



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The University Gallery of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst is pleased to present an installation of recent work by German artist GEORG HEROLD from September 10 through October 19. Included in the exhibition are five sculptures from 1986-88, as well as new work created by the artist while in residence at the University of Massachusetts in August and September.

Georg Herold's work is characterized by a reduction of materials, form, and subjective content. Wood lath, brick, wire, and twine, chosen by Herold for their 'neutrality', form the basis of his recurring vocabulary of materials. Possessing no intrinsic aesthetic value, they are however imbued with cultural and historical associations, and are adapted by the artist to a number of forms. In Herold's work, materials are combined to shape ideas that in combination with his spare form give the work its structural force.

Herold acts as a social observer, incorporating in his work personal references to cultural, historic, aesthetic, and philosophical issues. Certain motifs recur--hands, the concept of mother--themes which have basic, underlying social significance and subjective connotations. Herold uses these motifs as if to signify a specific meaning, then denies their assimilation by combining disjunctive materials and themes in such a way as to form contradictions. Overloading the viewer's capacity to absorb and interpret any one meaning, the work thus expands our acceptance of other meanings. Herold calls this phenomenon the "Uncertainty Principle. Established in 1927 by W. Heisenberg," and describes it as follows: "The growing certainty (distinctness, precision) of some components is achieved at the expense of the growing uncertainty of others. The uncertainty can be said to transfer itself from the object to the beholder."

In "Mutter's Hände (Vorsicht das Auge)," ["Mother's Hands (Watch out for your eye)"], a work from 1986 included in the exhibition, two three-fingered hands are splayed against the wall. The hands are attached to a wooden T-shaped block from which a long metal spear projects into space at eye level, forming the warning implicit in the work's title. The menacing object, which invades the viewer's space, embodies enigmatic and conflicting information. Mother's hands may be equated with protection and caring, and possibly with the legendary women of Germany, who, following World War II, rebuilt their cities by hand, brick by brick. The antipodal elements of care and danger are thus juxtaposed and may suggest a mother's guidance cautioning against danger, or alternatively warn the viewer against sentimentalizing the concept of motherhood.

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The work engenders personal and emotionally charged associations, only to deny access to literal meaning. Ultimately, Herold's work--paradoxical, humorous, deadly serious, and caring--with its delicate balance of equations and disjunctions, is about probing and analyzing the process of making, assigning, and interpreting meaning.

Georg Herold was born in Jena, East Germany, in 1947. He left East Germany by the exchange system in 1973, studying art in Munich, and later in Hamburg with Sigmar Polke, among others. He has exhibited with Albert Oehlen, Werner Büttner, and Martin Kippenberger, and has had several solo exhibitions in Europe,, and at Koury Wingate in New York last spring. His work was included in the exhibition "Similia/Dissimilia," organized by Columbia University, and will be part of the upcoming binational exchange exhibition organized by the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and the Städtische Kunsthalle and the Kunst-Sammlung Nordrhein Westphalen, Dusseldorf. Georg Herold lives and works in Cologne.

The artist will deliver a public lecture on his work in September at the University of Massachusetts. The exhibition and lecture are supported by funds from the University's Arts Council and Alumni Association. The University Gallery, located in the Fine Arts Center, is open to the public Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m.