

Menagerie

**Sabina Grzimek, Peter Herrmann, Ralf Kerbach,
Heidrun Rueda, Hans Scheib**

Painting, Sculptures, Works on Paper

Opening: Thursday, 13th June 2024, 6–9 p.m.

Exhibition from 14th June to 27th July 2024 (in August by appointment)

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and by appointment

This summer, Galerie Poll will be transformed into a “menagerie”: native and exotic animals will appear in paintings, sculptures, and watercolours by Sabina Grzimek, Peter Herrmann, Ralf Kerbach, Heidrun Rueda, and Hans Scheib.

One of the oldest animal encyclopaedias is Aristotle’s: his treatise *Historia animalium*, written in 335 BCE, classifies animals according to their appearance, behaviours, and habitats. In realistically capturing individual animals with their anatomy and unique movements, the Renaissance elevated their representation to an ideal. Albrecht Dürer was among the first artists to regard animals as a worthy subject for art, beyond mere sketches. The works of the artists presented in “Menagerie” prominently feature animal depictions.

The oil paintings, sculptures and works on paper, some created specifically for this exhibition, open a dialogue – revealing, in their juxtaposition, “animalistic”, wild, or even tamed aspects of their respective worldviews.

Sabina Grzimek draws her themes from her personal surroundings and experiences. Che, her dog, frequently serves as a model for her sculptures. Employing an expressive yet sensitive language of forms, the artist captures the essence of the animals she creates, as with her bronze of a pregnant donkey or a cow turning away with an udder full of milk.

Heidrun Rueda paints her naturalistic motifs partly from photographs and partly from her own observations in the wild. The exhibition includes a selection of small-format oil paintings depicting owls, a bird family with some 200 species. Rueda focuses on animals close to home: tawny owls, barn owls, and eagle owls.

With “Salute Vittore Carpaccio!” (2003), Peter Herrmann pays homage to a painting by the Venetian Renaissance artist. Against a blue background, a woman sits, bending over a lapdog. The small creature stands on its hind legs, looking up at its owner, who plays with its front paws. Beside her is a large vase with a bouquet of calla lilies, and in front of it, a small, shaggy cat. True to his style, Herrmann has captured the traditional scene in surprisingly simple forms and added a comic element missing from the original artwork. The painter also adds an ironic twist to the genre of lifelike animal painting: his otherwise fearsome big cat lounges on its back under the title “When Leopards Dream”.

Ralf Kerbach takes a different approach with his oil paintings “White Horse”, “Group of Horses”, and “Goats”. Created from studies in nature, the brushstrokes remain sketch-like,

and the application of colour is translucent. Kerbach's "Moonlit Night" from 2023, by contrast, is painted "from the mind." In a stylised depiction built up from thickly applied, opaque colours, a white cat and a black dog face off. The animals fight over a macaw, their teeth bared in greedy anticipation. All the while the moon shines in the clear sky, quietly illuminating a bare tree and some houses.

With Hans Scheib's sculptures, several exotic animals also join Poll's menagerie: the sculptor has carved a snake (2005) out of wood that coils itself into a high tower, painted in red and green colours typical of the species; or a wooden monkey with an extremely long tail, its teeth bared in a threatening snarl. In his expressive wooden sculptures, Scheib successfully develops his own style, clearly referencing the tradition of Expressionism.

Sabina Grzimek (born 1942) completed her studies in sculpture at the Weißensee Academy of Art Berlin (Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weißensee) in 1967; she was a master student of Fritz Cremer at the Berlin Academy of Arts (Akademie der Künste) from 1969 to 1972. Honours such as the Käthe Kollwitz Prize (1983) and the Honorary Prize of the Prime Minister of the State of Brandenburg for a lifetime achievement (2011), among others, testify to the recognition of her work. Her works are held by distinguished collections, including the Nationalgalerie Berlin, which devoted a retrospective exhibition to her in 1992.

After being trained in chemigraphy, **Peter Herrmann** (born 1937), attended painting courses with Jürgen Böttcher-Strawalde from 1953. In 1984 he left East Germany and emigrated to Hamburg; since 1986 he has lived in (West) Berlin. In 1998 Herrmann received the Villa Romana Prize, Florence, and in 2001 the Fred Thieler Prize from the Berlinische Galerie. His works are included in the collections of the Berlinische Galerie, as well as the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, and the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, among others.

Ralf Kerbach (born 1956) studied painting and graphic art with Prof. Gerhard Kettner at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts (Hochschule für Bildende Künste) from 1977 to 1979, when the GDR forced him to leave the university. He then relocated to West Berlin in 1982. In 1986/87 he received a scholarship from the Germany Academy in Rome, at the Casa Baldi in Olevano; from 1992 to 2023 he taught painting and graphic arts as a professor at the HfBK Dresden. His works are held in collections including the Berlinische Galerie, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, and the Museum Barberini Potsdam.

Heidrun Rueda (born 1963) studied painting at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts (Hochschule für Bildende Künste) under Professor Günther Horlbeck and was a master student from 1994 to 1996. In 1994 she received the Saxon State Scholarship; in 1999 a working scholarship from the Stiftung Kunstfonds; and in 2004 a scholarship at Wiepersdorf Castle. Rueda's works are held in private and public collections, including the Brandenburgisches Landesmuseum für moderne Kunst Frankfurt an der Oder, the German National Library Frankfurt am Main, and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris.

Hans Scheib (born 1949) studied at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts (Hochschule für Bildende Künste) from 1971 to 1976, after which he lived as a sculptor in Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin. In 1985, he moved to West Berlin. He received the Förderpreis from the Academy of

Arts, Berlin in 1995, and the Egmont Schaefer Prize for Drawing in 2014. In 2004, he was awarded a residency at Villa Romana in Florence. His works are held by institutions including the Berlinische Galerie, the Museum Ludwig in Aachen, the Nationalgalerie Berlin, and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.