

Basic Detail Report



Figurazione

Date

1945

Primary Maker

Willi Baumeister

Medium

Oil on paper mounted on board

Dimensions

28 x 39.5 cm

Description

Baumeister was an important figure in the development of the abstract school in German painting in the first half of the twentieth century. In his formative years he was influenced by Cézanne and Post-Impressionism and then moved on to abstraction in the 1930s. *Figurazione* was painted at the end of the Second World War, when Baumeister was living at Lake Constance to escape the bombing. Despite shortages of materials and other problems, he managed to produce a substantial body of work during the war. The major works of these years were the African pictures, the Gilgamesh series, the Relief pictures and the Perforations. This painting, with its violently gesturing dark hieroglyph-figures is close in content and style to the African paintings, begun in 1942 and in which he created a range of symbols, which matched his idea of African. Baumeister was concerned with the philosophy of art and believed that freely imagined forms provide images relating to the deeper, primitive roots of humanity. He repeatedly stated that what he painted came as a surprise and that inner forces urged him on in a direction he had not foreseen. He explained his process in his book, *Das Unbekannte in der Kunst* (The Unknown in Art) (1947).