

## 40 Georg Baselitz

Deutschbaselitz/Saxony 1938 – 2026

“Hirte”. 1966

India ink, pencil and asphalt varnish on paper. 34 × 25,5 cm (13 3/8 × 10 in.). Lower right of center monogrammed: G.B. On the reverse, later signed, dated, titled and inscribed in pencil: G Baselitz 66 „Hirte” Dahlem. [3182] Framed.

Provenance

Galerie Franz Dahlem, Darmstadt / Private Collection, Berlin / Private Collection, North Rhine-Westphalia (acquired in 2004 at Galerie Fred Jahn, Munich; on long-term loan to Museum Folkwang, Essen from 2020–2026)

EUR 100,000–150,000

USD 118,000–176,000



Georg Baselitz. “Die Hand – Die Hand Gottes”. 1964/65. Oil/canvas. Kunstmuseum Bonn

In 1965/66, Georg Baselitz worked feverishly on his paintings and drawings in Florence and Berlin. It was a moment in which everything was open to debate for a young artist in divided Germany: not only the future of painting itself, caught in ideological and at times dogmatic conflicts between international abstraction and Socialist Realism, but also the future of his homeland during the Cold War. In 1965, the painter was twenty-seven years old and living in West Berlin, producing figure paintings in an almost feverish state: desolate and defiant, fractured, monumental men; soldiers, painters, archetypes, heroes. These figures carried not only the future within them, but also the burden of the past. On closer inspection, however, these “New Types” and “Heroes” are not always clearly male figures. As in the case of our drawing, later titled *Shepherd*, they often possess androgynous features and can at times even be read as female.

The scandal of 1963, when Baselitz became the focus of a fierce public morality debate following works such as *Die große Nacht im Eimer* (1962/63), *Der nackte Mann* (1962), and *Geschlecht mit Klößen* (1963), shaped the image of the artist as a radical far beyond the event itself. Baselitz drew extensively in ink and added watercolour to our sheet depicting the “good” shepherd, who appears to be climbing up a ladder out of the depths of a hole in rain-soaked, swollen ground. Dishevelled from the exertion, the shepherd proudly presents a burning house on his outstretched hand. The drawing relates to three paintings executed in 1964/65 and 1965 featuring the motif of the outstretched hand, through which Baselitz confronted German history and a childhood marked by traumatic events, including the destruction of Dresden in February 1945.

It is a sorrowful reflection on himself, on his own hand, and on what he, the shepherd, is symbolically capable of saving through the ‘hand of God.’ The drawing of the shepherd holding the burning house in the palm of his hand transports the viewer into an emotionally unstable universe: frozen, melancholic, and imbued with palpable sadness. Baselitz presents the shepherd as the survivor of a historical tragedy. MvL

