



van Gogh to Beuys
CROSSART: Masterpieces from 10 Museums of the Lower Rhine Area
Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn
12. August until 6. November 2005

10 museums from the Lower Rhine region have initiated an extensive collaboration. In order to celebrate this synergetic action, they have asked the curator Jean-Christophe Ammann to create an exhibition selected from their collections to be presented in Bonn.

The subject of the exhibition is at the same time very general and specific. It is concerned with art of the Modern era, but not with the history of the museums involved. Ammann's metaphor for this project is a celebration dinner. He created a seating plan in which the works act as guests. This metaphor underlines the ambition to stress the active power of each work in its dialogue with the other selected works. The encounters of the works are according to their individual characteristics, and not so much to historical or stylistic criteria.

The first work seen will trigger off a cathartic shock in the viewer. He is confronted by the power of 3000 watts of blinding light shot at him by Gilberto Zorio's "Evviva", an installation consisting of 4 javelins and 12 strong lights, made in 1974. It is impossible to escape from the direct impact of this piece, which is at once irritating and fascinating. Its blinding power cleans the visitor's sense of view.

Jean-Christophe Ammann has selected key works and unfamiliar pieces by long overlooked artists from the collections of the museums involved. The visitor will experience surprising constellations such as the one between an impressive series of early paintings by van Gogh made during his stay with the peasant people of Flanders with the "Nature" bronzes by the Italian artist Lucio Fontana from the end of the Fifties. Other confrontations include an encounter of three classic paintings by Piet Mondrian from the 1920s with a "Date painting" by the Japanese conceptual artist On Kawara, made in 1971, as well as the chance meeting of Joseph Beuys' key work from 1976, "Tram Stop", with a neon piece by Richard Serra entitled "Outside" from 1969, the "Great Ghost" from 1997 by Thomas Schütte and a recent photorealistic portrait of a girl by Franz Gertsch in massive proportions (Sylvia II, 2001). All these works mark a place, they insist on creating a sense of presence. The presentation of this exhibition relies on the energy of the presented works. It provides discoveries of new relatives and re-discoveries of old acquaintances.

140 works will be presented in 13 galleries.

An extensive publication will accompany the exhibition, documenting the presentation as well as providing historical essays on the development of the art scenes on the Lower Rhine and introductions to the 10 museums. 392 pages, c. 250 illustrations. Hatje/Cantz Editions.

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