

[Polke at the Tate](#)[Polke at the Guggenheim](#)[Polke at MoMA](#)[Polke at Michael Werner](#)**Sigmar Polke (German, 1941-2010)**

One of Polke's first solo exhibitions in the United States was at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1991. Scroll through [installation images](#) on the MCA's exhibition archive.

The [Dallas Museum of Art](#) organized *Sigmar Polke: Recent Paintings and Drawings* in 2003, which traveled to the [Tate Modern](#) as *Sigmar Polke: History of Everything*. The exhibition featured works created between 1997 and 2003 inspired by the American West, especially the shooting arcades, gun sellers, and gun culture in Texas.

In 2005, The Ueno Royal Museum in Tokyo and Osaka National Museum of Art installed [Sigmar Polke: Alice In Wonderland](#). Read a review by Matthew Larking in [Artscape Japan](#).

[Sigmar Polke: Photographs, 1968-1972](#) was on display at the Getty Center in 2007. That same year, Museum Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden, Germany installed a retrospective bringing together 60 paintings and 114 works on paper. Watch a [VTV Classics video](#) about the exhibition.

In 2007, Polke's famous series, *Axial Age*, was shown at the 52nd Venice Biennale. Read a [New York Times article](#), "The Alchemist's Moment: The Reclusive Mr. Polke," in anticipation of the installation.

Raphael Rubinstein, who wrote a monograph on Sigmar Polke in 2009, [reflected](#) on what he would have asked the artist at the time of his death in 2010.

Polke rarely gave interviews. Read an article in the Guardian by Adrian Searle, "[Sigmar Polke – Sorry I Missed You](#)," reflecting on an ill-fated interview attempt in 1995.

Alibis: Sigmar Polke 1963-2010 retrospective traveled between the [Museum of Modern Art](#) in New York, the [Tate Modern](#) in London, and the [Museum Ludwig](#) in Cologne in 2014. Read a review of the MoMA edition in [Hyperallergic](#) and the Tate edition in the [Guardian](#).

Watch a [Tate Shots video](#) about Sigmar Polke's unusual materials and techniques, from snail juice to meteor dust and potatoes.

A 2016 exhibition at [Palazzo Grassi](#) in Venice, Italy included works that won the artist the Golden Lion at the 42nd Venice Biennale in 1986. [Watch a tour](#) of the exhibition with the curators and flip through the [exhibition catalogue](#).

[Productive Interference: Sigmar Polke and Artistic Perspectives Today](#) was on display at the Kunsthalle Dusseldorf in 2021-2022. The exhibition marked the 80th anniversary of the artist's birth, juxtaposing Polke's work with 21st century artists exploring similar themes of fake news, manipulated images, and information transmission.



Polke, 1999
Photograph: Franziska Adriani



Polke in his studio, 2007
Photograph: Albrecht Fuchs



Sigmar Polke (German, 1941-2010)

Bikini Frauen, 2004

Acrylic and interference color on canvas

Private Collection; L2023:74.11

In the 1960s, Sigmar Polke and several other like-minded young artists founded the tongue-in-cheek Kapitalistischer Realismus (Capitalist Realism) movement in West Germany. The movement's style was derived from advertising, newsprint, and other commercial imagery, akin to the Pop Art movement in the United States. Like Pop artists such as Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) and Andy Warhol (1928-1987), Polke was particularly interested in the mechanized raster dot printing process. However, Polke used the imagery to critique the process, assert the dominance of painting, and question the truthfulness of mass-media. **Bikini Frauen** is one of many works that features the bikini-clad female form – an ever-present subject in magazine advertising and pop culture gossip columns. As the artist once said: “The conventional definition of reality, and the idea of ‘normal life,’ mean nothing.”

On view October 25, 2023 – January 28, 2024

Sigmar Polke (German, 1941-2010)

Rasterbild mit Palmen, 1966

Dispersion on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:192.1

"I like the way that the dots in a magnified picture swim and move about. The way that motifs change from recognizable to unrecognizable, the undecided, ambiguous nature of the situation, the way it remains open.... Many dots vibrating, swinging, blurring, reappearing: one could think of radio signals, telegraphic images, television come to mind" (Sigmar Polke, 1966).

Sigmar Polke moved as a boy with his family from East to West Germany in 1953. In the 1960s, he founded the tongue-in-cheek Kapitalistischer Realismus (Capitalist Realism) movement with Gerhard Richter (b. 1932) and Konrad Lueg (1939-1996). Like Pop Art in the United States, the movement's style was derived from advertising, newsprint, and other commercial imagery, and in Polke's case, a biting sense of humor. However, the artists worked to challenge the dominance of US Pop Art and situated their practice in the political context of postwar West Germany. **Rasterbild mit Palmen** was made in 1966, the same year as Polke's first solo exhibition in Berlin. The work is one of the artist's *Rasterbilders* (Raster-dot paintings), a series of magnified, pixelated images that question the apparent truth in mechanically printed photographs in the media.

On view May 18 – August 21, 2022

