

ROSENBAUM

contemporary

SIGMAR POLKE

Sigmar Polke was an influential German artist whose inventive paintings and photographs used non-traditional materials, such as meteorite dust or detergent. The artist once stated, "There has to be an element in of risk-taking for me in my work." His wry probing of aesthetic taste is evident in his work "Alice im Wunderland (Alice in Wonderland)" (1972), a painting layered with irony, psychological states, and fiction.

Born on February 13, 1941, in Oels, Polke and his family were expelled to East Germany after the World War II. Growing up in the German Democratic Republic left a lasting impact on the artist, especially the sensorial overload of consumer culture he experienced upon moving to West Germany in 1953.

While studying at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Polke, Gerhard Richter, and Konrad Lueg created what is now known as capitalist realism. Together, these artists responded to the nationalistic themes of socialist realism, while also critiquing West Germany's burgeoning consumer society. Polke's work went on to have a profound impact on a generation of young American artists, including Julian Schnabel and David Salle.

Polke died on June 10, 2010, in Cologne, Germany, at the age of 69.

Today, his works are included in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Gallery in London, the Kunstmuseum Bonn in Germany, and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, among others.