

Contact:
Sonja Hempel
Press and Public Relations
Heinrich-Böll-Platz, 50667 Cologne
Tel. +49 221 221 23491
sonja.hempel@museum-ludwig.de

MUSEUM LUDWIG

PRESS RELEASE

Mapping the Collection: New Two-Year Research Project Starts with a Blog at the Museum Ludwig

July 2018 marked the start of the two-year research project Mapping the Collection at the Museum Ludwig. Thanks to the Terra Foundation Collection Research Fellowship for American Art, the Museum Ludwig's collection of American art from before 1980 is being researched and evaluated in a new light. The project is the result of a research grant from the Terra Foundation for American Art based in Chicago and Paris, which supports research on and understanding of American art around the world. Initial results are now being presented on a new blog: <http://blog.museum-ludwig.de/>

The Museum Ludwig holds one of the most important collections of American modern and contemporary art outside the United States. The cornerstone for the founding of the museum was laid in 1976 with a donation of 350 works of modern art to the city of Cologne by the collectors Peter and Irene Ludwig. The couple were among the first in Germany to collect art in the United States in the decades immediately after World War II. The post-war era ushered in a period in which American art and culture became increasingly popular in Europe and shaped the cultural scene. Through their activities as collectors, the Ludwigs were part of this development. The museum's collection offers a good overview of the development of art in the United States after World War II and includes works by some of the world's most renowned artists, such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Jackson Pollock. But the image of art that emerged from this development and that still underlies our idea of American art today is centered on the identity of the white heterosexual male artist and his understanding of form and aesthetics. Female artists as well as artists of color and all those who do not conform to heteronormative standards are excluded from this image.

The research project Mapping the Collection focuses on the collection, the artworks and artists represented in it, as well as their specific history and development in relation to the collection. By examining social, political, and historical conditions, it aims to reassess and expand historical perspectives. In this context, artistic perspectives that have contributed to the discourses surrounding post-colonialism, decolonization, and gender representation from the early 1990s will be taken into account.

The research project is divided into three phases. The first involves making the research results visible, which will now be presented to the public on the museum's blog. Art movements, artworks,

and artistic practices will be reexamined against the background of the historical, social, and political circumstances in which they originated.

Janice Mitchell, Terra Foundation Research Fellow at the Museum Ludwig, on her new role: "I've been here at the museum since July, and I initially focused on gaining an overview of the collection of American art up to 1980. There's still a lot to discover. In the coming weeks I'll focus on Abstract Expressionism and point out new connections to Mexico, among others places. You can follow all this on our blog."

The second phase of the project, which will build on these insights, consists of selective interventions and commentary in the permanent collection. This will be visible in different rooms of the collection in two years.

In a third phase, coinciding with the interventions in the collection in two years, a conference will be organized to examine the reception of American art and culture in post-war Germany. The conference will bring together academics, curators, and artists from different contexts.

About Janice Mitchell

Janice Mitchell is currently a doctoral candidate at Central Saint Martins. In addition to twentieth-century American art, her research interests are in contemporary art and critical practice in art.

About the Terra Foundation for American Art

The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognizing the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.