

dresden

artotel

a.r. penck
a.r. penck exhibition

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artotel dresden is dedicated to a. r. penck, one of the most significant artists of post-bellum germany, and it is currently exhibiting a sensational collection of his creative works in a permanent museum-like exhibition. large format paintings, silk prints, sketches, wall reliefs, and sculptures decorate the spacious entrance hall as well as the corridors, the conference rooms and the restaurant as well as the 174 guest rooms. penck's 2.5 tonne, 6.4 metre high bronze sculpture standart t (x) is crowning the roof and welcoming the guest at great distance.

artist background

born ralf winkler in dresden in 1939, a. r. penck has often been described as a man and artist who found the feeling of being rooted in a community and a state unbearable. after quitting school and abandoning an apprenticeship, he applied to the art academy in east berlin and dresden. he was rejected a number of times and began an apprenticeship as a graphic artist at the east german state-owned "people's advertising agency". thereafter he had his first exhibition. since then penck has continuously worked as an artist, and he now lives in dublin, berlin, and london. his acquaintance with west german gallerists in 1965 led to other exhibitions, including his participation in documenta7 in 1987, and to greater successes in the federal republic of germany. penck developed a new and distinctive pictorial language. towards the end of the 1960s he began to work with signals, signs and symbols, and he chose his pseudonym based upon the geologist and climatologist albrecht penck (1858-1945). his study of system theory is apparent in the 28 drawings exhibited in the halls of each floor of the building. these are sketch-studies of abstract thought processes: outlines of scientific biological and mathematical models reminiscent of family trees, cell groups and molecular structures. "each of the three systems reaches an almost similar problematical form following various organizational principles", wrote penck on one of his sketches. penck's artwork was rejected in east germany; having struggled with the political system of the gdr for years, penck left the country permanently and moved to cologne when his friend, wolf biermann, was deprived of his east german citizenship.

art in the hotel

penck's reduction of the complexity of the modern world through the use of abstract forms also affected his depiction of people. he disembodied them, rendering them as signs reminiscent of the stick men in archaic cave paintings or of graffiti. silk prints in bright colours on every floor of the building depict figures in numerous variations, each accompanied by a flat sculpture in which the figures appear to come dancing out of the metal. a total of six large format canvas works greet the guests in the corridors from the first to the sixth floor. worldview future on the second floor is one of penck's so-called "world pictures" reflecting both the political protest over the situation between east and west as well as the utopian longing for a peaceful world. political concepts also play a central role in other series of works. the work standart is hard from the "standart" series of the 1970s – a combination of "standard" and "art" – can be seen on the fourth floor. on the next floor you will find a work from the "mike hammer" series, a reference to the hero of a detective series and another pseudonym that penck assumed temporarily during his service as a reservist in the east german people's army in 1973. in this series he expressed his critique of present day socialism. in the same corridor, from the vantage of a sitting area in front of the wellness facility, guests have a breathtaking view of the historical buildings in the centre of dresden and the best view of the colossal bronze statue on the roof of the building.

total numbers of artworks: 706

best known artworks: black, red and white lion, colonisation of the moon, bronze sculpture standart t (x)

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ostraaallee 33
01067 dresden, germany
www.artotels.com

t: +49 (0) 351 4922 0
e: addinfo@pphe.com

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