

PRESS PORTFOLIO FOR THE EXHIBITION

The Other Side of the Moon: Women Artists of the Avant-Garde

22 October 2011 to 15 January 2012

K20 GRABBEPLATZ

Press Conference and Preview: Thursday October 20, 2011 at 11 a.m.

Speaking will be:

Dr. Marion Ackermann, Artistic Director of the Kunstsammlung-Nordrhein-Westfalen

Dr. Susanne Meyer-Büser, curator of the exhibition

Peter Schüller, curator education

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Text and image material for download: www.kunstsammlung.de/presse

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The Other Side of the Moon: Women Artists of the Avant-Garde

(Die andere Seite des Mondes. Künstlerinnen der Avantgarde)

22 October 2011 to 15 January 2012

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Curator: Susanne Meyer-Büser

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen offers a fresh perspective of the artistic avant-garde in the period between the world wars. This exhibition, entitled ***Die andere Seite des Mondes. Künstlerinnen der Avantgarde / The Other Side of the Moon: Women Artists of the Avant-Garde***, revolves around eight women who made major contributions to the aesthetic renewal which occurred in Europe against the background of the political and societal upheavals of the 1920s and 1930s. Common to Claude Cahun, Dora Maar, Sonia Delaunay, Florence Henri, Hannah Höch, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, as well as the lesser known figures Katarzyna Kobro and Germaine Dulac, was the high artistic level of their artistic production and their passionate commitment to a range of aesthetic tendencies, ranging from Dadaism to Constructivism and Surrealism. Equally diverse were the artistic styles in which they worked and the artistic resources upon which they drew, including painting and photography, collage, film and sculpture, marionettes and fashion design.

With more than 230 exhibition items, ***The Other Side of the Moon***, held at the K20 Grabbeplatz, expands our view of this important epoch of European culture. For the first time in this configuration, the presentation focuses on eight major female avant-garde pioneers, illuminating their works and lives while highlighting the intimate associations which connected them, whether through personal friendships or through familiarity with the works of their counterparts. The exhibition's title alludes to the concealed and still little-known network of creative women which functioned during this period. The title's motif, Hannah Höch's "Seven-League Boots" (circa 1934), emphasizes both the often-used Surrealist motif of flight above a landscape, as well as the overcoming of artistic and geographical boundaries affected through the activities of these female protagonists of the avant-garde.

For all of these artists, a decisive role was played by an unerring feel for the latest artistic tendencies, a talent for establishing fruitful contacts, and a knack for being at the right place at the right time. The artistic network that joined these eight women spanned the European continent from Zürich to Berlin, from Warsaw to Amsterdam and Paris. There is little doubt that the fundamental social shift which resulted in a contemporary image of the

“New Woman” profoundly shaped the self-images of the artists presented: independence, open-mindedness, and mobility are leitmotifs which are found threaded through all eight biographies. The ways in which these artists reciprocally influenced and inspired one another in manifold ways becomes evident through the juxtaposition of the exhibited works: among recurring themes are the theater, dolls and self-portraits, as well as aesthetic problems such as “constructed space,” the color chord, and “color in space.” Also continually resurfacing in a range of works are motifs such as the mirror, the shell, hands, and masks. This presentation provides insights into affinities and relationships between the works of these eight extraordinary creative personalities, often proposing provocative and even astonishing interconnections.

The interwar period was an immensely creative phase in the history of art and culture. Beginning in 1916, the Dada movement erupted in Germany and Switzerland as a new art form which broke with bourgeois conventions. The experiences of World War I led many artists to doubt the ideals of the prewar era, generating a novel and extraordinarily radical form of artistic expression. In Eastern Europe as well, artists elaborated a new aesthetic language: as early as 1914, the Russian Constructivists – together with Malevich and his legendary *Black Square on a White Ground* – demanded a new image of reality. Building on their innovations were the De Stijl group, the Bauhaus, and the exponents of Concrete Art. As a third internationally active artistic tendency, Surrealism made the unconscious and the world of dreams its central concerns, thereby opening a perspective onto a different reality. In the initial years after its foundation, the Surrealists, grouped around André Breton, dominated the Parisian art scene. Women artists were rarely accepted in this circle, and won recognition only in the 1930s.

In the 1920s and 1930s, nonetheless, Paris remained the epicenter of the most diverse avant-garde tendencies: for artists intent on building their careers, a period spent living, working, and establishing contacts in the French capital remained indispensable. Taking place in Paris in 1925 were the enormously influential L’Art d’Aujourd’hui and the Exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, through which the Concrete Art tendency became well-known. Both the abstract and Surrealist groups in Paris established contacts with artists and Eastern Europe, generating alliances between tendencies in the west and the east. As highly talented networkers, Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Florence Henri played especially important roles in such processes of exchange.

The Artists

Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943) launched her artistic career in the circle of the Zürich Dadaists grouped around Hugo Ball and Hans Arp. Her wide-ranging oeuvre, which represents a link between Dadaism and geometric-abstract art, occupies a position at the

margins of Surrealism. Alongside Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg, she contributed to the establishment of Concrete Art in Europe. A cosmopolitan personality, she was an early networker in the realm of avant-garde culture.

Hannah Höch (1889–1978) as well – a cofounder of Berlin Dadaism together with Raoul Hausmann, and the only woman in the Dadaist circle which included Baader, Huelsenbeck, Grosz, and Heartfield – won recognition for collages which critiqued contemporary realities. Her collage technique would later become a trademark of Dadaism.

Equally exemplary among pioneer women of the avant-garde is **Sonia Delaunay** (1885–1979). Together with Robert Delaunay, she paved the way for simultaneous painting in Paris. Later, she applied her color experiments to the field of fashion design, revolutionizing the industry with her own “Sonia” label and producing exclusive fabrics for the luxury Amsterdam department store Metz beginning 1925 and continuing into the 1960s.

Florence Henri (1893–1982), who was a friend to both Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Sonia Delaunay, is regarded as a representative of the “New Vision” in France. Whether among the futurist in Rome, the Cubist in Paris, or at the Bauhaus in Dessau, the widely-traveled, multilingual Henri consistently found her way to the centers of avant-garde activity. She integrated a psychological level into her mirror pictures, with their multiple perspectives, that was familiar from Surrealism.

The sculptress **Katarzyna Kobro** (1898–1951), who lived in Łódź and had a Russian background, made decisive contributions to the later development of constructivist sculpture. Kobro, virtually unknown until recently, advocated a conception of space as a universal phenomenon. She liberated sculpture from object references and corporeality, and was active in the international Constructivist avant-garde of the 1920s. As a consequence of unfortunate life circumstances and the ravages of World War II, many of her singular sculptures were lost, and now are now being “rediscovered” in the west.

During the 1930s, photographer **Dora Maar** (1907–1997) moved in the Surrealists circles grouped around André Breton, Man Ray, and Brassai. Alongside her fashion photography, Dora Maar – who would later become a longtime partner of Picasso – initially made a name for herself with socially critical photographs of street children and homeless people, and beginning in 1936, through her Surrealist imagery.

Among the outstanding women Surrealists active as early as the 1920s is film director **Germaine Dulac** (1882–1942). In 1928, she directed *La coquille et le clergyman*, the first

Surrealist film – a year before Luis Buñuel’s legendary *Un chien andalou*. Dulac’s 40-minute film will be screened in the exhibition and its accompanying program.

Another protagonist of early Surrealism is **Claude Cahun** (1894–1954), who won recognition as a gifted writer and philosopher in the circle around André Breton. At first, she attributed little importance to her photographs, which were produced only “incidentally.” Today, her self-portraits are regarded as among the most important and radical expressions of feminine identity during the 1930s. Breaking with conventional gender roles, Cahun staged herself in photographs as an androgynous or transsexual being which occupied a Surreal world.

Presented in the exhibition in the form of a “sonic island” is music by six internationally recognized women composers who were active during the interwar period. A documentary film produced by Ralph Goertz deepens the theme of the exhibition ***The Other Side of the Moon***.

Supporter and cooperation partner of the exhibition

The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (duration: 14 February to 28 May 2012).

Our media partner is the Handelsblatt.

The exhibition is kindly supported by Institut français Düsseldorf and the Polish Institut Düsseldorf.

The Steinway-Haus Düsseldorf GmbH supports the exhibition’s opening with two grand pianos which are given rentless for a music program.

Exhibition Catalog

Die andere Seite des Mondes. Künstlerinnen der Avantgarde, exhibition catalog, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2011, with texts by Ralf Burmeister, Karoline Hille, Walburga Krupp, Paulina Kurc-Maj, and Susanne Meyer-Büser; biographies: Louise Bugge Jacobsen, Matteo de Leeuw-de Monti, 288 pages, ca. 351 illustrations, some in color, format: 27 x 31 cm, paperback, DuMont Verlag, Cologne, 34 euros.

Opening of the Exhibition

Friday 21 October 2011, 7 PM
with *notabu.ensemble neue musik*

Preview for Young People

Taking place on Friday 21 Oct 2011 from 4 PM to 6 PM is a preview for young people 14 years of age and older. Admission is free of charge - please bring your student ID!

Public Guided Tours

Sundays 3 PM – 4 PM, Thursdays 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM,
Guided tours for children Sundays 3 PM – 4:30 PM

Reserving Guided Tours

You may book individual guided tours through and workshops on the exhibition. For information and registration, contact the Visitor Service, tel. 0211.8381-204, service@kunstsammlung.de

Workshops and Lectures for adults, young people and children, further education

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive supporting program.

Film Program *Große Ausstellung. Großes Kino / Great Exhibition, Great Cinema*

In conjunction with the exhibition, the cinema BLACK BOX and the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf is offering six film evenings designed to explore the theme of the exhibition. Two silent films accompanied by live music performances represent a concentrated retrospective of works by Germaine Dulac. Screened on four subsequent evenings will be films which deal with the works of the featured artists or with their activities in the cinematic medium. The film program is being curated by Florian Deterding and Matthias Knop in collaboration with the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf.

Lectures/Discussions

The exhibition will be accompanied by five events which will discuss the works of the featured artists in a variety of contexts. Examined will be the social conditions under which the presented artists work and the networks they cultivated, with specific reference to the contemporary situation and to current aesthetic positions.

Each event will begin at 7 PM, location: Auditorium, K20 Grabbeplatz

Musical Interventions

On four Sunday afternoons, musical interventions in the exhibition galleries will allow visitors to experience the works on display in very special ways. Musicians from the well-known group notabu.ensemble neue musik will perform pieces by women composers who were contemporaries of the featured artists, thereby shedding light on the historical and aesthetic context.

Works by contemporary women composers will create connections with the musical present. The music program is being curated by Thomas Brezinka and Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen.

Scenic Reading with Music (in German)

Wednesday, 07 Dec 2011, 8 PM (in the framework of the KPMG Kunstabend (Art Evening))

“Die Spiele der Frauen“ – “Husch, husch, der schönste Vokal entleert sich.”

With Karoline Hille (author), Bettina Franke (actress), and Matthias Dörsam (saxophonist, clarinetist)

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Grandes Dames – Visitors to the Collection

06 October 2011 to 29 January 2012

For the collection project *Grandes Dames*, we have adopted a critical and cautious approach to the following question: Which women artists are missing from the permanent collection, in particular from the realm of classical modernism? Which major positions received insufficient attention during the museum's relatively brief collecting history, and hence remain unrepresented? A number of the gaps within the collection have been identified and marked by incorporating targeted works by women artists into the collection in the form of temporary loans. Among these are paintings and sculptures by **Natalia Goncharova, Käthe Kollwitz, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Gabriele Münter, Meret Oppenheim, Lyubov Popova, and Marianne Werefkin.**

To close gaps in a museum collection through loans is a widespread strategy. Ultimately, we are concerned here with a long-term examination of the version of the artistic canon that is conveyed by the collection. As the opportunity arises, revisions are to be affected through purchases and gifts. Illuminating as well is a retrospective analysis of the market: Which works were available, and when, and at which prices? This question is of particular interest against the background of current price increases for works by both important earlier and recently deceased women artists. In cooperation with students of Kunstgeschichtliches Institut, Ruhr-Universität Bochum.

K21 STÄNDEHAUS

New Rooms by Woman Artists

05 October 2011 to 29 April 2012

After «Intensif-Station» the K21 has continued to expand the collection's focus on artist's rooms. The next six rooms will be occupied without exception by women artists. Each month, a room will be opened with a special event. We begin in October with ceramic works by **Rosemarie Trockel** — at the same time, a room at the K20 will be installed with new, black wool pictures by the same artist. On view beginning in November will be a presentation of works by **Lee Bontecou**, who celebrates her 80th birthday this year. The Kunstsammlung already owns a major work by this artist, which was acquired in 1971 by Werner Schmalenbach. On view beginning in December will be the "War Series", **Nancy Spero's** artistic reflections on the Vietnam War. A piece by **Charlotte Posenenske** follows in January, while **Annette Messager's** recently acquired, room-filling installation "Sous vent" will be presented to the public in February. In March, the series will conclude with a work by **Candida Höfer.**

Exhibition Preview 2011/2012

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Tomás Saraceno – Labor	ab 16.09.2011
Grandes Dames – zu Gast in der Sammlung	06.10.2011 – 29.01.2012
Die andere Seite des Mondes. Künstlerinnen der Avantgarde	22.10.2011 – 15.01.2012
Zvi Goldstein – Haunted by Objects Weltreisen im Inneren meines Kopfes	13.11.2011 – 26.02.2012
Fresh Widow Fenster-Bilder seit Matisse und Duchamp	31.03.2012 – 12.08.2012
Gillian Wearing	15.09.2012 – 06.01.2013
Rita McBride	27.10.2012 – 13.01.2013

K21 STÄNDEHAUS

Neue Künstlerinnenräume Rosemarie Trockel, Lee Bontecou, Nancy Spero, Charlotte Posenenske, Annette Messager, Candida Höfer	05.10.2011 – 29.04.2012
Big Picture (Zeitzone)	10.12.2011 – 01.04.2012
Tomás Saraceno In den Umlaufbahnen	11.02.2012 – 20.01.2013
Roman Ondak	25.02.2012 – 28.05.2012
Big Picture III	14.04.2012 – 16.09.2012
Thomas Schütte Wattwanderung	16.06.2012 – 16.09.2012
Paul Klee	29.09.2012 – 10.02.2013

SCHMELA HAUS

Jordan Wolfson	bis 15.01.2012
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