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# Los Angeles Times

ARTS & CULTURE

## Jorg Immendorff at Hannah Hoffman Gallery



Jorg Immendorff, "Lidl-Block," 1967, mixed media (Hannah Hoffman Gallery)

By Christopher Knight, Times art critic  
November 8, 2013, 7:00 a.m.

German artist Jörg Immendorff (1945-2007) is commonly misidentified as a Neo-Expressionist painter, probably because he was introduced to American audiences in the 1980s. A fine, concise show of 17 paintings, drawings, sculptures and mixed-media works from the 1960s at Hannah Hoffman Gallery neatly puts the lie to that.

Instead, everywhere in sight is Immendorff's Neo-Dada and Fluxus rambunctiousness, partly inspired by Joseph Beuys, his teacher at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. Nowhere is it more congenially displayed than in big, cut-out paintings on wood of fat, gaily gurgling yellow and brown babies.

With chubby cheeks and happy Chinese faces, they declare Immendorff's Maoist, working-class sympathies. A degree of infantile mewling seems necessary to both mock the status quo and counter the obscure theorizing of the established political class.

A suite of six little paintings shows a turtle, his soft body protected by a hard shell. The turtle swims happily, munches on tomatoes and finds refuge hiding under a chest. In Immendorff's typically cutting manner, the legend "Everything about the ambassador" is scrawled in German across each one.

Another painting, redolent of the Nazi past that haunted many of his fellow artists, carves the silhouette of a rifle-toting soldier in negative space surrounded by pink paint, slashed with a rain of bright blue marks. An enormous medal of valor is pinned to the chimerical figure's non-existent chest, where it hangs in empty space like a guillotine's blade.

Perhaps the most pertinent work is "Lidl-block" -- "lidl" said to be the noise created by a baby's rattle. A small block of wood is smeared in the painted colors of the German flag and attached to a nylon tether. When he dragged a block like it back and forth on the ground in front of the German parliament in Bonn, Immendorff was arrested for desecrating the flag.

He later repeated the gesture with this second version hung around his neck, as if a patriotic albatross. Keeping the second "Lidl-block" off the ground spared Immendorff from arrest, all while signaling a heaping helping of political absurdity.

Hannah Hoffman Gallery, 1010 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, (323) 450-9106; through Dec. 7.  
Closed Sun. and Mon. [www.hannahhoffmangallery.com](http://www.hannahhoffmangallery.com)