



DANIEL  
RICHTER  
a major survey

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DENVER  
ART MUSEUM

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## Daniel Richter

(b. 1962, Lütjenburg, Germany)

Acclaimed German artist Daniel Richter began his artistic career before receiving formal training. During the 1980s, while embedded in the Hamburg punk music scene, Richter designed album covers for obscure underground bands. In the '90s, the artist studied at the Hamburg *Hochschule für bildende Künste* under Werner Büttner and was an assistant to Albert Oehlen. Although he followed a semi-typical path for an art student, there would be nothing typical about his artwork.

Richter's first paintings are colorful abstract works that explore superficial, excessive ornamentation through the use of patterning, repetition, drips and graffiti outlines. Then, rather abruptly, in 2000, Richter turned the art world on its ear by joining the revival of figurative painting. Richter's large-scale figurative works tell stories of city street life, with a particular focus on political subject matter. While confidently controlled, his work reflects an apocalyptic panic, a sense of alienation and general mistrust of the contemporary world.

His brushwork, dancing between nightmare and fantasy, conveys a complex web of popular imagery taken from comic books and newspapers as well as the influence of the underground scene. His first figurative work, *Phienox*, presents a dramatically-charged scene in which people are helping to heave a struggling man over a high wall. This painting was inspired by a newspaper photograph documenting the events surrounding the 1998 terrorist attack on the American embassy in Nairobi.

A recipient of many awards, including Germany's *Förderpreis* in 2000, and the *Otto Dix Preis* in 1998, Daniel Richter also has held several teaching positions at institutions including the prestigious *Akademie der Bildenden Künste* in Vienna and the *Universität der Künste* in Berlin. More recently, the artist designed the stage set for the opera *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók which premiered on August 6, 2008, at the famed Salzburg Festival.

Although Richter appears to have two very different bodies of work, he has indicated that ultimately there is no difference between abstract and figurative painting: "The problems of how to organize colors on a surface never really change. The same method is there either way, slipping through the various forms." *Daniel Richter: A Major Survey* will offer an inclusive overview of the artist's work to date. The Denver Art Museum will show his first museum exhibition in the United States.