

THREADS OF METAMORPHOSIS: FABRIC PICTURES BY SIGMAR POLKE

November 4, 2014 – January 15, 2015

NEW YORK – Nahmad Contemporary is pleased to present *Threads of Metamorphosis: Fabric Pictures by Sigmar Polke*, at our 980 Madison Avenue gallery in New York, running from November 4, 2014 through January 15, 2015. The selected masterworks in this exhibition evidence the artist's diverse and idiosyncratic engagement with fabric from the 1980s through the last three decades of his life. Polke's notoriously multidisciplinary approach produced an expansive oeuvre, marked by promiscuity in material and medium as well as an absence of identifiable style, yet all the while bearing the hallmark of his inimitable spirit as playful provocateur. This exhibition, featuring paintings from prestigious museums and private collections around the world, encapsulates the breadth of Polke's practice and creativity grounded in a specific body of work and the metamorphic qualities therein.

Sigmar Polke is widely regarded as one of the most enigmatic and influential artists of the Postwar era. In his early paintings of the 1960s, Polke took on objects of desire within Germany's growing consumer culture as his subject matter, creating his first fabric picture in 1964. The fabrics he incorporates throughout his career signify their sociological and historical origin. These inexpensive textiles, used for curtains, upholstery, and tablecloths, foreground the physical surface of the painting and in turn, undermine the traditional subject-background dichotomy: the historically neutral canvas support becomes the art itself.

The fabrics served as fertile testing ground for Polke's heterogeneous experimentation with the pictorial conventions of painting. Informed by his travels and exploration of photography during the preceding decades, the early 1980s ushered in a period of maturity for the artist. He mined and manipulated every conceivable category of unconventional materials, including toxic pigments and reactive chemicals, which resulted in unstable compositions that changed and reacted to time, temperature, humidity, and light. Polke was a master of superimposing disparate images and forms, sustaining a duality in figuration and abstraction to create visual analogs of various states of consciousness or evocations of occult phenomena. By overlaying imagery on printed fabrics, he telescoped the patterns of the fabric with the images he painted and the random poolings and drippings.

Through their plurality in sources and techniques, the exhibited works are unparalleled in Polke's ability to weave together fragmented moments in time, to utilize disparate media, and to illuminate seminal art historical moments, as well as allegorical and cultural references. He freely reshuffled imagery from all disciplines to create a formal metaphor for the complexities of contemporary existence. At the core of his practice, Polke sought to illuminate the inability for anything, in art or life, to maintain absolute meaning and questioned the very nature of meaning itself. *Threads of Metamorphosis* demonstrates Polke's uncanny ability to capture the ambiguity of reality.