

HALL

ART FOUNDATION

Brazil, Meg. "REVIEWS: Vermont," *Art New England*, March/April 2013, p. 55.

REVIEWS: Vermont

INAUGURAL EXHIBITION: GEORG BASELITZ, EDWARD BURTYNSKY, NEIL JENNEY, AND A.R. PENCK

Hall Art Foundation at Lexington Farm • Reading, VT • hallartfoundation.org • Through August, 2013

The Hall Art Foundation's (HAF) new exhibition space is squarely off the beaten path. Contemporary art enthusiasts have long embraced the repurposing of industrial buildings, like MASS MoCA and Dia:Beacon's art spaces. In Reading, Vermont (pop. 666), HAF has retrofitted a dairy farm (circa 1800), including the farmhouse and three barns. Intended for long-term art installations, each building showcases a single artist from its collection.

A common thread of rebelliousness—against political authority, or cultural trends, or both—underlies the inaugural installation of paintings by Georg Baselitz, Neil Jenney, and A.R. Penck, plus photographs by Edward Burtynsky. Neil Jenney's (American, b. 1945) crudely painted images and obvious brushwork were a reaction against photorealism and minimalism, a call to return painting to painting. In *Hunter and Hunted*, a deer, arrested in flight, attempts escape, perhaps from the painting itself. The vitality and wry humor are haunting.



Georg Baselitz, installation view, 2012–2013, Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont. Photo: Jeff Nintzel. Courtesy Hall Art Foundation.

The horse barn's high ceilings and post-and-beam structure provide a simple backdrop to A.R. Penck's (German, b. 1939) complex world of pictorial symbols. Penck witnessed the bombing of Dresden as a child, and two 112-inch square paintings erupt with primitive symbols and chaotic figures. *Untitled (Figur Mit Ausgestreckten Armen)* (1966) shows a male figure with arms outstretched, a primitive figure that appears

repeatedly elsewhere. Perhaps he is protesting or supplicating or, finally, giving up.

Georg Baselitz's (German, b. 1938) inverted images force viewers to see the painting, not the subject. Like Jenney, he's about painting upside down, perhaps as WWII did to him. Baselitz's masterful drawing, his articulation of faces in a few brushstrokes, is evident in paintings of Baselitz and his wife, which hang on four oval canvases (114" diameter) like oversized embroidery hoops. The paintings tug at the imagination as our brains scramble to put the images right-sided.

Photographer Edward Burtynsky's (Canadian, b. 1955) large-format color photographs bear witness to the spoiling of the planet while the images themselves are beautiful, compelling windows on the world. They are striking enough to neutralize disturbing images of Bangladesh shipworkers standing barefoot in oil, and of California oil wells pumping the very life from the earth. —Meg Brazill