

Preview of Exhibitions 2020/21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen

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K20**Thomas Ruff****September 12, 2020 – February 7, 2021**

Thomas Ruff (b. 1958) is one of the internationally most important artists of his generation. Already as a student in the class of the photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in the early 1980s, he chose a conceptual approach to photography which, to this day, continues to determine his handling of the most diverse pictorial genres and theoretical possibilities of photography.

Thomas Ruff's contribution to contemporary photography thus consists especially in the development of a form of photography that does without a camera: He uses images that have already been shot, disseminated, and optimized for specific purposes in other, largely non-artistic contexts. Ruff's image sources for these series range from photographic experiments of the nineteenth century to photographs taken by space probes. He has examined the archive processes of large image agencies and the image politics of the People's Republic of China. But pornographic images and pictures of catastrophes from the Internet also form starting points for series of works, which, over the past twenty years, have increasingly been created on the computer. They originate from newspapers, magazines, books, archives, and collections or were simply accessible to everyone on the Internet.

In each series, Ruff explores the technical conditions of photography in the confrontation with these various visual worlds. At the same time, he focuses on the afterlife of the images in publications, archives, databases, and on the Internet.

K21

The exhibition has been made possible by the support of the NATIONAL-BANK AG.

**Everyone Is an Artist. Cosmopolitical Exercises with Joseph Beuys
March 27 – August 15, 2021****Press Conference: March 25, 2021, 11:00 am in K20**

As a draftsman, sculptor, teacher, politician, and activist, as well as an action and installation artist, Joseph Beuys (Krefeld 1921 – 1986 Düsseldorf) fundamentally changed the art of the twentieth century. His influence can still be felt today in artistic and political discourses. His 100th birthday in 2021 is an occasion to rediscover, appreciate, and critically examine both his complex oeuvre and his international standing.

The exhibition in K20 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen offers profound insight into Joseph Beuys' cosmopolitan thinking as manifested in his actions. For here—as an acting, speaking, and moving figure—Beuys examined the central and radical idea of his expanded concept of art: "Everyone is an artist." The goal of his universalist approach was to renew society from the ground up.

In the exhibition, contemporary artists, along with representatives from the most diverse areas of society, enter into a multi-layered, transcultural dialogue with the engaged protagonist Beuys. From today's perspective, they confirm, question, and expand his theses on the possibilities of a future conceived through art.

An exhibition in conjunction with *beuys 2021. 100 years of joseph beuys*. A project of the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia in cooperation with the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf as organizer. The patron of the anniversary year is Minister-President Armin Laschet.

Christoph Schlingensief. Kaprow City**April 24, 2021 – October 17, 2021**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is presenting Christoph Schlingensief's (1960–2010) multimedia installation *Kaprow City*, which has been completely preserved as one of the few artistic works by the filmmaker, theater and opera director, talk show host, and political action artist. Originally conceived as an accessible stage set for the Volksbühne in Berlin, Schlingensief transferred *Kaprow City* to the Migros Museum in Zurich in 2007 as an art installation. The expansive work of art is now being presented for the first time in a museum in Germany.

Aesthetically, *Kaprow City* gives the impression of a battle of materials. According to the principle of overload, numerous themes and ideas overlap in the spaces, pictures, and films. Schlingensief incorporated the way the US-American Happening artist Allan Kaprow (1927–2006) worked with the audience, as well as his reflections on a fictional film about the tragic death of Lady Di.

The project offers one of the rare opportunities to see an installation by this extraordinary all-around artist.

A project of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in cooperation with the Estate of Christoph Schlingensief and Aino Laberenz.

Georges Braque. Inventor of Cubism**October 16, 2021 – January 23, 2022****Press Conference: September 23, 2021, 11:00 am in K20**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is honoring Georges Braque as a pioneering artist of the French avant-garde. The exhibition focuses on the most important years of his oeuvre, i.e. on his particularly eventful early work created between 1906 and 1914. Before the First World War, the young Georges Braque (1882–1963) and his friend Pablo Picasso left their mark on perhaps the most revolutionary stage in the history of modern painting: Cubism. Landscapes and still lifes are his preferred motifs. The exhibition reveals how Braque developed or reinvented stylistic means at the highest level. Fauvism, Proto-Cubism, Analytical Cubism, *papier collé*, and Synthetic Cubism follow one another in unique condensation. The tempo and intensity of the stylistic changes continue to amaze to this day. With roughly sixty masterpieces from international museums, private collections, and the holdings of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, the exhibition describes the exemplary path of modern art from the representational to the abstracted reproduction of reality.

**Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Fly in League with the Night
October 16, 2021 – February 13, 2022****Press Conference: October 14, 2021, 11:00 am in K20**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is presenting the first comprehensive exhibition in Germany dedicated to the work of Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (b. 1977), a London-born painter and writer with Ghanaian roots. Her central theme is the human being: With oil or charcoal and pastel pencil she “portrays” women and men, occasionally resting, dreaming, dancing, gazing, or interacting with a counterpart. These are, however, not real people, but rather composite figures whose appearances are derived from various sources. Lynette Yiadom-Boakye depicts exclusively Black people, thus abruptly revealing their widespread absence in the representations of European art history, which she has studied intensively. In the context of the collection of K20, her pictures, which she consciously stages and sets in dialog, will stimulate reflection on the potential of painting, as well as on female and male role models, on pressing questions of representation, racism, and diversity.

The exhibition, which will be on view in the Henkel Hall of K20, was conceived by the TATE Britain in cooperation with the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, and the MUDAM Luxembourg.

K21**OPEN SPACE. Nothing but the Future
November 13, 2021 – February 13, 2022****Press Conference: November 11, 2021, 11:00 am in K20**

For the second *OPEN SPACE*, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen will again transform an exhibition hall into an indoor public space. Under the title *Nothing but the Future*, the focus is now on the Anthropocene, a scientific term for the present age of the earth, in which humankind has become a force of nature. In view of the climate crisis and its life-threatening consequences, the excessive waste of resources, and growing social and economic inequality, the question must be asked: How can we think and shape a just and worthwhile future together? In a cooperative process with local and international partners, a transdisciplinary program is being developed that will make *OPEN SPACE* a place for negotiations on questions concerning the present and future of our planet. Developed in collaboration with the architectural office of raumlaborberlin, *OPEN SPACE* is a place where people can meet—without having to pay admission—and where they can work, discuss, learn, play, read, or participate in a wide variety of events.

K21**Simon Denny. Mine****September 5, 2020 – January 17, 2021**

In his multifaceted, research-based work, Simon Denny (b. 1982 in Auckland, New Zealand) investigates how profoundly the experience and perception of culture is changed by the reconfiguration of technology and politics. On the *bel étage* of K21, the artist will present a group of new works that have not yet been shown in Europe. His sculptures, wall works, and immersive installations expose the political and social consequences of the emergence of the data economy, the transformation and reconfiguration of “work,” and the interaction of humanity with non-human life forms and the planet, often in the form of “resources.”

Simon Denny studied at the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland (2001–05) and at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main (2007–09). His work has been presented in international exhibitions, including MoMA PS1, New York (2015) and the 56th Venice Biennale. The artist is Professor for Time-Based Media at the HFBK Hamburg. He lives and works in Berlin.

The exhibitions on the *bel étage* are sponsored by the Foundation for Art, Culture, and Social Affairs of Sparda Bank West.

K21**Hito Steyerl. I Will Survive****September 26, 2020 – January 10, 2021**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is presenting the first survey exhibition dedicated to the work of the artist, filmmaker, and author Hito Steyerl (b. 1966 in Munich). Steyerl is currently considered one of the most advanced positions in terms of current reflections on the social role of art and museums, the development of artificial intelligence, and experimentation with forms of media presentation. With early works that exemplify the “documentary turn,” the exhibition introduces a different notion of the documentary, the conceptual change of which Steyerl has significantly contributed to, formulated, and practiced.

Another key aspect in Steyerl’s work is the mutations of camera images over the last thirty years, the development from the analog image and its various montages to the split, fluid image of the digital information age. In her most recent works, Steyerl follows with a critical eye how art is increasingly becoming an object of investment and speculation, determined and driven by large galleries and powerful oligarchs. The concept of public art, which Steyerl lays claim to, thus takes on a new relevance.

A collaboration between the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf and the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation.

Coming to Voice. Graduates of the Düsseldorf Academy of Art 2020
February 6 – March 21, 2021

In February 2021, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is continuing its extremely popular cooperation by featuring young artists who completed their studies at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in 2020. At K21, the roughly eighty participating artists will present new works in a museum context. The positions on display reflect the entire spectrum of artistic forms of expression and range from painting, sculpture, and prints to photography, videos, installations, and performances. They question the possibilities of both classical and digital visual media.

Especially in times of a pandemic, when the public visibility of young artists is limited, the Kunstsammlung is pleased to offer a platform and give the public insight into the latest artistic developments in Düsseldorf.

Within the frameworks of the exhibition *Coming to Voice. Graduates of the Düsseldorf Academy of Art 2020* at K21, Provinzial Rheinland is awarding an art scholarship. The “Stiftung Junge Kunst” of the Friends of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen is supporting the graduates of the academy by purchasing presented works of art. In 2021, the Rundstedt Promotional Prize “rund wie eckig” (“round and square”) will be awarded for the first time.

A cooperation of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen with the Düsseldorf Academy of Art.

Isa Genzken. Works from 1973 to 1983
May 8 – September 5, 2021

Press Conference: May 6, 2021, 11:00 am in K21 (tbc.)

The work of Isa Genzken (b. 1948) is considered today to be among the most influential oeuvres and has inspired generations of artists. The exhibition draws attention to Genzken’s outstanding early work—a period that has not yet been consistently honored internationally in any institution. On display will be sculptures, computer prints, series of drawings, photographs, and films. The focus is on the groups of *Ellipsoid* and *Hyperbolo* sculptures created between 1974 and 1983, which, through their subtle mathematics, convey an aesthetic liberated from gravity.

The artist combines 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. The artist’s practice is influenced by the minimalist and conceptual working methods that were decisive for the West at the time. Genzken always plays with the basic forms and materials that shape architectural and social spaces.

The exhibition in Düsseldorf establishes a special relationship to Genzken’s biographical context, as the artist studied here from 1973 to 1977 and then lived in the city until 1979. Parallel to the presentation on the lower level of K21, recent works by the Berlin-based artist will be on view on the *bel étage*. In this way, developments within Isa Genzken’s oeuvre, as well as her long-standing interests, become apparent.

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

The exhibitions on the *bel étage* are sponsored by the Foundation for Art, Culture, and Social Affairs of Sparda Bank West.

**Marcel Odenbach. one way or another
October 9, 2021 – January 9, 2022**

Press Conference: October 7, 2021, 11:00 am in K21

The artist Marcel Odenbach (b. 1953), who lives in Cologne, Berlin, and periodically in Ghana, has been working with video since 1976. His filmic collages, installations, and performances have contributed to video art becoming a key medium of international contemporary art. Odenbach's artistic approach is based on a strong awareness of the historical, social, and transcultural issues of the time. The survey exhibition at K21 places his filmic work in the context of works on paper based on the principle of collage and montage. Odenbach's images and videos, virtuously assembled from a wide variety of facets, present a variety of constellations and challenge the flexibility of ways of thinking and seeing.

**Media Partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:
*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung***

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is supported by the Ministry for Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.