

Presse kit: Isa Genzken

Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983

Isa Genzken. Here and Now

May 8 – Sep 5, 2021

K21

Press conference and preview

Wednesday, May 26, 2021, 12 am, K21

Speakers:

- Prof. Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer, Director Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen
- Vera Pues, Stiftung Kunst, Kultur und Soziales der Sparda-Bank West

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**#K21Genzken
#IsaGenzken
#K20K21fromhome**

Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983**Isa Genzken. Here and Now****May 8 – Sep 5, 2021 (tbc)****K21**

With two parallel exhibitions dedicated to Isa Genzken (b. 1948), the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen offers a special look at the work of one of the most important contemporary women artists worldwide. The focus is on two work phases from her career spanning five decades. On the lower floor of K21, the emphasis is on her visionary early work—a period that has never before been honored to this extent in any other exhibition. In parallel, current works from the last decade are on view on the bel étage. This exciting compilation draws attention to developments within the oeuvre, as well as to Isa Genzken's attitude towards the world. It testifies to her ability to continually reinvent herself artistically, to appropriate new materials and techniques, and to respond precisely to the circumstances of her time.

„Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983“ at K21**K21**

Works from 1973 to 1983 is an adapted version of the eponymous exhibition that was on view last fall at the Kunstmuseum Basel. In Düsseldorf, special reference will now made to the city, as well as to Genzken's biography, because this is where the artist studied from 1973 to 1977 and subsequently lived until 1979. The exhibition thus begins with works from her years of study and builds a bridge to the year 1983, when Genzken increasingly turned her attention to the next theme. On display are sculptures, computer prints, multi-part drawing series, photography, and film.

One focal point of the exhibition are the Ellipsoids and Hyperboloids, elongated wooden sculptures based on elaborate computer calculations. Their aerodynamic form suggests industrial production, but in fact they are one-of-a-kind handcrafted pieces that emerged from Isa Genzken's engagement with the historical avant-garde and American Minimalism in particular. Unlike Minimalist art, however, her reduced aesthetic conceals subtle associations and references to her own biography, for example by the titles of her sculptures, which denote names of people, places, and objects.

The early works testify to Isa Genzken's self-confidence and intransigence, with which she adopted her position in the field of sculpture—an environment that, in the 1970s, was largely dominated by men.

In addition to the sculptures, another focus of the exhibition is on the computer graphics, some of which are very large, measuring up to eight meters long. They were created from 1975 onwards parallel to the Ellipsoids and Hyperboloids and are printed on continuous paper, including the guide hole margins typical of the time. They reveal how Genzken played in an innovative way with algorithmic fig-

ures and the technical possibilities of her time. Here as well, the artist mixes conceptual approaches with personal themes. Works that initially appear abstract become recognizable at second glance as traces of her own existence and tell of relationships and desires.

„Isa Genzken. Here and Now“ on the Bel Étage at K21

Parallel to the presentation on the lower floor of K21, current works by the Berlin-based artist will be on view on the Bel Étage. Featuring installations, sculptures, and wall works, the exhibition “Isa Genzken. Here and Now” undertakes a diagnosis of the state of the present. In her works, Genzken takes an unabashed look at the society of late capitalism. In doing so, she exposes the crises, fears, and taboos that characterize it.

Her installation *Gibt es genug Medikamente* (Is There Enough Medicine), for example, refers to how societies struggle to deal with diseases. With the installation *Poverty*, she in turn deals with the themes of impoverishment and homelessness. Also on display is a selection of works from the series of *Geldbilder* (Money Pictures), which consists of a group of canvases on which banknotes and coins of different currencies are attached, thus figuratively referring to currencies that shape the world.

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A further group of works in the exhibition are the *Schauspieler* (Actors). These sculptures comprised of mannequins, which the artist has dressed, sprayed, and equipped with everyday objects, stand individually or in groups fraught with tension. Here as well, references to the artist's own biography become clear—several of the mannequins wear Genzken's own clothes. The aspect of interaction is also important, insofar as visitors can walk around the sculpture groups or pass between the individual mannequins, thus becoming part of the scenarios. Unlike the Ellipsoids and Hyperboloids, the *Schauspieler* create strong narratives among themselves. At the same time, however, just as in the early sculptures, their material again refers to industrially manufactured production and, in particular, the rapidly perishable consumer goods of mass culture.

As with the Ellipsoids and Hyperboloids, with the *Schauspieler* cinematic thinking plays a role which has accompanied Isa Genzken from the very beginning of her artistic career. The model-like character of the groups of actors is reminiscent of film sets or scenarios from cities, and the movement of the viewer is an elementary component of the work.

Curators: Susanne Gaensheimer and Agnieszka Skolimowska (“Isa Genzken. Here and Now”), Sören Grammel (“Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983”)

Short Biography

Isa Genzken (* 1948, Bad Oldesloe) is one of the most influential artists and sculptors of her generation. She first studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in

Hamburg with Almir Mavignier before moving to the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin. From 1973 to 1977 she studied at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the class of Gerhard Richter. At the same time she took courses in art history and philosophy at the University of Cologne between 1973 and 1975. Subsequently, she lived for a time in New York. Isa Genzken has exhibited in the most prestigious houses worldwide, including the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (1992-1993), the Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (2002-2003), or the Kunsthalle Wien (2014).

In 2013, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Dallas Museum of Art, presented a retrospective of the artist's work.

Isa Genzken has participated many times in international biennials and group exhibitions, such as documenta 7, 9 and 11 in Kassel (1982, 1992 and 2002), Skulptur Projekte Münster (1987, 1997 and 2007) and the Venice Biennale (1982, 1993, 2003, 2007 and 2015).

The artist has received various prizes and awards, including the Karl Schmidt Rottluff Fellowship (1978-1980), the Berlin Art Prize (1980), the Wolfgang Hahn Prize of the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst am Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2002), the International Art Prize of the Cultural Foundation of the SSK Munich (2004), the Goslar Kaiserring (2017), and the Nasher Prize for Sculpture (2019).

Isa Genzken lives and works in Berlin.

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Publications

For the exhibition "Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983," a comprehensive exhibition catalog has been published. Edited by Søren Grammel, Kunstmuseum Basel; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen.

With texts by Simon Baier, Søren Grammel, Jutta Koether, Griselda Pollock

Published bilingually: German and English

Published by Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne.

240 pages / Price in the museum: 36 Euro

A comprehensive accompanying **booklet** is published for both exhibitions in printed form (free with admission ticket); available digitally as a download in the press area of the website: <https://www.kunstsammlung.de/de/press/>

A **K+ Digital Guide** will be published to accompany the exhibition, offering insights into both exhibitions and detailed information on the artist and her working methods. In this context, there are also six video statements by companions and people who have been following Isa Genzken's work for a long time, including Daniel Buchholz, Susanne Gaensheimer, Ralph Krotz, Nicolaus Schafhausen, Raf Simons and Josef Strau.

<https://www.kunstsammlung.de/de/digital/kplus>

Partners and Sponsors

The exhibition “Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983” was conceived by the Kunstmuseum Basel in cooperation with the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

The exhibition “Isa Genzken. Here and Now” is sponsored by the Foundation for Art, Culture, and Social Affairs of Sparda.

Collection Deutsche Bank (as lender)

Media partner: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

With funding support from the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine Westphalia

Opening day**Saturday, May 8, 2021 will not take place!****K21**

Due to the current Corona measures, the exhibition will open at a later date. Current changes to this will be announced on the website and on the social media channels of the art collection.

Supporting program to the exhibitions**KPMG Art Evenings**

Jul 7, 8 pm

Lecture by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Professor of
Art History, Harvard University

Sep 1, 8 pm

Talk with Susanne Gaensheimer (Director of Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen), Daniel Buchholz (Galerie Buchholz) and Søren Grammel (curator "Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983", Kunstmuseum Basel)
Moderation: Catrin Lorch (art historian and art critic, Süddeutsche Zeitung)**K21**Free admission as part of the KPMG Art Evening; limited number of participants;
registration required.**Linklaters-Theme day for the whole Family: Materials for the art of the future**

Sep 5, 11 am - 5 pm (subject to change).

Workshops and guided tours, free admission, registration required

Workshops for adults

Isa Genzken and the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf

Jul 23, 2.45 – 5.45 pm

Jul 24, 11.15 am – 2.15 pm

Fee: 30,00 Euro; registration required; Moderation: Markus Kottmann

Artists in Kunstsammlung NRW: Isa Genzken and further

Aug 14, 2.45 – 5.45 pm

Aug 14, 11.15 am – 2.15 pm

Fee: 30,- Euro; registration required; Moderation: Susanne Ristow

If infection events do not allow for face-to-face events, the events will be conducted digitally or rescheduled.

Exhibition preview**Georges Braque****Inventor of cubism****Sep 25, 2021 — Jan 23, 2022****K20**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen pays tribute to Georges Braque as a pioneering artist of the French avant-garde, an artist who has hitherto received too little attention in Germany. The exhibition focuses on the most important years of his oeuvre, on his particularly fascinating and turbulent early work between 1906 and 1914.

For eight years before the First World War, the young Georges Braque (1882–1963) and his friend Pablo Picasso shaped what was perhaps the most revolutionary stage in the history of modern painting: Cubism. Landscapes and still lifes are his favored motifs. The exhibition reveals how Braque developed or reinvented stylistic means in rapid succession and at the highest level. Fauvism, Proto-Cubism, Analytical Cubism, papier collé, and Synthetic Cubism follow one another in a unique condensation. The speed and intensity of the stylistic changes continue to amaze to this day. Our exhibition presents Braque's work as an example of modern art's exemplary path from a representational to an abstract reproduction of reality. Roughly sixty masterpieces from international museums, private collections, and the holdings of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen shall be brought together and presented in a customized architecture at K20.

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The exhibition is supported by Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung.

Press conference: Sep 23, 2021, 11 am at K20

Opening day: Saturday, Sep 25, 2021, 11 am – 8 pm at K20