable gaps, is thus far correct.

Rauch's experimental search for an own style also continued in 1989, the year of the Peaceful Revolution leading up to the fall of the Wall, for example in the works *Mann mit Hut* ('Man in a Hat')²⁶ and *Möhrenschneider* ('Man chopping carrots').²⁷ In both compositions the artist extensively dissolves the object: the silhouette of the man in a hat can only be made out with difficulty against the intense hues of the background, while the red carrot in the left-hand foreground of the *Möhrenschneider* seems like a mockery of figurative representation. Given that we cannot date the pictures to a specific month, it is of course impossible to gauge with any accuracy whether the political events of October and November 1989 have left immediate traces in Neo Rauch's creative process. On the basis of the material I have studied, however, the above-mentioned slight alteration in his style between 1987 and 1988 seems to me more significant.

On the evidence of the works that can be traced to these early years, 1990 saw at least the beginning of another significant shift in Rauch's oeuvre. Although he continued to paint expressive, colourfully



5 Neo Rauch, *Männchen vor Industrielandschaft* ('Little Man in Industrial Landscape'), 1988 Oil on fiberboard, 83,7 x 60 cm, Ketterer Kunst Munich, 9th June 2017, lot no. 446



6 Neo Rauch, *Das Innere* ('The Interior'), 1990, Oil on hard fiber, 170 × 148 cm, Collection Siegfried Seiz, Reutlingen

representational associations are characteristic of this and other works produced shortly afterwards. Recognizable human figures also make an increasing appearance between now and 1993. A good example is the painting *Säuberung* ('Cleansing'; fig. 8) of 1993.³³

In the period between 1988 and 1991, Rauch was clearly in the midst of an interesting process of transformation, ranging from an initial orientation towards a neo-expressionist ideal of style to a complete dissolution of figurative elements in his works. A similar trend or experimental evolution can also be observed for other Leipzig artists of those years. This is documented, for example, by the exhibition *Young Leipzig Art*, which opened in 1991 and was first shown at the Staatliches Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg and, in early 1992, at the BASF Feierabendhaus in Ludwigshafen.³⁴ Rauch's stylistic development is also directly comparable with the stylistic development of fellow artists of his generation. Figurative paintings like *Heart Break Hotel* and *Mechanisches Abendmahl* ('Mechanical Last Supper') by Roland Borchers from 1986 and 1987, painted in a neo-expressionist style, for example, could well be compared with some of Rauch's paintings from the same period.³⁵ And Borchers's abstract work *Rauf und runter, Wand und Wende* ('Up and Down, Wall and Turning Point'; fig. 9), created in 1990, compares equally well with Rauch's *Das Innere* ('The Interior'; fig. 6) or with his *Der Gärtner* ('The Gardener'; fig. 10), both also from 1990.³⁶ In addition, it can be generally stated that the stylistic development of Roland Borchers and Neo Rauch during this period showed a number of similarities. Just like Borchers, between 1989 and 1990 Rauch oriented himself towards an expressive realism on the one hand and an abstract visual language on the other. Even individual elements in the work of both artists can be directly compared with each other. These include unidentifiable black forms against a background of intensely luminous colour surfaces and the integration of picture titles and lines of text or letters into the painting. For comparison, one could mention Borchers's gouaches *Kopf II '89* ('Head II', 1989) and *Taback '90* ('Tobacco', 1990).³⁷

potent and abstract canvases such as *Keimlinge* ('Seedlings'), *Der Gärtner* ('The Gardener'; see below) and *Das Innere* ('The Inside'; fig. 6)²⁸, an unmistakeable change in style makes itself felt in works such as *Andere Länder, andere Sitten* ('Other Countries, Other Customs')²⁹ and *Opfer* ('Sacrifice'; fig. 7) of the same year.³⁰ Some of these were now executed on paper and already exhibited properties that would become typical of later works, namely an opaque ground and the combination of real-world objects and figures in alien situations with individual letters of the painting's title placed seemingly by chance on the picture plane.³¹ Tending in the same direction are works from 1991, which are barely distinguishable from those Rauch would produce as from 1993. The best example I know is *Die Erde ist eine kurze Waltz* ('The Earth is a Short Waltz'), a painting in oil on paper of 1991.³² More or less opaque grounds, muted tones and sign-like ciphers carrying

Stylistic parallels between Rauch's and Borchers' oeuvre may also be related to the close connections between the two artists. Both had their studios at Peterssteinweg 10 in Leipzig in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Both artists had at least eight joint exhibitions of their works between 1987 and 1992.³⁸ Towards the end of the 1980s, Borchers and Rauch, both stood as examples of a neo-expressionist style in Leipzig. However, there was also a group of artists in Leipzig who used an abstract or informal formal language. These included Andreas Hanke (born 1950), Kaeseberg (Thomas Frobel, born 1964) and Olaf Nicolai (born 1962).³⁹ In precisely this environment, Borchers and Rauch experimented with abstract elements in their painting. All the formal characteristics of Rauch's works from the period between 1990 and c. 1993 invoke, moreover, the very categories of art that Rauch had already discussed in his diploma thesis, submitted in June 1985 to the HGB in Leipzig.

This theoretical thesis was devoted to *Die informelle Malerei in der BRD* ('Informel painting in the FRG').⁴⁰ The discussion ostensibly focuses upon selected West German representatives of Action Painting, Art Informel and the abstract art of post-war modernism (inter alia Hans Platschek, Gerhard Hoehme, Winfried Gaul and Emil Schumacher), but the programmatic text in fact seeks to play off the possibilities of abstraction and figuration in painting. Rauch's starting point is the official GDR stance on art, which saw the non-representational tendencies of the post-war era – abstract art and Art Informel – as agents of the Cold War and ambassadors of an aesthetic absolutism. But this only makes up the smaller part of Rauch's argumentation. Of greater interest are his thoughts on the formal categories of modernism and post-modernism. Thus the Leipzig student identifies a return to the figurative in art in the FRG, and observes an orientation in the GDR art system towards the properties of Art Informel. Ultimately, however, Rauch understands abstraction and Art Informel as transitional stages of development. At the end, once again, lies the figurative. Rauch thereby sees "strings of letters and numbers" or "animated signs against coloured grounds" as a possible means of getting away from "abstract academicism".⁴¹

Just ten years later, in an interview on the occasion of an exhibition of his works in the Overbeck-Gesellschaft in Lübeck, Rauch explained how he had steered clear of abstraction: "I have also known the danger of disappearing into the abstract jungle, I have felt its threat looming and have corrected my course in good time. It was somehow clear to me that I had to make sure I arrived at a figure of my own. I'm evidently a narrator; I need something representational to get closer to the poetry of my dreams. So out of these smears of colour I started fishing creatures that had something vegetative, something amoeba-like about them. In the meantime they've coagulated into a pleasing clarity. I can now finally spell out with these things."⁴²



7 Neo Rauch, *Das Opfer* ('Sacrifice'), 1990, Oil on hard fiber, 170 x 150 cm, exhibited in the Galerie Schwind, Frankfurt 1991



8 Neo Rauch, *Säuberung* ('Cleansing'), 1993, Oil on paper, 146 × 100 cm, exhibited in the Galerie Alvensleben, Munich 1993

debate as to whether the works of East German artists should be integrated into the Berlin museums; in 1995 by the debate over the exhibition *Auftrag: Kunst* mounted by the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin⁴⁴; in 1998 by the Art Archive Beeskow, whose mass presentation of products of East German art, although intended as a documentation, was greeted with much anger; and again in 1998 by the controversy over whether Bernhard Heisig, Neo Rauch's former teacher, should be involved in the artistic decoration of the German Bundestag – and so on.⁴⁵

Parallel to these controversies a corrective adjustment was taking place in the galleries of Germany's museums. In almost every public collection, the majority of works by GDR artists were banished to the warehouse and in a number of cases hastily replaced by art from the Free West.⁴⁶ Something similar happened (and continues to happen) in public spaces with the removal of larger, politically tainted monuments of Socialism. Smaller memorials of the GDR era are often entirely neglected and are disappearing as a result of neglect and vandalism. This cultural 'reparcelling' has been rounded off, lastly, by the thefts of non-ferrous metal that have increased in recent years. There is nothing unusual about such consolidation in the wake of a change of political system: the ruling art has always been the art of the rulers, victorious art the art of the victors – in this case, the art of the victorious capitalist system.

The artist here describes with great precision both the character of his partially abstract or Informel works and his successful attempt to sever all links with this early phase of his oeuvre. We can therefore assume that the artist reflected more or less constantly upon the evolution of his own painting. This reflection finds its expression in his advancing of the start date of his authentic oeuvre to 1993.

The strict ruling that only the works he produced as from 1993 are authentic is probably also linked with two incidents: Rauch's switch from the Galerie Schwind in Frankfurt to the Galerie Eigen + Art in Leipzig, marked by an exhibition of his work hosted by the Leipzig gallery that same year, and his employment as assistant at the HGB. It should also be seen in the light of the heated debates in the nineties over whether East German art – the art practised by Rauch's professors at the HGB, in other words – was actually art at all. It is a fact that art produced in the GDR was almost wholly discredited throughout the entire decade following German Reunification: in June 1990 by Georg Baselitz, for example, who curtly dismissed the East German artists as "assholes" and "propagandists"⁴³; in 1993 by the

The climax of this art war was undoubtedly the Weimar exhibition *Aufstieg und Fall der Moderne*, held in 1999, which in the eyes of certain recipients sought to defame East German art, together with the painting of National Socialism, as having sounded the death-knell of Modern Art.⁴⁷ Neo Rauch became directly involved in this bitter controversy, as one of his early works – *Die Kreuzung* of 1984 – was part of the show. He demanded its return and described the Weimar exhibition as a “mass execution” of East German painting.⁴⁸

However we may today judge the Weimar exhibition and the disputes of the nineties, three conclusions in particular are suggested by the ferocity of the arguments, the often defamatory accusations made at the time, and the irreconcilable positions held by the different fronts: 1. The debate on art here became a “proxy war”⁴⁹, one that broke out in place of the political conflicts still unresolved in post-Reunification Germany; 2. The debate fed the suspicion that this was a clash between two contradictory concepts of art. If one was art, the other could not be art – and vice versa; and 3. In view of these debates, an artist who wanted to achieve international success would do well to dissociate himself from the art of the former East Germany.

In the case of Neo Rauch, this act of dissociation from one’s origins has been largely successful. Thus the notion that Neo Rauch has no “real early oeuvre” has become widely rooted in the public perception.⁵⁰ Just how problematic and fragile this highhanded exclusion of his early work can be, however, was demonstrated in exemplary fashion by the Rauch retrospective curated by Werner Spies in May 2011 in the Museum Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden. Burda himself owns four works by Neo Rauch, including two large-format works on paper signed and dated 1992 by the artist, *Flut I* (‘Flood I’) and *Flut II* (‘Flood II’). According to the official definition, these two works on paper ought not to be counted within Rauch’s authentic oeuvre, since they predate the magic year of 1993. So as not to offend the prominent collector, however, the exhibition organizers resorted to the following trick: whereas in April, just one month before the show opened, the galley proofs for the catalogue still carried the correct date of 1992, in the version that went to print, the dating of the two works was given as 1992–1993, even though this is in plain conflict with the signatures they carry.⁵¹ After I had pointed out this contradiction in a lecture in July 2012, the gallery put out the version, via *The Art Newspaper*, that the artist – autograph dating or not – had begun the two pictures in 1992 and completed them in 1993.⁵² The two works continued to appear with the dating “1992” on the Museum Frieder Burda’s website right up to August 2012, but have since been removed. As things stand at present, it is almost impossible to ascertain what status the two *Flut* paintings currently possess. Be that as it may, in August 2013 it was meanwhile possible to buy *Flut II* as an art print for EUR 249.90 on Amazon’s



9 Roland Borchers, *Rauf und runter, Wand und Wende* (‘Up and Down, Wall and Turning Point’), 1990, oil on hard fiber, 170 × 150 cm, Collection of the artist



10 Neo Rauch, *Der Gärtner* ('The Gardener'), 1990, Oil canvas, 170 x 148 cm, Collection Siegfried Seiz, Reutlingen

from Rauch's official oeuvre thus undermines, in a strange dialectic, the very strategies by which it was to be outwitted.

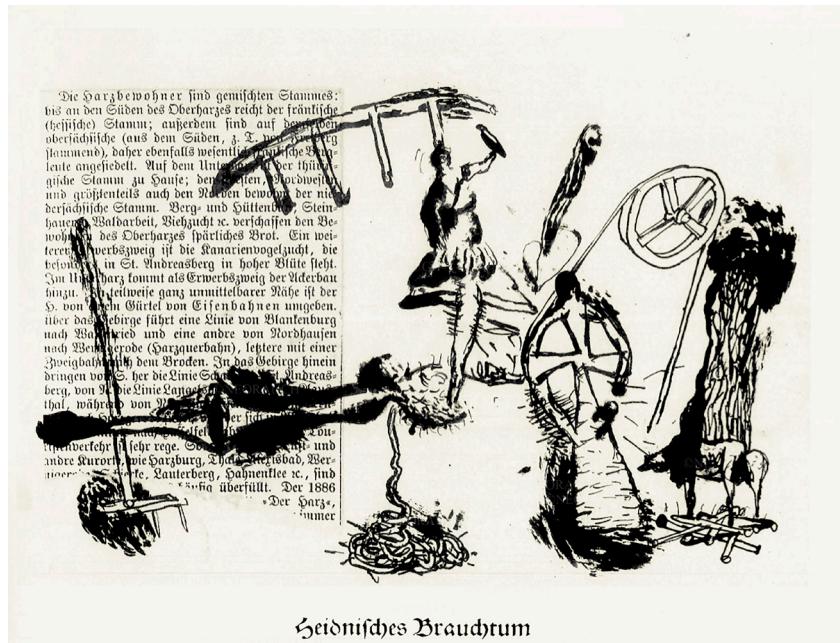
However, the market reacts with a slight price differentiation. Rauch's works from 1993 onwards sell for up to five times as much as those produced prior to that year, while his latest paintings carry a price tag up to ten times higher. This trend is also confirmed by the results posted by the 2012 edition of Art Basel, where two monumental paintings by Neo Rauch sold for EUR 720,000 each and a third for USD 850,000. In February 2014 his painting *Platz* ('Square') was sold at Christie's in London for EUR 1,066,472 and a year later *Reaktionäre Situation* ('Reactionary Situation') for EUR 1,049,958.⁵⁵ These are the highest prices the works of Neo Rauch have fetched so far.

Rauch's early works are bought and sold almost exclusively within Germany, moreover, whereas his current works attract an international clientele. If we take into account their size, technique and support, however, the price differentiation between individual works is much less marked. In December 2006, for example, a small Rauch self-portrait against a yellow background, painted in 1987 and measuring only approx. 80 x 60 cm, sold at Ketterer's for around EUR 80,000 – a huge sum when we consider that it represents a price of some EUR 220,000 per square metre.⁵⁶ However, the same painting only fetched EUR 38,000 at Christie's in Amsterdam in May 2019.⁵⁷

If we are to judge by the prices achieved at fairs such as Art Basel, it is nonetheless the recent paintings that achieve the highest degree of authenticity, while other phases of Neo Rauch's oeuvre are less authentic according to their price bracket. At the end of the day, in other words, it is the market that decides the authenticity of art. What role scholarship has to play in this process of authentication, and the extent to which scholarship is itself authentic and credible, are questions that must remain open. To be more precise: scholarship and scholars are only able to be authentic and hence credible to

German site.⁵³ The taste of the wider public, as reflected in the commercial market for such art prints, is evidently not influenced by magic year numbers.

The artist's and gallerist's strategies of authentication are extraordinarily strict. However, the market provides the means for a less biased view, in the form of the online databases that chart what is happening in the world's salerooms. A great many works from Rauch's early career have been sold at auction over the past two decades. Of the 111 lots that are listed for Rauch's paintings on the ARTNET platform in Summer 2012, for example, 50 date from the period before 1993 and only ten from 2000 onwards. In the years up to 2019 numerous pre-1993 works have been auctioned and sold.⁵⁴ Such figures show that works from Rauch's early years still make up a substantial proportion of his sales at auction. The market for whose sake such works were to be excluded



¹¹ Neo Rauch, *Heidnisches Brauchtum* ('Pagan Tradition'), in: Harz. Ein deutsches Gebirge. Die Reise danach. Ein Projekt der Galerie am Kraftwerk, ed. by Peter Lang, Leipzig 1991.

the extent to which they act independently of the market's protagonists. A postulate that applies not only to contemporary art, with its patent involvement of different interests, but equally to the art of the past.

Authentication and market manipulation are just one side of the coin, however. It also seems to me relevant to look at what ‘kind’ of works by Neo Rauch are today commanding such six-figure sums. And here we again find a confrontation of two different systems: on the one hand, an art oriented sooner towards symbols, represented by Rauch’s early work, and on the other his current production, which aims sooner towards a kind of narrative. Examples of this leaning towards symbolism can be seen in the painting *Die Kreuzung* of 1984 and the works on paper in Rauch’s *Harz* series of 1991 (see below).

Die Kreuzung, ("The Intersection") was part of a commission and was produced in 1984 on behalf of the Freie Deutsche Jugend ('Free German Youth') association for the Jugendhochschule Wilhelm Pieck just north of Berlin.⁵⁸ In a number of its details, the painting betrays a concept of art that is today considered incompatible with market criteria. It shows the intersection of Riemannstrasse and Peterssteinweg in Leipzig, with a view eastwards towards the Gothic Revival church of St Peter. The scene, situated a few steps from the artist's studio, is peopled by four young men, a young woman and a policeman. Three white doves are flying westwards. The most recent interpretations of this painting refer to its possible symbolism: frustrated youth at the crossroads, a traffic policeman with no traffic, doves overhead that may or may not represent doves of peace, and the huge eye on the advertising pillar that may or may not evoke the idea of the German Democratic Republic as a Big Brother state.⁵⁹ This form of enigmatic symbolism was typical of late East German painting. For those who wished to see it



12 Neo Rauch, *Nachhut* ('Rear Guard'), 2010, Bronze, 51 × 27 × 41 cm,
Hildebrand Collection, Leipzig

as such, it offered a theatrical setting for a range of meanings and starting points for a critical discourse referencing social reality. Neo Rauch continued to employ symbols as a means of expression even after the end of the GDR. A case in point is the above-mentioned 1991 series of works on paper, *Harz. Ein deutsches Gebirge. Die Reise danach*, which documents in artistic terms a trip through the Harz Mountains, the idea for which had been conceived in 1990.⁶⁰ The purpose of the trip was to explore the Harz Mountains that had previously been divided in two by the border with the West, and whose East German side Neo Rauch knew very well from his childhood. The aim was to experience the depth of Germany's past and thereby forge a kind of new identity. Together with his fellow artists Roland Borchers, Wolfgang Henne (born 1949) and Michael Kunert (born 1954), Rauch hiked through the mountains in the deliberate vicinity of the former border. Here, on this historically significant soil, it was possible to trace the Germanic mythology of ancient times and at the same time the impact of Germany's reunification upon the now undivided landscape. In works such as *Opferstätte*, *Heidnisches Brauchtum* and *Deutsche Treue*, with their themes of sacrificial sites, heathen practices and German allegiance, the artist celebrates the lines of tradition descending from the heathen Germanic past and converging within the Harz Mountains. The individual sheets making up the *Harz* portfolio combine excerpts from the entry devoted to the Harz region in Meyer's Lexicon of 1904 with cipher-like signs and figures laid out in a highly reduced form. A good example is the sheet *Heidnisches Brauchtum* ('Pagan Custom'; fig. 11). On the right, opposite a column of text from the encyclopaedia, we see a number of signs that are suggestive of sacrificial ceremonies or exhibit an obscure symbolism, among them a wheel with four spokes familiar as a symbol of the sun.

Another example is the sheet *Deutsche Treue*, where a sword on the right may be seen as a clear symbol of the 'German Allegiance' of the title. This use of symbols was still reminiscent of the painting

that had issued from the GDR. Discredited by this association, symbolism, it seems to me, had less prospect of success in reunified Germany where its creator looked back upon an East German training. Through the strategies of strict authentication already discussed, this form of symbolism was to be exorcised.

By contrast, the works that Neo Rauch is producing today offer the viewer far less symbolism and much more narrative. This is demonstrated, as we have already seen, by the painting *Der Rückzug* (fig. 3), with its firing squad and art public in the background and its petrol drums in the foreground. In what direction this little narrative can evolve is illustrated by Neo Rauch's bronze sculpture of 2010, *Nachhut* ('Rear Guard'; fig. 12): a hybrid creature who is part man and part beast walks onto the scene holding a petrol can in each hand. Neo Rauch's titles and subjects, with their often martial flavour, must possibly be seen as an indirect expression of the debates surrounding the art produced under Germany's two different art systems.⁶¹ In other words: does not Rauch's oeuvre ultimately touch upon fundamental issues of art in just the same way as abstraction and Expressionism before the two world wars and the Abstract Expressionism of the Cold War era? In short: does the question of evaluation here appear as a key issue of art, beyond the bounds of valuation by the market? Is Rauch's work not ultimately about the question of whether figural or abstract painting gains the upper hand in the war of the art systems? Rauch had already intimated something similar in the interview, cited earlier, that he gave in Lübeck in 1995. He makes the point even more clearly in 2009, in a text in which he ultimately insists on a primacy of figuration over abstraction: "Post Auschwitz and Hiroshima, abstraction and Informel were the art of the day, the only possible art, as they said at the time. Man had forfeited the privilege of being depicted as a result of these atrocities; the only option for the rest of eternity was to weigh up the respective qualities of painting materials and inject impulses and energy into each other. But no more representational painting. And, in the face of this, you have [Karl] Hofer. If you see a Hofer alongside a [Willi] Baumeister these days, it's easy to say who will still have something to say in future centuries, and who can probably only be associated with a certain design preference from a specific decade."⁶²

Epilogue

Recently, the year 1993 as the magical threshold for the authentication of Neo Rauch's oeuvre has begun to falter, or so it seemed. From October to December 2015, for example, the Kunstverein Zwickau showed the works of Rauch and his wife Rosa Loy in a joint exhibition. Among these works were also those from the 1980s, for example a 1983 portrait of Mick Jagger, which appears to be a self-portrait of the artist.⁶³ However, this exhibition was not documented by any catalogue. The same is true of an exhibition by the Neo Rauch Graphic Foundation in Aschersleben, where several of the artist's early works were shown for almost a year.⁶⁴ The prospect thus unfolds that an authentication, which the art market has already largely accomplished, will one day be made up for in a public museum.

Notes

- 1 Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter. Catalogue Raisonné I. Nos. 1–198, 1962–1968*, Ostfildern 2011, p. 13; Jürgen Schreiber, *Ein Maler aus Deutschland. Gerhard Richter. Das Drama seiner Familie*, Berlin 2007, pp. 214–215. The public discussion about de-authentication of Richter's early works began with the controversy over two of his works, the large wall painting *Lebensfreude* of 1956, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden, and the oil painting *Rheinhausen* of 1962. See Wolfgang Büscher, "Der verborgene Richter", in: *DIE ZEIT* 11th May 2008; Jürgen Schreiber's commentary on this article of 13th May 2008, <http://www.zeit.de/2008/20/Richter-Wandbild> (16th August 2020). *Rheinhausen* was auctioned in December 2012; see Sven Goldman Nicola Kuhn, "Das verstoßene Bild", in: *Tagesspiegel* 1st December 2012, and <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/gerhard-richter-das-verstoessene-bild/7464250.html> (14th December 2020). – For the problem of an artist's own interest in his catalogue raisonné see Peter J. Schneemann, "Eigennutz. Das Interesse von Künstlern am Werkkatalog", in: *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 62 (2005), pp. 217–224. – This text is a greatly expanded version of a talk I presented at the invitation of Johannes Nathan in the section "Cultural Clearings: The Object Transformed by the Art Market" at the CIHA conference in Nuremberg on 17 July 2012. For the translation of my text I would like to thank Karen Williams, to Neo Rauch for permission to reproduce his works, and for helpful suggestions Johannes Gebhardt, Johannes Nathan and Jeannette Stoscheck.
- 2 For the Leipzig School see Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, "Mitarbeit an einem Weltbild: die Leipziger Schule", in: *Kunst in der DDR*, ed. by Eugen Blume and Roland März, exhibition catalogue, National Galerie, Berlin 2003, pp. 45–59; Eckhart Gillen, *Feindliche Brüder? Der Kalte Krieg und die deutsche Kunst 1945–1990*, Bonn 2009, pp. 327–350; Tino Heim and Paul Kaiser, "Verdeckte Konflikte, offene Brüche. Die 'Leipziger Schule' als genealogisches Projekt" in: *60/40/20. Kunst in Leipzig seit 1949*, ed. by Karl-Siegbert Rehberg and Hans-Werner Schmidt, exhibition catalogue, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Leipzig 2010, pp. 116–122; Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, "Ideenzwang und Bildgleichnisse. Leipzig als Zentrum der DDR-Malerei", in: *ibid.*, pp. 19–35. – See also *Realisme uit Leipzig. Drie generaties Leipziger Schule*, ed. by Harry Tupan, exhibition catalogue, Zwolle 2009 ("Leipziger Schule" and "Neue Leipziger Schule"). Claus Baumann, *Es war einmal ... Vom Mythos der Leipziger Schule. Kunstgeschichten*, Leipzig 2013.
- 3 April Eisman, "Painting the East German Experience. Neo Rauch in the Late 1990s", in: *Oxford Art Journal* 35 (2012), pp. 233–249.
- 4 Renate Hartleb, "Die Malerei der 'Leipziger Schule' und die Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst", in: *Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig 1945–1989. Eine Ausstellung der Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst und des Museums der bildenden Künste Leipzig anlässlich des 225. Jubiläums der Hochschule, 8.4.1989 bis 28.5.1989*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1989, vol. 1, pp. 39–45.
- 5 This painting is now owned by the Kunsthalle der Sparkasse Leipzig. See <https://www.kunsthalle-sparkasse.de/suchergebnisse/kuenstler/neo-rauch.html> (23rd August 2020).
- 6 As far as I know, after the reunification of Germany in 1990, the term "Neue Leipziger Schule" was mentioned for the first time in print in *MERIAN. LEIPZIG 4* (2004), p. 50, and *ART Das Kunstmagazin* 12 (2004), pp. 3–4 and pp. 34–45. Internationally, the wording "New Leipzig School" was possibly inaugurated by Arthur Lubow, "The New Leipzig School", in: *The New York Times Magazine* 8th January 2006, pp. 38–43. As a phenomenon, the "New Leipzig School" is linked to the LIGA, a self-organized artists' gallery ("Produzentengalerie"), and to a major exhibition of this group in 2000. See *Sieben mal Malerei. Baumgärtel, Busch, Eitel, Kobe, Ruckhäberle, Schnell, Weischer*, ed. by Joseph Filipp, exhibition catalogue, Bielefeld 2003, pp. 6–7, though the introductory texts only speak of "junge Maler", "Leipziger Lerchen", "Leipziger Malerschule", "junge Malerei aus Leipzig" and "neue Leipziger Malerei". – For the "New Leipzig School" see also Carolin Modes, *Die Neue Leipziger Schule – Eine akteurzentrierte Diskursanalyse*, Norderstedt 2007, pp. 68–88; Paul Kaiser, "Die Stimmung ist besser als die Lage", in: *Kunstforum international* 176 (2005), pp. 147–158; Sophie A. Gerlach, *Neo Rauch: Bilder 1984–2005. Ansätze zu einem Werkverständnis*, Hamburg 2014, pp. 36–49; *Auf der Bühne: 15 Gespräche. Ein Porträt des Malers Matthias Weischer*, ed. by Michael Hametner, Halle (Saale) 2016, pp. 102–110.
- 7 Hartleb 1989 (as note 4), p. 45. – See also the literature in note 2 and 6. – A few years earlier, the wording "Neue Leipziger Schule" had already been used for the generation of painters such as Sighard Gille (b. 1941); see *Zeitvergleich. Malerei und Grafik aus der DDR*, ed. by Axel Hecht and Hanne Reinecke, exhibition catalogue, Hamburg 1983, p. 82.
- 8 Eisman 2012 (as note 3), p. 243. – The earliest of Rauch's painting I am aware of is *Head before purple Background* of 1982, Museum Jung Kunst, Frankfurt (Oder), no. M579, 583.
- 9 *Neo Rauch*, ed. by Hans Werner Holtzwart, with texts by Wolfgang Büscher, Harald Kunde, Gary Tinterow, Cologne 2010, pp. 68–70 and p. 448. – This position has again been underlined in *Neo Rauch. Selected Works 1993–2012*, ed. by Harald Kunde, exhibition catalogue, Centre of Fine Arts Brussels, Ostfildern-Ruit 2013, p. 15, and contradicted by Tupan 2009 (as note 2).
- 10 *Neo Rauch*, ed. by Deutsche Bank, exhibition catalogue, Sammlung Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt 2000, pp. 8–12.
- 11 *Neo Rauch. Randgebiet*, ed. by Klaus Werner, exhibition catalogue, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Haus der Kunst Munich, Kunsthalle Zürich, Leipzig 2000.
- 12 *Neo Rauch*, ed. by Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, exhibition catalogue, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht, Ostfildern-Ruit 2002.

- 13 *Neo Rauch – Begleiter*, ed. by Hans-Werner Schmidt and Bernhart Schwenk exhibition catalogue, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Pinakothek der Moderne Munich, Ostfildern-Ruit 2010; *Neo Rauch. Selected Works 1993–2012*, ed. by Harald Kunde, exhibition catalogue, Centre of Fine Arts Brussels, Ostfildern-Ruit 2013; *Neo Rauch. Painting 1993–2017*, ed. by Ralf Keuning, exhibition catalogue, Museum de Fundatie Zwolle, Ostfildern-Ruit 2017; Franziska Müller, *Neo Rauch. Narration im Bild. Eine Studie zum malerischen Werk von Neo Rauch*, Ph. D. thesis, Siegen University 2017, p. 96. – A few early works are discussed by Gerlach 2014 (as note 6), pp. 83–100, however without addressing the problem of authentication.
- 14 See the illustrations in: Werner 2000 (as note 11), pp. 42–43 and pp. 46–47. For the different phases of Rauch's pictorial style see also Gerlach 2014 (as note 13), pp. 81–138; Michael Glover, *Neo Rauch*, London 2019, pp. 21–39.
- 15 Schwenk 2010 (as note 13), p. 16.
- 16 For Rauch's irony see *Neo Rauch – Marineschule*, exhibition catalogue, Lübeck 1995, Leipzig 1995, p. 6. – For *Plazenta* and *Rückzug* see also p. 242 and Kunde 2013 (as note 9), pp. 14–15.
- 17 Early publications with pre-1993 paintings by Neo Rauch are: *X. Kunstausstellung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik Dresden 1987/88*, ed. by Ministerium für Kultur der DDR and Verband Bildender Künstler der DDR Dresden 1987, p. 78; *Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig – Studienergebnisse der Abteilung Malerei/Grafik 1980 bis 1987*, ed. by Stadt Duisburg, Duisburg 1987, p. 19 and p. 159; *Leipzig, Warschau, Wien, Berlin. Arbeiten aus 4 Kunsthochschulen. Künstlerwerkstatt im Bahnhof Westend*, ed. by Karl-Hofer-Gesellschaft and Hochschule der Künste Berlin, Berlin 1988, pp. 27–31; *Neo Rauch*, ed. by Galerie am Thomaskirchhof, Leipzig 1989; *Zwischenspiele*, ed. by Verband bildender Künstler der DDR and Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, Berlin 1989, pp. 54–55; *Leipziger Schule. Malerei/Grafik/Fotografie. Lehrer und Absolventen der Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig*, ed. by Städtische Galerie Schloß Oberhausen, Ludwig Institut für Kunst der DDR, Leipzig 1990, p. 147; *Neo Rauch. Bilder*, ed. by Galerie Schwind, Frankfurt 1991; *Junge Leipziger Kunst*, ed. by Staatliches Lindenau-Museum Altenburg, Ludwigshafen 1991, pp. 91–102; *Neo Rauch*, ed. by Galerie Alvensleben, Munich 1993; *Maren Roloff & Neo Rauch. Echoes*, ed. by Goethe House New York, New York 1995; *Neo Rauch. Kunstdpreis der Leipziger Volkszeitung*, ed. by Herwig Guratzsch, Leipzig, 1997. – See also Tupan 2009 (as note 2), pp. 105–107, and Eisman 2012 (as note 3), p. 237.
- 18 Deutsche Bank 2000 (as note 4), p. 8, Holtzwarth 2010 (as note 9), pp. 68–69; Eisman 2012 (as note 3), pp. 236–237; Gerlach 2014 (as note 13), p. 82 and pp. 322–324.
- 19 *Kunstarchiv Beeskow. See Junge Kunst im Auftrag. Jugendobjekt „Bildkünstlerische Ausgestaltung der Jugendhochschule Wilhelm Pieck“*, ed. by Zentralrat der FDJ, Potsdam 1986, p. 28.
- 20 Lempertz, 4th December 2010, lot no. 00507, <https://www.lempertz.com/de/kataloge/lot/971-1/507-neo-rauch.html> (23rd September 2020).
- 21 Kunsthalle der Sparkasse Leipzig, <https://www.kunsthalle-sparkasse.de/suchergebnisse/kuenstler/neo-rauch.html> (16th August 2020).
- 22 Kunsthalle der Sparkasse Leipzig, <https://www.kunsthalle-sparkasse.de/suchergebnisse/kuenstler/neo-rauch.html> (16th August 2020).
- 23 Ministerium für Kultur der DDR 1987 (as note 17), p. 463. Städtische Galerie Schloß Oberhausen 1990 (as note 17), p. 147.
- 24 Dorotheum, 25th November 2009, lot no. 171, http://www.kunstmarkt.com/pages/mag/marktberichte_grossbildansicht.html?berichtid=198556&bildid=198770&bk=013_16 (23rd September 2020).
- 25 Ketterer Kunst Munich, 9th June 2017, lot no. 466, <https://www.kettererkunst.com/result.php> (29th December 2019).
- 26 Ketterer Kunst, 4th December 2010, lot no. 202, <https://www.kettererkunst.com/result.php> (23rd September 2020).
- 27 Lempertz, Zeitgenössische Kunst, lot no. 508, 3rd December 2010, <https://www.lempertz.com/de/kataloge/lot/971-1/508-neo-rauch.html> (23rd September 2019). A number of similar paintings from this period can be found in Galerie Schwind 1991 (as note 17).
- 28 Collection Siegfried Seiz, Reutlingen. *Weltenwechsel. Sammlung Siegfried Seiz. Figürliche Malerei aus dem letzten Jahrzehnt der DDR und heute*, ed. by Siegfried Seiz, Reutlingen 2014, p. 66. *Point of no Return. Wende und Umbruch in der ostdeutschen Kunst*, ed. by Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, exhibition catalogue, Leipzig 2019, pp. 310–311.
- 29 Ketterer, 9th June 2012, lot no. 267, <http://www.kettererkunst.de/kunst/kd/details.php?obnr=112001167&anummer=393> (23rd September 2019).
- 30 Galerie Schwind 1991. See also the paintings of 1990 in der database artprice.com, https://de.artprice.com/artist/188117/neo-rauch/viele/vergangenheit/1/gemalde?year_from=1990&year_to=1990 (3rd February 2020).
- 31 See *Andere Länder, andere Sitten*, Van Ham, 31st May 2006, lot no. 514; *Blauer Bar Christie's London* 6th April 2006, lot no. 464; *Nacht in Havanna*, Van Ham, 4th June 2015, lot no. 237; https://de.artprice.com/artist/188117/neo-rauch/viele/vergangenheit?ipp=25&nbd=5&sort=datesale_desc&year_from=1990&year_to=1990 (13th February 2020).
- 32 Phillips de Pury & Company, 29th February 2008, lot no. 417, <https://www.phillips.com/search/1/?search=neo%20rauch> (12th September 2019). See also Staatliches Lindenau-Museum 1991 (as note 17); Galerie Alvensleben 1993 (as note 17).
- 33 See also Galerie Alvensleben 1993 (as note 17).
- 34 See Staatliches Lindenau-Museum 1991 (as note 17).
- 35 See Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig 2019 (as note 28), pp. 88–91.

- 36 See Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig 2019 (as note 28), pp. 88–91.
- 37 See the documentation of Borcher's early works in <https://private-kuenstlernachlaesse-brandenburg.de/lbk-sachsen/person/68> (5th February 2020).
- 38 <https://private-kuenstlernachlaesse-brandenburg.de/lbk-sachsen/person/68> (5th February 2020).
- 39 Staatliches Lindenau-Museum Altenburg 1991 (as note 17).
- 40 Unpublished, *Neo Rauch: Die informelle Malerei in der BRD. Diploma thesis. Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig*, Fachklasse Malerei / Grafik, Leipzig 1985, Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst – Academy of Visual Art Leipzig, Library, ZI 14101/ D701, p. 18 – For *Art Informel* in the GDR see *Gegenwelten. Informelle Malerei in der DDR. Das Beispiel Dresden*, ed. by Sigrid Hofer, exhibition catalogue, Dresden/Marburg/Frankfurt 2006.
- 41 Rauch 1995, pp. 6–10 (as note 16).
- 42 “Die Gefahr des Verschwindens im abstrakten Dschungel habe ich auch kennen gelernt, die bedrohliche Nähe habe ich verspürt und habe beizeiten Kurskorrekturen vorgenommen. Da war mir irgendwie klar, ich muß zusehen, dass ich zu einer eigenen Figur komme. Denn ich bin offenbar ein Erzähler, ich benötige Gegenständliches, um der Poesie meiner Träume näher zu kommen. Ich fing dann an, aus diesen Farbschlieren heraus Wesen zu fischen, die so etwas Vegetatives, Amöbenhaftes hatten. Inzwischen sind sie zu einer erfreulichen Klarheit geronnen. Ich kann jetzt endlich mit diesen Dingen buchstabieren.” Neo Rauch – Marineschule 1995 (as note 16), pp. 6–18, p. 18 (interview 20th July 1995 Roswitha Siewert), also printed in: Werner 2000 (as note 11), pp. 126–128. – Rauch has developed this view further in *Neo Rauch. Schilfland. Works on Paper*, Munich et al. 2009, pp. 82–84.
- 43 *Art. Das Kunstmagazin* 6 (1990), pp. 54–72.
- 44 *Auftrag: Kunst 1949–1990. Bildende Künstler in der DDR zwischen Ästhetik und Politik*, ed. by Monika Flacke, exhibition catalogue, Berlin 1995. – See “Im Auftrag der Bonzen”, in: *DER SPIEGEL* 4 (1995), p. 170, and Monika Flacke, “Waren die Maler nur Diener des Staates?”, in: *Berliner Zeitung* 3rd March 1995.
- 45 Paul Kaiser, “For eyes only. Unbefugtes Betreten? Der Weimarer Streit um die DDR-Kunst als Legitimationsfalle und Identitätsproblem”, in: *Der Weimarer Bilderstreit. Szenen einer Ausstellung. Eine Dokumentation*, ed. by Kunstsammlung zu Weimar, Weimar 2000, pp. 297–303. *Volks Eigene Bilder. Kunstbesitz der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR*, ed. by Dokumentationszentrum Kunst der DDR, Berlin 1999, pp. 9–15; *Zwischen Himmel und Erde. Landschaftsbilder aus der DDR*, ed. by Simone Tippach-Schneider, exhibition catalogue, Beeskow 2004, pp. 9–24. Eisman 2012 (as note 3), p. 243; Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, “Von der Unmöglichkeit einer Ausstellung. Einleitende Überlegungen zu ‘Abschied von Ikarus. Bildwelten in der DDR – neu gesehen’”, in: *Abschied von Ikarus. Bildwelten in der DDR – neu gesehen*, ed. by Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, Wolfgang Holler and Paul Kaiser, exhibition catalogue, Cologne 2012, pp. 14–25; *Bilderstreit und Gesellschaftsumbruch. Debatten um die Kunst der DDR im Prozess der Wiedervereinigung*, ed. by Karl-Siegbert Rehberg and Paul Kaiser, Berlin/Kassel 2013.
- 46 Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, “Zwischen Skandalisierung und Verdrängung: Bildwelten der DDR in Ausstellungen und Museen nach 1989”, in: Lutz Hieber, Stephan Moebius and Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, *Kunst im Kulturmampf. Zur Kritik der deutschen Museumskultur*, Bielefeld 2005, pp. 73–92; Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, “Zwischen Präsenz und Verdrängung. Bilder aus der DDR in Museen und Sammlungen”, in: *Stichwort Provenienz. Museums- und Sammlungspolitik DDR*, ed. by Katja Margareta Mieth, Dresden 2011, pp. 98–109. For the on going debate see also Anne Hähnig, “DDR-Kunst. Oder kann das weg?”, in: *DIE ZEIT* 23rd October 2017, <https://www.zeit.de/2017/43/ddr-kunst-museen-ostdeutschland-kuenstler-geschichte> (5th February 2021). Paul Kayser, “1989’ und die ostdeutsche Kunst”, in: Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig 2019 (as note 28), pp. 12–37, especially pp. 17–29.
- 47 *Aufstieg und Fall der Moderne*, ed. by Rolf Bothe and Thomas Föhl, exhibition catalogue, Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar, Ostfildern-Ruit 1999; Kunstsammlung zu Weimar 2000 (as note 42).
- 48 *DER SPIEGEL* 21 (1999). – See also Anja Hamm, “Der junge Rauch in Beeskow”, in: *Märkische Oderzeitung* 4th October 2010, <http://www.moz.de/artikel-ansicht/dg/0/1/262169> (17th September 2012).
- 49 Jost Hermand, *Politische Denkbilder. Von Caspar David Friedrich bis Neo Rauch*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2011, pp. 267–269. See also Kunde 2013 (as note 9), pp. 16–17.
- 50 Tim Ackermann, “Neo Rauch verdient Geld mit realem Sozialismus”, in: *DIE WELT* 18th April 2009, review of the dual exhibitions Schmidt 2010 (as note 13).
- 51 *Rauch*, ed. by Stiftung Frieder Burda and Werner Spies, exhibition catalogue, Museum Frieder Burda Baden-Baden, Ostfildern-Ruit 2011, pp. 60–61. For a review of this exhibition in *DIE ZEIT* I was provided with the proofs of the exhibition catalogue which still had the date 1992 for both paintings.
- 52 Clemens Bomsdorf, “It’s not what you paint, it’s the date when you do it. Art historian alleges that two works by Neo Rauch had their date of execution changed to increase their value”, in: *The Art Newspaper* 283 (September 2012).
- 53 <http://www.amazon.de/küche-haushalt/dp/B0098L6MT0> (16th August 2013 and 27th December 2020). At present the print is not available.
- 54 <https://www.artnet.com/price-database/> (28th June 2012) and <http://www.artnet.de/kuenstler/neo-rauch/?sort=11> (21st November 2019). – Similar figures can be found in the Artpice index which lists 226 paintings of which 78 date from before 1993 <https://de.artprice.com/artist/188117/neo-rauch/viele/vergangenheit/1/gemalte> (22nd December 2019).

- 55 Swantje Karich, "Anbau ist Umbau ist Beständigkeit", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 16th June 2012, p. 39 (*Männer mit Flugzeugen*, US\$ 850,000), https://www.christies.com/features/Neo_Rauch-5175-1.aspx and <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/neo-rauch-vorort-6038678--details.aspx?from=searchresults&cintObjectID=6038678&csid=1fffafca-3d43-4b2a-9181-a5df8bf32818> and https://de.artprice.com/artist/188117/neo-rauch/viele/vergangenheit/1/gemalde?sort=price_desc (29th December 2019).
- 56 Ketterer, Modern Art and Post War, 5th December 2006, lot no. 361 <https://www.kettererkunst.de/kunst/kd/details.php?obnr=100601044&canummer=306&detail=1> (28th June 2019). See also <http://www.artnet.com/artists/neo-rauch/self-portrait-j9MXwC1mrQ-n7FA8iShapQ2>. <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Self-Portrait/D4573FF6488B7DC8> (29th December 2019).
- 57 Ketterer, Modern Art and Post War, 5th December 2006, lot no. 361, <https://www.kettererkunst.de/kunst/kd/details.php?obnr=100601044&canummer=306&detail=1> (28th June 2019). Christie's Amsterdam, Post-War & Contemporary Art, 1st May 2019, lot no. 185, <https://de.artprice.com/artist/188117/neo-rauch/gemalde/18410469/self-portrait> (5th February 2020).
- 58 Zentralrat der FDJ 1986 (as note 19). The painting (oil on fiberboard, 223 × 169 cm) is housed by the Kunstarxiv Beeskow, see <https://www.bildatlas-ddr-kunst.de/item/897> (23rd September 2020). See also Axel Matthies, "Junge Kunst im Auftrag – Eine Erinnerung", in: *Freunde Schloss Biersdorf e.V.*, <https://www.stiftung-schloss-biesdorf.de/allgemein/ankuendigung-des-vortrages-januar-2015/> (30th December 2020).
- 59 *Bilder-Bühnen – Leinwandszenen aus dem Kunstarxiv Beeskow 1978–1988*, ed. by Simone Tippach-Schneider, exhibition catalogue, Beeskow, Beeskow 2010, pp. 60–61 and p. 88.
- 60 *Harz. Ein deutsches Gebirge. Die Reise danach. Ein Projekt der Galerie am Kraftwerk*, ed. by Peter Lang, Leipzig 1991. See also www.roland-borchers.de/download/bibliographie_borchers.pdf (12th August 2013). The new site of Roland Borchers shows no works from before 2006, see <http://www.roland-borchers.de/werkschau/thematische-arbeiten-oel-auf-leinwand/> (13th December 2020).
- 61 See Eisman 2012 (as note 3), pp. 241–243.
- 62 "Die Abstraktion, das Informel war die Kunst der Zeit nach Auschwitz und Hiroshima, die einzig mögliche, wie es seinerzeit hieß. Nachdem der Mensch sich seiner Darstellungswürdigkeit enthoben hatte durch diese Schreckenstaten, sollte es nur noch darum gehen, bis in alle Ewigkeit, die Qualitäten des Malmaterials gegeneinander aufzuwiegen und Impulshaftes und Energetisches ineinander schießen zu lassen. Aber keine Darstellung mehr. Demgegenüber dann Hofer. Wenn man heute einen Hofer neben einem Baumeister sieht, dann ist die Frage schnell zu beantworten, wer auch in künftigen Jahrhunderten noch eine Aussage zu treffen vermag und wer wahrscheinlich nur noch mit einer bestimmten Designvorliebe einer bestimmten Dekade in Zusammenhang gebracht werden kann." *Neo Rauch. Schilfland. Works on Paper*, Munich et. al. 2009, pp. 82–84, pp. 102–103.
- 63 Rosa Loy and Neo Rauch, *Perlmutter. Werke aus der eigenen Sammlung*, Kunstverein Freunde aktueller Kunst 2nd October 2015 – 2nd December 2015, Zwickau. See Jürgen Kleindienst, "Intim wie überraschend: Das Malerehepaar Rosa Loy und Neo Rauch in der Zwickauer Schau 'Perlmutter'", in: *Leipziger Volkszeitung* 9th November 2015, <https://www.lvz.de/Nachrichten/Kultur/Intim-wie-ueberraschend-Das-Malerehepaar-Rosa-Loy-und-Neo-Rauch-in-der-Zwickauer-Schau-Perlmutter>; Julia Voss, "Zwickau, zum Beispiel", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 2nd December 2015, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/kunst/perlmutter-rosa-loy-und-neo-rauch-stellen-in-zwickau-aus-13834678.html> (30th January 2021). Jürgen Kleindienst, "Bescherung im Bildermuseum: 20 Werke von Neo Rauch nach Leipzig", in: *Leipziger Volkszeitung* 21st Dezember 2017, <https://www.lvz.de/Nachrichten/Kultur/Kultur-Regional/Bescherung-im-Bildermuseum-20-Werke-von-Neo-Rauch-nach-Leipzig> (30th January 2021); Glover 2019 (as note 14).
- 64 Neo Rauch, *Das Fortwährende. Papierarbeiten 1989 – 1995*, Grafikstiftung Neo Rauch, Aschersleben, 6th June 2020 – 2nd May 2021, <https://www.grafikstiftungneorauch.de/ausstellung/das-fortwährende/> (30th January 2021). – See also the review by Joachim Lange, "Eine raunende Vorahnung – das Frühwerk von Neo Rauch", in: *Das Blättchen. Zweiwochenschrift für Politik, Kunst und Wirtschaft* 23 (13), 22nd June 2020, <https://das-blaettchen.de/2020/06/eine-raunende-vorahnung-das-fruehwerk-von-neo-rauch-53051.html> (26th June 2021).

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- Fig. 1: Neo Rauch, *Plazenta* ('Placenta'), 1993, Oil on paper, diameter 340 cm, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 2: Neo Rauch, *Großküche* ('Canteen Kitchen'), 1995, Oil on paper on canvas, 177 × 183 cm, Leipzig, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021

- Fig. 3: Neo Rauch, *Der Rückzug* ('The Retreat'), 2006, Oil on canvas, 300 × 420 cm, Basel, Fondation Beyeler; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 4: Neo Rauch, *Die Band* ('The Band'), 1987, Oil on hard fiber, 171 × 151, Leipzig, Kunsthalle der Sparkasse; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 5: Neo Rauch, *Männchen vor Industrielandchaft* ('Little Man in Industrial Landscape'), 1988 Oil on fiberboard, 83,7 × 60 cm, Ketterer Kunst Munich, 9th June 2017, lot no. 446; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 6: Neo Rauch, *Das Innere* ('The Interior'), 1990, Oil on hard fiber, 170 × 148 cm, Collection Siegfried Seiz, Reutlingen; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 7: Neo Rauch, *Das Opfer* ('Sacrifice'), 1990, Oil on hard fiber, 170 × 150 cm, exhibited in the Galerie Schwind, Frankfurt 1991; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 8: Neo Rauch, *Säuberung* ('Cleansing'), 1993, Oil on paper, 146 × 100 cm, exhibited in the Galerie Alvensleben, Munich 1993; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 9: Roland Borchers, *Rauf und runter, Wand und Wende* ('Up and Down, Wall and Turning Point'), 1990, oil on hard fiber, 170 × 150 cm, Collection of the artist; courtesy of the artist; © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 10: Neo Rauch, *Der Gärtner* ('The Gardener'), 1990, Oil canvas, 170 × 148 cm, Collection Siegfried Seiz, Reutlingen; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 11: Neo Rauch, *Heidnisches Brauchtum* ('Pagan Tradition'), in: *Harz. Ein deutsches Gebirge. Die Reise danach. Ein Projekt der Galerie am Kraftwerk*, ed. by Peter Lang, Leipzig 1991; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021
- Fig. 12: Neo Rauch, *Nachhut* ('Rear Guard'), 2010, Bronze, 51 × 27 × 41 cm, Hildebrand Collection, Leipzig; © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und Zwirner New York/London, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2021

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