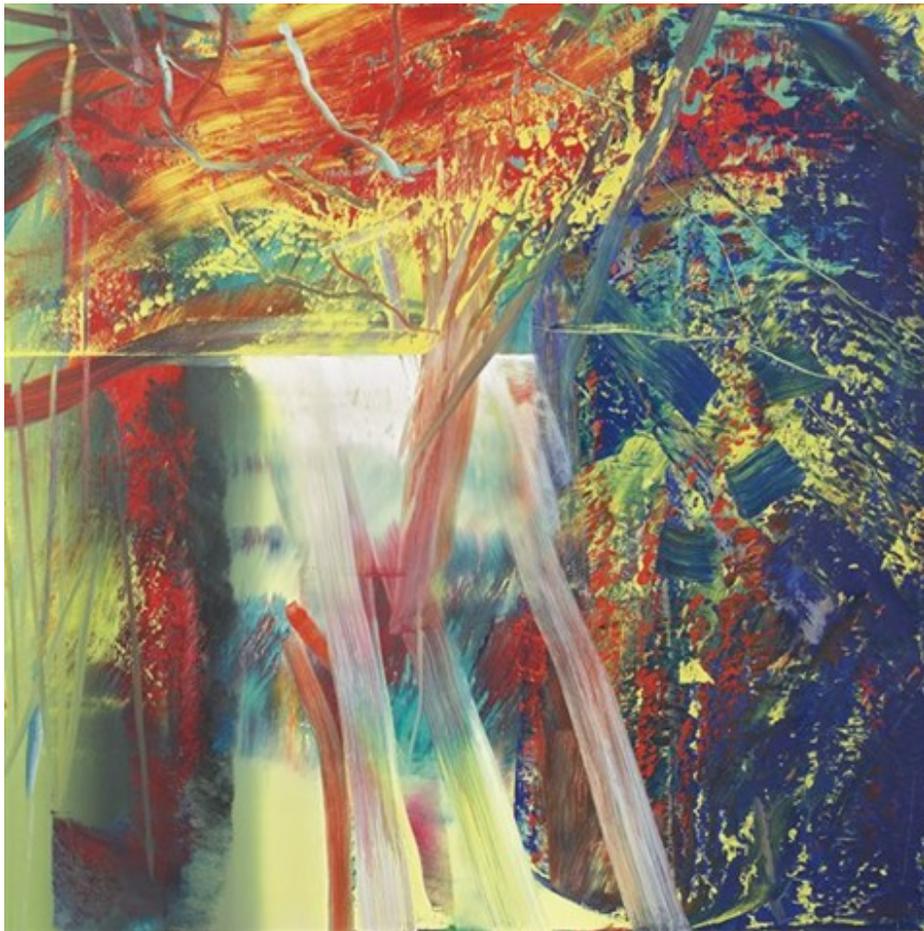


# PHILLIPS

PRESS RELEASE

## Phillips Presents Gerhard Richter: Abstraktes Bild

Exhibition On View at Phillips' Park Avenue Galleries from  
7 January – 9 February



**Gerhard Richter**  
*Abstraktes Bild 610-1, 1986*  
oil on canvas

NEW YORK – 6 JANUARY 2017 – Phillips is pleased to present *Gerhard Richter: Abstraktes Bild*, which focuses on the artist's ongoing exploration of abstraction, a fascination of his since the early 1960s. Spanning over 40 years, the exhibition will be on view at Phillips' 450 Park Avenue headquarters from 7 January – 9 February 2017 and includes a number of iconic, large-scale "squeegee" paintings, two monumental tapestries, one 16-part editioned work, and a rare self-portrait from 1971. Comprised of works available for sale and loans, *Gerhard Richter: Abstraktes Bild* will highlight Richter's monumental achievements, and innovation, in the realm of abstraction.

Robert Manley and Jean-Paul Engelen, Phillips' Worldwide Co-Heads of 20th Century & Contemporary Art, said, "Arguably the most successful and celebrated painter practicing today, Gerhard Richter's contribution to the development of painting is impossible to overstate. We are delighted to present this selection of examples from his most iconic body of work and to provide viewers with the opportunity to engage with these seldom-exhibited paintings and innovative editioned works together in one space."

1968 marked the beginning of Richter's intensive engagement with abstraction, which began with his mostly grey monochrome paintings. Richter painted *Ohne Titel (Selbstportrait)*, 1971 (illustrated right) during this pivotal moment and it stands as one of the most significant works in the exhibition. Many of Richter's portrait paintings were based on photographs and there is very likely an image of the artist at an earlier point in his life obscured beneath this painterly field of brown, grey, ochre, and yellow. *Ohne Titel (Selbstportrait)* is one of less than ten self-portraits by Richter to date, and the only abstract one.



**Gerhard Richter**  
*Ohne Titel (Selbstportrait)*, 1971  
oil on canvas



**Gerhard Richter**  
*Kegel (cone)*, 1985  
oil on canvas

Highlighting the exhibition are four large-scale *Abstraktes Bild* paintings from 1985-1991 (one example, page 1). The artist executed his first painting utilizing a squeegee in 1980; this tool would come to define Richter's abstract oeuvre from then onwards. The squeegee enabled Richter to expose and obscure various layers of overpainting and underpainting within his compositions, effecting compositional nuances impossible to achieve with a brush alone. *Stuhl* and *Kegel*, both from 1985, as well as *Abstraktes Bild (610-1)*, 1986, (illustrated left), are examples of this breakthrough period when Richter is using both the brush and the squeegee to make paintings. This compound technique forms an intricate and multi-dimensional entirety, cohesive yet complex in construction. Adding to the dramatic tension of these paintings is the high-keyed color palette of fiery reds, deep azure blues, and electric yellows.

Complementing the aforementioned works, *Abstraktes Bild (747-4)*, 1991, is from a series of four all-red paintings that were exhibited in Richter's 1994 retrospective. A fifth squeegee painting, *Abstraktes Bild (940-2)*, 2015, illustrates Richter's continued dedication to the ideas set forth in the earlier works on view.

Richter has long used multiples to challenge the notion of what is unique. He created *Cage Grid (Komplettes Set)* (illustrated right), in 2011 - an editioned work that is directly derived from *Cage 6*, a large scale abstract painting which took John Cage's aleatoric compositions as inspiration. *Cage Grid (Komplettes Set)* is made up of 16 square prints that together comprise the original composition. By executing



**Gerhard Richter**  
*Cage Grid (Komplettes Set)*, 2011  
Giclee print on paper mounted on aluminum

a print of an earlier painting, and then subdividing that print into another series, Richter confounds the viewer's understanding of what can be considered to be the "whole" composition – each section being deemed both a part of, and manifesting, the whole. Finally, there are two additional, editioned works, *P1 (Abstraktes Bild)* and *P2 (Haggadah)* also based on earlier abstract paintings.

One of Richter's most ambitious recent projects is a series of heroically scaled tapestries, which rival his paintings in size and intensity. The artist created each of the four tapestries by taking one quadrant of his painting, *Abstraktes Bild (724-4)*, and mirroring it across all the axes of the picture plane to create these radical, new compositions. Writing about the tapestries, curator Francesco Bonami has said, "the hand of the artist has disappeared to make room for a mystical experience...what finally makes the tapestries extraordinary is their capacity to balance the psychological, the physical, and the spiritual." Critically acclaimed, they are visually and conceptually complex; even their names add another layer of meaning – *Yusuf* (illustrated right) and *Abdu* alluding to Sufism and to the culture of Persia and the Middle East.



**Gerhard Richter**  
*Yusuf*, 2009  
jacquard woven tapestry

**Exhibition:** 7 January – 9 February 2017

**Hours:** Monday to Saturday 10am-6pm (Closed 14-16 January)

**Location:** 450 Park Avenue, New York

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#### PRESS CONTACTS:

NEW YORK - Michael Sherman, *Chief Communications Officer*

[msherman@phillips.com](mailto:msherman@phillips.com)

+1 212 940 1384

NEW YORK - Jaime Israni, *Public Relations Specialist*

[jisrani@phillips.com](mailto:jisrani@phillips.com)

+1 212 940 1398

HEADQUARTERS: LONDON - 30 Berkeley Square, London W1J 6EX | NEW YORK - 450 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022

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