

# Gerhard Richter BIRKENAU (Photo Version)

ゲルハルト・リヒター  
ビルケナウ (フォト・ヴァージョン)



Gerhard Richter, Birkenau CR 937F (Photo Version), 2015/2020  
© Gerhard Richter 2024 (13032024)

Wako Works of Art opened a permanent space for Gerhard Richter's works called "Richter Raum" in a forested area of Karuizawa in July 2023. To commemorate its first anniversary, the special exhibition "Gerhard Richter: Birkenau (Photo Version)" will be held from May 25 to September 28, 2024, at this space.

The "Birkenau" series is a culmination of Richter's prolonged engagement with the Holocaust, a theme he has confronted as a German who experienced World War II. The series was completed in 2014 (15). Birkenau, a village adjacent to Auschwitz in southern Poland, was the site of a Nazi concentration camp during the war. Four photographs taken by a member of the Sonderkommando inside this camp form the basis of "Birkenau." In 2008, Richter came across these photos in a newspaper review of the German edition of French philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman's book "Images in Spite of All" (2003). He cut out the review and put it on his studio wall. Six years later, Richter began working on the series, projecting these photographs onto canvas, tracing their outlines to depict them realistically, and then overpainting them with multiple layers of paint until they were completely covered. He also created digital copies of the four resulting oil paintings, which he named the "Photo Version."

The Birkenau Pavilion (Gerhard Richter BIRKENAU exhibition pavilion), which opened in February 2024 in Oświęcim (Auschwitz), Poland, displays the "Birkenau (Photo Version)" opposite "Grey Mirror." At Richter Raum, the "Birkenau (Photo Version)" will also be shown alongside "Grey Mirror." Additionally, works related to the "Birkenau" series, such as "Grey" (1972), which symbolizes the color gray for Richter, "Abstract Painting, Ravine" (1996), an example of overlaying paint on figurative images, and "Hahnwald" (2005), reminiscent of the drawings underlying "Birkenau," will be exhibited.

In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, and in October last year, Israel began attacks on Gaza. The fighting continues with no prospect of a ceasefire. Witnessing this ongoing violence, we contemplated displaying the "Birkenau" series again at Richter Raum. Richter readily agreed, making this exhibition possible. Simultaneously, Wako Works of Art in Tokyo will host an exhibition showcasing Palestinian poetry and art until June 29. In an era when achieving a world without violence and war seems increasingly impossible, confronting both "Birkenau" and Palestinian issues may provide a starting point for contemplating these profound problems.

**25 May (sat.) – 28 September (sat.), 2024**

**Richter Raum**

**1323-1475 Karuizawa, Karuizawa-machi, Nagano 389-0102, Japan**

**Opening hours may vary according to the season. Please refer to the Reservation site.**

**URL : <https://www.richterraum.jp> Mail : [office.rr@wako-art.jp](mailto:office.rr@wako-art.jp)**