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# MUSEUM LUDWIG

## PRESS INFORMATION

### **New Presentation of the Contemporary Art Collection at the Museum Ludwig**

Friday, June 22, 2018

The Museum Ludwig collection includes the most important artists of the twentieth century and contemporary art. The works of modernism and art from 1945 to 1970 are arranged chronologically from the uppermost to the middle floor. The contemporary art in the stairwell and on the basement level forms the backbone and foundation of the museum, looking into the past and the future. At the same time, the collection presents the diverse media and conceptual manifestations of contemporary art, which do not follow a firmly established canon and cannot be categorized into styles.

In order to convey the wide range and diversity of subject matter of the contemporary art collection at the Museum Ludwig, the presentation on the basement floor will change about every two years. Each presentation takes a programmatic work as its starting point. This work provides key questions that can be addressed in different ways in the other works.

Jimmie Durham's *Building a Nation* (2006) plays the key role in this presentation. His walk-in sculptural installation is a permeable architectural ensemble of roughly assembled found items. It uses quotations to reference the United States' relationship to its founding myth and its founding history, which are directly linked to the murder of the Native Americans and the violent exploitation of resources. This installation raises further questions for the other exhibited works: How do social status, gender, and cultural agreements determine the perception of reality? How is their representation critically questioned in photography and video? What role does the artist play in the work, especially in painting? What differentiates the sculptural installation from other works in our experience of art?

### **Social Role Models**

Photographs and video are perceived as images of reality. However, they only show a partial view from a privileged position. This is particularly evident in the image of women, for example, which is determined by role models in mass media, advertising, and art history, as well as by social status. Sanja Iveković and Stephen Willats make clear how viewers are influenced by these factors in their interpretation of the subject. Louise Lawler breaks the stereotypical image of women with surprising captions. Carrie Mae Weems addresses the double invisibility as a woman and a black artist. Michal Heiman's installation uses a supposed psychological test to examine subliminal meanings in snapshots from a private photo album.

Candida Höfer and Andreas Gursky, by contrast, show the limits of the documentary. In *Rien du tout* (2006) by Maya Schweizer and Clemens von Wedemeyer, documentation and fiction are

interwoven when young people from the outskirts of Paris simultaneously appear as background actors in the story of a theater rehearsal and in the video. They raise the question of whether and how the subjects are able to make themselves heard.

### **Painted Reality**

The gestural painting of Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism was long regarded as an immediate expression of the artist. After Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter, beginning in the 1980s artists such as Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, Susanne Paesler, Georg Herold, Rosemarie Trockel, and Yan Pei-Ming have also worked against this myth. They try “bad painting,” have computers paint, translate the painterly gesture into streaks of caviar or pictures in wool, or use political symbols and people as eye-catching subjects. Ilya Kabakov, Kerry James Marshall, and Lubaina Himid have other focuses. Kabakov involves the actual viewers of his installation *Unaufgehängtes Bild* in a story about art and its exhibiting. Marshall draws on traditional art and painting techniques to create a romantic portrait of the African American middle class which is missing in the Western art canon. In her work, Himid combines painting with activist engagement against the exclusion of black artists from exhibitions and art historiography.

### **Found Items**

Jimmie Durham’s expanded sculpture involves the viewer in a particular way that transcends the visible. The materials and the arrangement of the found items allow for an open, processual experience of art which differs from that of two-dimensional pictures. This is also true of Zoe Leonard’s *Tree* (1997/2011), a disassembled tree that has been reconstructed with metal parts and is both a thing and a sculpture. Cady Noland works with found everyday objects such as elements of a shingled roof and a metal truck trailer, which refer to the American myth of unlimited freedom and mobility. Manfred Pernice derives his sculptures made of pressboard from structures such as the Hangelar airport tower. Katsuro Funakoshi chooses camphor wood, which he carves based on Renaissance portraits and free-standing sculptures from the Kamakura period.

Wall texts in the presentation orient visitors, and short texts provide further details on individual works. In addition, Michal Heiman, Lubaina Himid, and Jeff Wall have been invited to talk about their work.

The presentation of the collection is made possible by generous funding from the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst am Museum Ludwig e.V. and the City of Cologne.