

Der Mucha – An Initial Suspicion **Major Survey Exhibition Dedicated to Reinhard Mucha at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen**

Reinhard Mucha's oeuvre, with its redefinition of sculpture, photography, and installation, is considered one of the most important artistic positions from the 1980s to the present. With the exhibition dedicated to the artist, who was born in Düsseldorf in 1950, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen will unite long unseen installations with works from all creative phases at its two venues, K20 and K21, starting on September 3, 2022, thus creating a panorama that spans more than four decades of artistic work.

K21

For the director of the museum, Susanne Gaensheimer, "Reinhard Mucha is one of the internationally most important artists of the 1980s, having contributed significantly to our current conception of sculpture, installation, and conceptual art. With key works from his student days at the Düsseldorf Art Academy in the late 1970s, he fundamentally expanded the conceptual notion of what sculpture is and can be. To this day, his works have lost none of their significance, so that Mucha can thus be described as both a historical and contemporary artist. This major survey exhibition is long overdue and was therefore an essential desideratum for me when I came to Düsseldorf, a city with a lively art scene with numerous important positions since Joseph Beuys. For me, Reinhard Mucha is at the forefront of this. He was the first in line for an inaugural visit when I assumed my position here."

Der Mucha – An Initial Suspicion is the first major survey exhibition of the Düsseldorf-based artist since the double exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern and the Kunsthalle Basel in 1987. During his studies at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art from 1975 to 1982, Mucha had already exhibited works that were groundbreaking for the artistic developments of the 1980s and beyond. This applies in particular to the significance of his multifaceted oeuvre in relation to the genre of installation, the institution-critical reflection of the art exhibition industry and the museum, and the handling of material in art, as well as to the awareness of history and the reflection of society. Especially when his works are experienced in context, contemporary and industrial history, as well as echoes of pop culture, are intertwined with the artist's biography. In this way, Mucha succeeds in weaving together seemingly disparate thematic approaches into complex, meaning-laden structures of high sensual quality.

Das Deutschlandgerät (The Germany Device) as the Starting Point of the Exhibition

The distribution of works between K20 and K21 results in two very different spatial situations for the two parts of the exhibition. While the Grabbe Hall of K20 offers Reinhard Mucha the unique opportunity to combine three large-scale installations and several multi-part works into a self-contained overall installation, the second floor of K21 presents a par-course of twelve rooms with more than sixty carefully selected works spanning more than forty years. Here, the exhibition is not shown on the second floor as usual, but rather on the bel étage of the former Ständehaus. The key work on permanent display here since 2002—**Das Deutschlandgerät**. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K21 Ständehaus, Düsseldorf [2021] [2002], XLIV Biennale di Venezia, German Pavilion, Venice 1990, [2021] [2002] 1990—thus becomes the starting point of the exhibition parcourse. Mucha originally conceived this expansive, site-specific work for the German Pavilion at the 44th Venice Biennale in 1990, where he exhibited together with the Düsseldorf-based photographer couple Hilla and Bernd Becher. As a partial reconstruction, the installation was specially adapted to the former plenary hall of the Ständehaus in 2002 and expanded to include a sound and video installation. On the occasion of the exhibition, the work has now undergone a second technical and content-related adaptation by the artist.

Opposite the Deutschlandgerät is the early key work **Wartesaal** (Waiting Room), [1997], [1986] 1979–1982, which has not been shown publicly since *documenta X* in 1997. In a sense, these two installations form the energetic poles of the exhibition, around which the other rooms are oriented. Among these are current works such as **# Hashtag mit Lichtblick im Schmerz** (# Hashtag with Bright Spot in Pain), [2019] 2001, as well as important landmarks from the 1990s such as **Dokumente I-IV** from 1992, the installation for *DOCUMENTA IX* 1992, as well as early works such as **Baden-Baden / Standard II**, [2022] 1984 / 2022, which are reunited for the first time in a new way.

At the center of the presentation in K20 is **Das Figur-Grund Problem in der Architektur des Barock (für Dich allein bleibt nur das Grab)** (The Figure-Ground Problem in Baroque Architecture (for you alone only the grave remains), [2022] 1985, one of the few surviving installations of utilitarian objects and museum furniture. For the first time since 1985, the work, one part of which is in the collection of the Musée national d'art moderne / Centre Pompidou in Paris, has been recreated in its complete form. In addition to these spectacular exhibits, in which office and museum furniture represent fairground attractions that have solidified into sculptures, **Frankfurter Block**, [2016], [2014] 2012 and **Stockholmer Raum** (Für Rafel Moneo) [Stockholm Room (For Rafel Moneo)], [1998] 1998 are “exhibitions within the exhibition.” Each brings its demountable museum space along and contains several previously independently conceived works. The show thus also becomes an exhibition about exhibiting. The museum space, the institutions of exhibiting and presenting, are repeatedly challenged and put to the test by Mucha's works.

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With the title of the exhibition, Mucha refers back to the restaurant guide DER MUCHA, which was widespread in Austria in the 1980s and on which the design of the exhibition catalog is also based. Taking up Mucha's almost sculptural handling of language and words, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen pursues the initial suspicion that his oeuvre needs to be explored anew in its entire breadth.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalog published by Hirmer Verlag. With this book, edited by Susanne Gaensheimer and Falk Wolf, the Kunstsammlung presents the long-awaited monograph on the oeuvre of Reinhard Mucha. Not only the exhibited works, but also important previous states of these are systematically documented. Mucha's working method is characterized by a constant review of solutions once found, so that several works were further developed due to adjustments to the respective exhibition situation and the circumstances of the time. In-depth essays by Julian Heynen, Stefanie Kreuzer, Sebastian Egenhofer, Kolja Reichert, and Falk Wolf examine key aspects of Reinhard Mucha's work from different perspectives. 400 pp., price ca. 39 EUR.

A free booklet with all work details and introductory texts on individual rooms and works is also available at the ticket counter.

Short Biography:

Reinhard Mucha was born in Düsseldorf in 1950 and studied at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in the class of Klaus Rinke in 1972 and then from 1975 to 1982. Reinhard Mucha lives and works in Düsseldorf. His major exhibitions include: Kunstmuseum Basel (2016), *documenta X* (1997), Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa), Berlin (1996), *DOCUMENTA IX* (1992), *Das Deutschlandgerät*, La Biennale di Venezia, German Pavilion (1990), *Nordausgang*, Kunsthalle Basel (1987), *Kasse beim Fahrer*, Kunsthalle Bern (1987), *Gladbeck*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1986), *Das Figur-Grund Problem in der Architektur des Barock (Für dich allein bleibt nur das Grab)*, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (1985), and *Von hier aus – Zwei Monate neue deutsche Kunst in Düsseldorf* (1984)

Program Accompanying the Exhibition

A comprehensive educational program is being conceived to accompany the exhibition, aimed at all visitors and age groups. Special attention will be paid to Mucha's playful approach in combining different materials, media, and found objects. In addition, the precision of the craftsmanship and the fundamental openness of the installations to future changes will also be addressed. The finalized program will be communicated at the press conference on September 1, 2022.

K20

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K20 and K21, September 3, 2022 – January 22, 2023

Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf

Press Conference and Preview: September 1, 2022, 11:00 am

#K20K21Mucha #ReinhardMucha #K20K21

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Media Partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:
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K21