

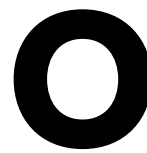


1. *SLEEPING FIELD* (2015–16), BY ANTONY GORMLEY, IS JUST ONE OF THE MANY WORKS ON VIEW AT SCHLOSS DERNEBURG, A HISTORIC CASTLE IN NORTHWESTERN GERMANY THAT WAS RECENTLY TRANSFORMED INTO A MUSEUM BY THE HALL ART FOUNDATION. 2. THE BUILDING WAS PREVIOUSLY OWNED BY ARTIST GEORG BASELITZ.

1

Noble Spirit

A family of collectors transforms a historic German castle into Europe's latest must-see art destination



Over dinner some ten years ago, art dealer Leo Koenig and artist Georg Baselitz made an offhand suggestion to collectors Christine and Andy Hall that would turn out to be pivotal. The Halls had a particular fondness for German Neo-Expressionism, and Koenig had just helped the couple buy Baselitz's personal trove of artworks, many by his contemporaries. "I told Andy and Christine that they should buy his castle as well," recalls Koenig, referring to Schloss Derneburg, a sprawling complex in northwestern Germany where Baselitz had lived and worked since the 1970s. "I'm not sure I was serious, but a year later the whole thing was consummated." This past summer, the couple unveiled a spectacular renovation of the castle as a museum, part of their family's Hall Art Foundation.

Set amid rolling farmland and forests, Schloss Derneburg was originally built in the 11th century as a fortified castle. For nearly 700 years it served as a home for various religious groups, before a German count hired architect Georg Laves to reconfigure the property as a private residence in the early 19th century. Later, during World War II, Derneburg was used as a military hospital, and by the time Baselitz acquired it, in 1974, much of the estate's land and some of its buildings had been sold to the state of Lower Saxony.

When the Halls purchased the castle, they didn't have a clear vision. "That evolved subsequently and is still evolving," says Andy, a prominent investment manager. "The fact that Baselitz



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CULTURE *art scene*



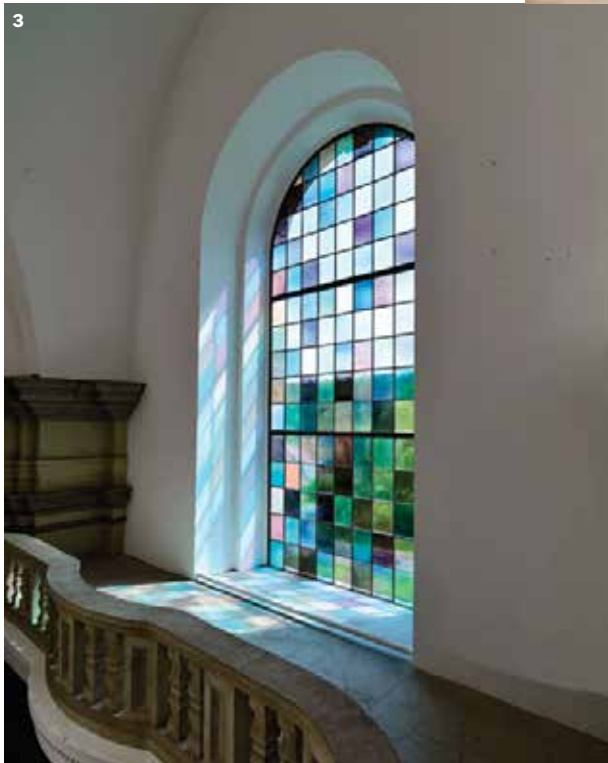
lived there for 30 years makes it a natural home for our collection,” a trove that includes important works by Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lüpertz, A. R. Penck, and others. “Plus it’s a beautiful property with an intriguing history.”

The renovations by architect Tammo Prinz would take the better part of a decade. While much of the work involved meticulous restoration, more radical interventions were undertaken to convert the warrenlike monks’ quarters and other domestic spaces into galleries for postwar and contemporary art. In the meantime, Christine and Andy, who are based in Palm Beach, Florida, established the Hall Art Foundation in 2007 and converted a Vermont dairy farm into their first art center. That venue, opened in 2012, boosted the Halls’ art-world profile, but as Koenig notes, “Derneburg is on another level.”

Featuring 70,000 square feet of gallery space, Schloss Derneburg opened on July 1 with no fewer than seven exhibi-

“The fact that *Baselitz* lived there for 30 years makes it a natural home for our collection,” says *Andy Hall*.

1. AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE SPRAWLING CASTLE REVEALS REFRESHED GROUNDS BY LANDSCAPE DESIGNER MARTIN DIEKMANN. 2. JULIAN SCHNABEL'S *AHAB* (2000) IN THE RESTORED ENTRANCE HALL. 3. *PASSING CLOUD (OVER DERNEBURG)*, A 2011 STAINED-GLASS INSTALLATION BY SPENCER FINCH.



tions, including two large group shows: a selection of moving-image works curated by Chrissie Iles of the Whitney and “Für Barbara,” a survey of works by female artists that Koenig organized as homage to his late stepmother, the influential Berlin dealer Barbara Weiss. In addition there are solo presentations devoted to Antony Gormley, Barry Le Va, Malcolm Morley, Hermann Nitsch, and Julian Schnabel. The Gormley show provides some of the most dramatic moments, among them *Sleeping Field* (2015–16), a group of 700 abstract figures installed in a former chapel. “It’s this interplay of art and architecture,” says Andy, “that makes Derneburg a true *Gesamtkunstwerk*.”

The plan is to keep the castle open on Wednesdays and weekends through December, close for a period, and then reopen in the spring. (Visitors must make reservations for guided tours.) Derneburg’s off-the-beaten-path location will no doubt appeal to those cultural insiders who can’t resist a good pilgrimage. And it’s really like nothing else. “Every little nook and cranny has a unique character,” says Koenig. “What the Halls have done is embrace the history and quirkiness of this place and the many lives it has gone through.” —STEPHEN WALLIS