

Time Out London

Art

Georg Baselitz



WHAT IS IT...
Giant paintings by a German master.

WHY GO...
You should see these ruminations on corporeal ablation in the flesh.

→ White Cube Bermondsey,
↳ London Bridge.
Until Jul 3. Free.



ALONG WITH ANSELM KIEFER and Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz is one of the big three of German painting: big themes, big works, very big money. You can't miss the bigness in this show. Baselitz has taken over the whole of White Cube, and that's a lot of space.

Giant paintings and bronzes command the rooms. The theme seems to be personal mortality, though the massive crude black sculptures with their jackboot heels (a Baselitz motif) and the dark, smeary painting 'Ofenruß' ('Oven Soot') hint at Germany's past. In most of the canvases one or two pallid figures appear and reappear: sometimes upside-down, sometimes on their sides, or sometimes headless, floating on grounds that are mottled like ancient skin or the night sky. They're called things like 'A Poor Future': unusually for Baselitz, there aren't many laughs here.

In a way, the scale of these works makes them hard to get a handle on. They're undeniably impressive but so what? In this, though, they reflect Baselitz's perennial anxieties: how can you hope to make work about death or art or history, without just standing there at a loss? Things are becoming the past even as we experience them, and there are much worse places to realise that than this sombre show. ■ *Chris Waywell*

Booking ahead

Art Night

This new art all-nighter will see venues around Westminster, including the disused Jubilee Line platform of Charing Cross Station, taken over by a host of ace contemporary artists. Free tickets are released at noon on Monday May 9. Find out more at www.ica.org.uk/artnight.

→ Various venues, Jul 2.



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SPOTLIGHT ON...

The exhibition that's permanently closed

What's going on here?

Not much. Chisenhale Gallery exhibiting artist Maria Eichhorn – well, she's isn't exhibiting. Instead, she's closed the gallery down for the duration of the show and given staff five weeks of paid time off.

That's nice for them. But what about the rest of us?

You need to get on board with Eichhorn's concept. What she's trying to do is raise questions about the role that work plays in our lives.

Okay. But is this...

Seriously, don't: PLEASE don't ask if this is art.

Actually, I was going to ask whether this is the best way of getting these ideas across. It's about screwing with the system.

But wait, is she really screwing with the system?

The Chisenhale gets public funding, and it's given her permission to do this. Aren't we going round in circles here? That does tend to happen when you start talking about art. ■ *Matt Breen*

→ 5 weeks, 25 days, 175 hours' runs at the Chisenhale Gallery until May 29. Kind of.

