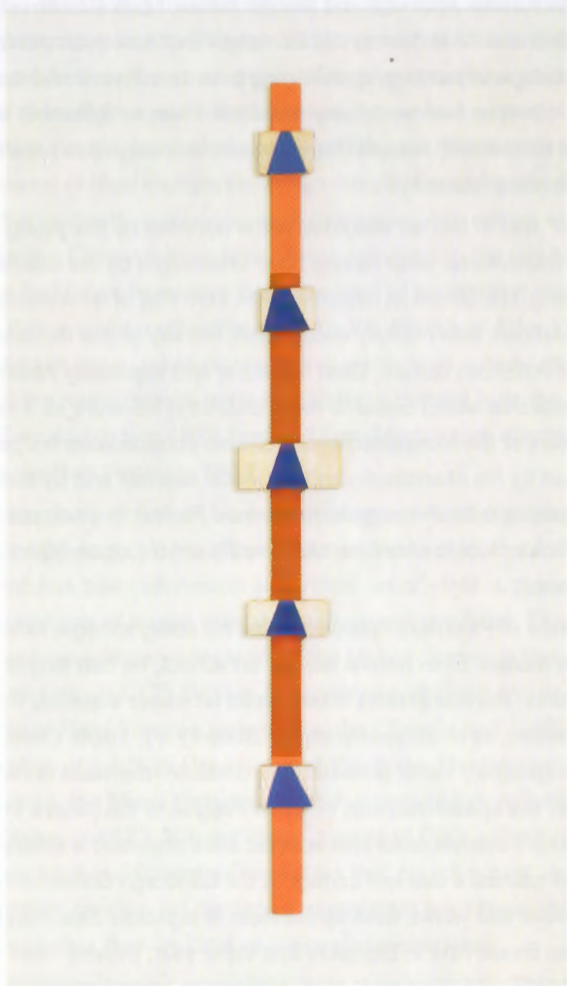


Blinky Palermo: Retrospective 1964–1977

June 25–October 31, 2011



Dia:Beacon
Riggio Galleries
3 Beekman Street Beacon New York 12508
845 440 0100 www.diaart.org

Center for Curatorial Studies
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Blinky Palermo's commitment to painting was steadfast during the late 1960s, a period in which the medium was widely felt as untenable for cutting-edge art making. His inventive approach to this most canonical of art forms was honed and refined as he explored a range of options manifest in the work of not only such revered predecessors as Kasimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, but also and most directly his European and American peers who were pushing the envelope of painting, questioning both its conventional materials and traditional format as well as its very definition. Palermo's teacher at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Joseph Beuys, would famously term his student's exceptional openness "porosity."

"Blinky Palermo" was in fact an assumed name adopted by the young German art student Peter Heisterkamp, after having been challenged by his teacher to change his way of working. His choice of moniker, taken from that of an American boxing promoter and Mafioso, was multiply determined, but key to the decision was his deep fascination with American culture, Beat literature, and especially Abstract Expressionist painting—interests that would become more distinct in his work as it matured. During his formative years at the Kunstakademie, Palermo consolidated his painterly aesthetic, stimulated in part by his charismatic and influential teacher and by several young painters then gaining critical recognition, Gerhard Richter in particular. Though slightly older, Richter would over time become Palermo's close friend and occasional artistic collaborator.

One consequence of Palermo's "porosity" was his ability to work simultaneously in several discrete modes. Even before leaving art school, he had begun to make what he termed Objects: painted entities often based on found materials that take on quasi-sculptural properties, as in *Schmetterling II (Butterfly II)*, 1969. Other early works, like *Landschaft (Landscape)*, 1968, activate their contexts—the walls on which they are installed—so that the spatial matrices become integral to the pieces themselves. On occasion, Palermo's interventions into specific sites assumed a strictly architectural form, as when he painted a stairwell cornice at the Edinburgh School of Art in the summer of 1970, while other wall works, such as the frieze of signature blue triangles he installed at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels that same year, proved more decorative.

Seemingly at odds with the Objects and Wall Paintings and Drawings was a third type of work, known as the *Stoffbilder*, or Cloth Pictures. Beginning in mid-1966, Palermo purchased lengths of colored cloth from department stores, stitched them together, and attached them to conventional stretchers. Dispensing with pigment and completely dependent on commercially available hues, these disarmingly radical works, with their refined, subtle, and yet often unorthodox chromatic chords, prove

Palermo a gifted colorist and a singular successor to some of the century's foremost harmonizers from Henri Matisse to Rothko.

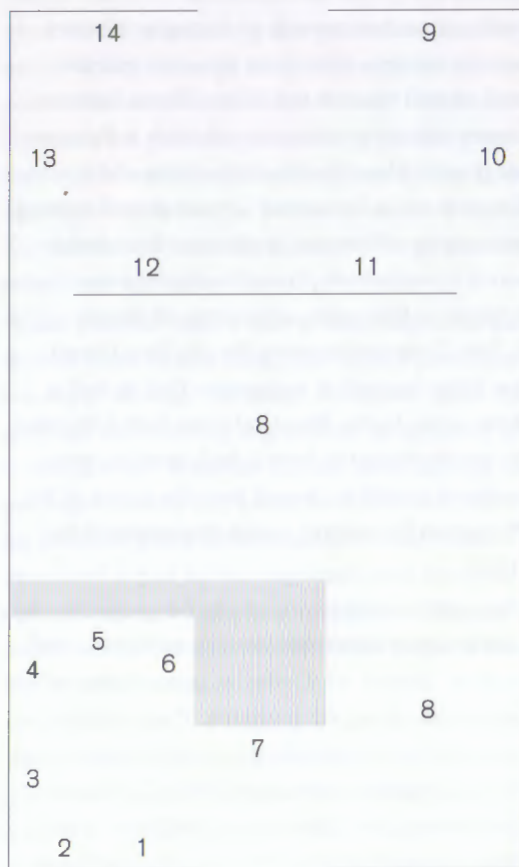
In 1973, all three of these concurrent approaches came to an end when Palermo relocated to Lower Manhattan, where he set up a studio that he would maintain for the rest of his life. Having traveled several times to the United States before making the decision to relocate, Palermo had long wished to establish a dialogue with American painters on their own ground. Despite some false starts and a fallow period of more than a year after his move, he evolved a novel way of working on small aluminum panels, bracketed slightly off the wall to enhance the intense chromatic presence of their multipartite compositions. Exceptionally, Palermo titled many of the modestly scaled pieces in this series with names of places—like *Wooster Street*, *Coney Island*, *14th Street*—referencing the city he so loved, even though he had failed to receive there the level of recognition that he had in Germany. The monumental multipartite work *To the People of New York City*, often deemed his magnum opus, takes its posthumous title from a dedication he wrote on the backs of the metal panels, while its palette is derived from the colors of the German flag. Executed in late 1976 back in Düsseldorf, it was discovered in his studio after his death in February 1977.

Palermo's sudden death cut short his work *in medias res*, as can be gauged by the diverse directions presaged in the latest works assembled for this exhibition. Until recently, Palermo has been very much an "artists' artist"—that is, primarily known and admired by generations of artists with widely divergent practices. This retrospective, the first comprehensive show of his work in the United States, is being presented in two New York venues: at CCS Bard in Annandale-on-Hudson and at Dia:Beacon. The presentation at Bard features early works, the Objects and *Stoffbilder*, together with documentation of his Wall Drawings and Paintings. The focus at Dia:Beacon is on the late works, the Metal Pictures, which Palermo began only after relocating to the United States in 1973. Viewed in the context of Dia's collection, this group of Metal Pictures confirms Palermo's conviction that his art is best viewed in an international context, one whose discursive parameters have been shaped by a modernist legacy rather than by local or nationalistic concerns.

Though his professional career spans little more than a decade, Palermo's independent, rigorous, and committed exploration of the continuing potential of painting as a vanguard art form, his probing of painting's contested relationship to both its literal and discursive context, and his enduring faith in painterly pleasures, at a time when painting was unquestionably beleaguered, mark his substantial contribution to the history of post-World War II art.

Lynne Cooke, curator

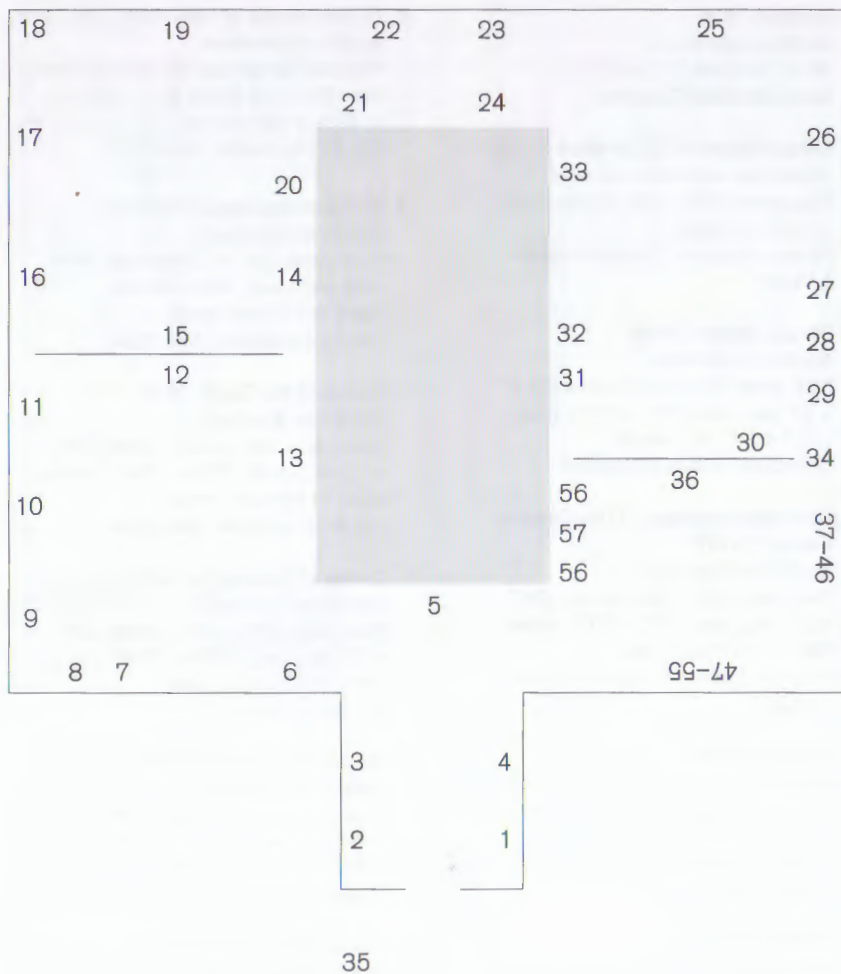
Dia:Beacon
site map



Dia:Beacon
checklist of works

1. **Untitled, 1976**
Acrylic on aluminum
48 × 13 inches (122 × 33 cm)
Julian Schnabel Collection
2. **Osten-Westen II (East-West II), 1976**
Acrylic and watercolor on steel
Two parts: 39³/₈ × 78³/₄ inches (100 × 200 cm) overall
Private collection, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth
3. **Coney Island II, 1975**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 10¹/₂ × 8¹/₄ inches (26.7 × 21 cm), each; 10¹/₂ × 57⁷/₈ inches (26.7 × 147 cm) overall
Collection Ströher, Darmstadt
4. **Himmelsrichtungen I (The Cardinal Points I), 1976**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 10¹/₂ × 8¹/₄ inches (26.7 × 21 cm), each; 10¹/₂ × 57⁷/₈ inches (26.7 × 147 cm) overall
Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Collection Ludwig
5. **Untitled, 1976**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: part 1, 108 × 7 inches (274.3 × 17.8 cm); parts 2-4: 108 × 3 inches (274.3 × 7.6 cm), each
Private collection
6. **Untitled, 1973**
Anti-rust paint on steel
39³/₈ × 39³/₈ inches (100 × 100 cm)
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth
7. **Untitled, 1973**
Chromium-plated steel
81¹/₈ × 81¹/₈ × 1¹/₈ inches (206 × 206 × 3 cm)
Edition of two
Private collection
8. **To the People of New York City, 1976**
Acrylic on aluminum
15 parts, comprising 40 panels ranging from 8¹/₄ × 6³/₈ inches (21 × 16 cm) to 39¹/₄ × 78³/₄ inches (100 × 200 cm)
Dia Art Foundation, New York
9. **Times of the Day I, 1974-75**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 22³/₈ × 20¹/₂ inches (56.8 × 52 cm), each; 22³/₈ × 204³/₄ inches (56.8 × 520 cm) overall
Dia Art Foundation, New York
10. **Times of the Day II, 1975**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 22³/₈ × 20¹/₂ inches (56.8 × 52 cm), each; 22³/₈ × 204³/₄ inches (56.8 × 520 cm) overall
Dia Art Foundation, New York
11. **Times of the Day III, 1975**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 22³/₈ × 20¹/₂ inches (56.8 × 52 cm), each; 22³/₈ × 204³/₄ inches (56.8 × 520 cm) overall
Private collection
12. **Times of the Day IV, 1975**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 22³/₈ × 20¹/₂ inches (56.8 × 52 cm), each; 22³/₈ × 204³/₄ inches (56.8 × 520 cm) overall
Private collection
13. **Times of the Day V, 1975**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 22³/₈ × 20¹/₂ inches (56.8 × 52 cm), each; 22³/₈ × 204³/₄ inches (56.8 × 520 cm) overall
Private collection
14. **Times of the Day VI, 1975**
Acrylic on aluminum
Four parts: 22³/₈ × 20¹/₂ inches (56.8 × 52 cm), each; 22³/₈ × 204³/₄ inches (56.8 × 520 cm) overall
Private collection

CCS Bard
site map



CCS Bard
checklist of works

1. **Komposition mit 8 roten Rechtecken (Composition with 8 Red Rectangles), 1964**
Oil and graphite on canvas
37 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 43 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (96 x 111 cm)
Collection Olga Lina and Stella Liza Knoebel
2. **Untitled, 1964**
Oil and graphite on canvas
37 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 33 inches (95.5 x 84 cm)
Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg; Collection Ströher
3. **Untitled, 1964**
Oil on canvas
37 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (95 x 80.5 cm)
Collection Ströher, Darmstadt
4. **Flipper, 1965**
Oil on canvas
35 x 27 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (89 x 69.5 cm)
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, Collection Prinz Franz von Bayern
5. **Blaue Brücke (Blue Bridge), 1964-65**
Oil on canvas
49 x 67 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (124.4 x 170.5 cm)
Private collection, courtesy Kunsthalle Emden
6. **Winkel Rot-Weiß (Angle Red-White), 1965**
Oil, canvas, and wood
57 x 20 x 1 inches (145 x 51 x 2.5 cm)
Dia Art Foundation, New York
7. **Untitled, 1965**
Casein paint on cardboard
30 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches (77.5 x 48 cm)
Private collection
8. **Untitled, 1965**
Oil and graphite on canvas, metal frame
78 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ x $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (199.5 x 20.5 x 2.1 cm)
Collection Olga Lina and Stella Liza Knoebel
9. **Grünes Viereck (Green Quadrangle), 1967**
Casein paint on cotton over pressboard sheet
18 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (46 x 70 x 1 cm)
Private collection
10. **Untitled, 1967**
Casein paint on muslin, wood
135 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (345 x 41 x 8 cm)
Glenstone
11. **Untitled, 1968**
Oil, chalk, and graphite on canvas
17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (45.1 x 95.3 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Gift of UBS, 1992
12. **Landschaft (Landscape), 1966**
Oil on canvas on wood
Two parts: 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 58 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (9 x 149 cm) and 4 x 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (10 x 200 cm); 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 1 inches (37 x 200 x 2.5 cm) overall
Private collection, Baltimore
13. **Blaue Scheibe und Stab (Blue Disk and Staff), 1968**
Fabric tape on wood
Two parts:
Staff, 99 x 4 x 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (251 x 10.3 x 8 cm)
Disk, 25 x $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (65 x 2 cm)
Private collection, courtesy Hauser & Wirth
14. **Tagtraum II (Nachtstück) (Daydream II [Night Piece]), 1966**
Casein paint on synthetic textile, wood
Two parts: 66 x 49 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (168 x 125 x 3.5 cm) overall
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, Collection Prinz Franz von Bayern
15. **Untitled, 1972**
Casein paint on cotton fabric over wood and pressboard
Two parts: 97 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 1 inches (247.8 x 5.5 x 2.5 cm); 21 x 53 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 1 inches (53.5 x 135 x 2.5 cm)
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, Collection Prinz Franz von Bayern
16. **Tagtraum I (Daydream I), 1965**
Two parts:
Oil, synthetic textile, canvas, and wood
23 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 inches (60 x 63 x 5 cm)

- Oil, canvas, and wood
9¼ x 18 x ⅔ inches (23.3 x 46 x 1.5 cm)
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt
a. M.; Former Collection Karl Ströher,
Darmstadt. Inv. Nr. 1981/38.1–2
- 17. Schmetterling II (Butterfly II), 1969**
Oil, canvas, wood, and composite board
Two parts: 119½ x 36⅞ x 1¾ inches
(303.5 x 93 x 4.5 cm) overall
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt
a. M.; Former Collection Karl Ströher,
Darmstadt; Inv. Nr. 1981/36.1–2
- 18. Untitled, 1970**
Synthetic paint on canvas on wood
and fiberboard
Four parts: 5⅞ x 5⅞ x 2 inches
(15 x 15 x 5 cm), each
Private collection
- 19. Untitled, 1967–72**
Two parts:
Gouache on pressboard
31 x 42¾ inches (78.6 x 108.6 cm)
Casein paint on canvas on wood
81½ x 81½ x 1¼ inches (207 x 207
x 3 cm)
Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel
Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial
Studies, Bard College, Annandale-
on-Hudson, New York
- 20. Untitled, 1967**
Oil on linen stretched over chalkboard
19¾ x 59 inches (50 x 150 cm)
Hall Collection
- 21. Untitled, 1970**
Oil on canvas on wood
Two parts: 6 x 6 x 2 inches (15.2
x 15.2 x 5.1 cm), each
Nicole Klagsbrun
- 22. Graue Scheibe (Gray Disk), 1970**
Oil and synthetic paint on cotton on
wood-core plywood
5⅞ x 10⅞ x ¾ inches (13.1 x 26.5
x 1.8 cm)
Collection Olga Lina and Stella Liza
Knoebel
- 23. Leisesprecher I (Soft Speaker I), 1969**
Cotton fabric
Two parts: 59 x 51¼ x 1⅞ inches
(150 x 130 x 3 cm) overall
MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst
Frankfurt a. M.; Former collection Karl
Ströher, Darmstadt. Inv. Nr. 1981/37.1–2
- 24. Untitled (Totem), 1964–67**
Casein paint on canvas on wood
86¼ x 10½ x 1¾ inches (219 x 27 x
4.5 cm)
Dia Art Foundation, New York
- 25. Mirror Object, 1973**
Painted wood and mirror
Two parts: 8½ x 12½ x 1¼ inches
(21.6 x 31.8 x 3.2 cm), each
Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel
Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial
Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-
Hudson, New York
- 26. Untitled, 1969–70**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 78¾ inches (200 x 200 cm)
Kunstmuseum Bonn
- 27. Blau/Grün (Blue/Green), 1968**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 27½ inches (200 x 70 cm)
Private collection
- 28. Untitled, 1970**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 27½ inches (200 x 70 cm)
Kunsthalle Bielefeld
- 29. Untitled, 1968–69**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 67 inches (200 x 170 cm)
Kunstmuseen Krefeld
- 30. Untitled, 1968**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 78¾ inches (200 x 200 cm)
Collection Musée d'Art Moderne
Grand-Duc Jean, Mudam Luxembourg
- 31. Ohne Titel (Rosa/Weiß) (Untitled
[Pink/White]), 1968**
Cotton fabric
79⅞ x 26⅞ inches (201 x 67 cm)
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen,
Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich;
Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds,
Collection Prinz Franz von Bayern
- 32. Untitled, 1969**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 78¾ inches (200 x 200 cm)
Private collection
- 33. Untitled, 1969**
Cotton fabric
78¾ x 11¾ inches (200 x 30 cm) overall
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart
- 34. Dreieck über einer Tür (Triangle above
a Door), 1969/2011**
Ultramarine blue casein paint
9 x 18 inches (23 x 46 cm)
Courtesy Edition Block, Berlin
- 35. Blaues Dreieck (Blue Triangle), 1969**
Cardboard with stencil, brush, paint
tube with ultramarine blue casein paint,
instructions, signed drawing of stencil
Edition in box: 20 x 25½ x 1⅞ inches
(51 x 65 x 4 cm)
Edition of 50; Edition Block, Berlin
- A selection of documentation panels for
Palermo's Wall Paintings and Drawings**
All 35½ x 26 inches (90 x 66 cm), framed
Kunstmuseum Bonn
- 36. For wall painting at Kunstverein
Hamburg, 1973**
10 panels: photographs, lithography,
screenprint, glue, and cardboard
- 37. For Ch. Hülsey's house, Drevenack near
Wesel, 1972**
Photographs, glue, and cardboard
- 38. For "Grey Angle" apartment Six Friedrich,
Munich, 1971**
Graphite, paper, photograph, glue,
and cardboard
- 39. For wall drawing apartment Franz
Dahlem, Darmstadt, 1971**
Graphite, transparent paper,
photograph, glue, and cardboard
- 40. For "Triangle above a Door" (blue, black),
apartment Franz Dahlem/Six Friedrich,
1971**
Photographs, glue, and cardboard
- 41. For "Triangle above a Door," 1971**
Graphite, transparent paper, glue,
and cardboard
- 42. For "Blue Triangle," Palais des Beaux-
Arts, Brussels, 1970**
Graphite, photograph, glue, and
cardboard
- 43. For wall painting in the big hall at
Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 1970**
Graphite, ink, photograph, glue, and
cardboard
- 44. For staircase wall painting at Documenta
5, Kassel, 1972**
Ink, photograph, glue, and cardboard
- 45. Proposal for the Pedagogical Center
of the Neusprachliches Gymnasium for
Modern Languages, Mönchengladbach
(not realized), 1971**
Two panels: graphite, watercolor, glue,
and cardboard
- 46. For "Staircase II" Experimenta 4,
Frankfurt Kunstverein, 1971**
Photographs, glue, and cardboard
- 47. For wall drawing with graphite,
Mönchengladbach studio, 1970–71**
Graphite, drawing paper,
photograph, glue, and cardboard
- 48. For "Ceiling Border," Galerie Ernst,
Hannover, 1970**
Graphite, glue, and cardboard
- 49. For "Wall Show" Lisson Gallery London,
1970**
Felt pen, sticker, ink, and cardboard
- 50. For wall painting on facing walls at the
Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich, 1971**
Three panels: graphite, transparent
paper, photographs, glue, and
cardboard
- 51. For "Window II" wall painting in the
Maximilianstrasse underpass, Munich,
1971**
Two panels: graphite, glue, and
cardboard

52. For "Window I" wall painting at Kabinett für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven, 1970–71
Two panels: graphite, paper, photograph, glue, and cardboard
53. For wall painting at the Kabinett für aktuelle Kunst Bremerhaven, 1971–72
Two panels: pencil, transparent paper, photographs, glue, and cardboard
54. For "Tuchverspannung," Galerie Ernst, Hannover, 1969
Graphite, felt pen, paper, photographs, glue, and cardboard
55. For "5" wall drawing with red-brown fat chalk, Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich, 1968
Four panels: paper, glue, and cardboard
56. For "Blue/Yellow/White/Red" stairway Edinburgh College of Art, 1970
Two panels: graphite, felt pen, photographs, glue, and cardboard
57. For "Blue/Yellow/White/Red" stairway Edinburgh College of Art, 1970
Four panels: acrylic, graphite, felt pen, glue, and cardboard

Blinky Palermo was born Peter Schwarze in Leipzig in 1943 and was adopted by Erika and Wilhelm Heisterkamp with his twin brother later that year. In 1962 he entered the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where he studied with Joseph Beuys, and, in 1964, became known as "Blinky Palermo," a name he appropriated from an American boxing promoter and Mafioso. In 1968 Palermo created a wall drawing for the Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich. After visiting New York with Gerhard Richter in 1970, he established a studio there in 1973. Palermo died in 1977, while traveling in the Maldives. His last work, *To the People of New York City* (1976), was shown at the Heiner Friedrich Gallery, New York, in 1977, and at Dia in 1987. Before his death, Palermo participated in more than seventy exhibitions and represented Germany at the São Paulo Bienal in 1975. He has had posthumous retrospectives at the Kunstmuseum Winterthur (1984), the Kunstmuseum Bonn (1993), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2002), and the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2007).

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cover image:

Blinky Palermo, *Untitled (Totem)*, 1964–67. Dia Art Foundation, New York.

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