

BUNDESKUNSTHALLE



COMICS! MANGAS! GRAPHIC NOVELS!

7 May to 10 September 2017

Media Conference: 4 May 2017, 3.30 p.m.

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Exhibition Dates

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| Duration of the Exhibition | 7 May to 10 September 2017 |
| Director | Rein Wolfs |
| Managing Director | Bernhard Spies |
| Curator | Alexander Braun Andreas C. Knigge |
| Exhibition Manager | Ulrich Best |
| Head of Corporate Communications / Press Officer | Sven Bergmann |
| Catalogue / Press Copy | € 32 / € 16 |
| Opening Hours | Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Public Holidays: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed on Mondays |
| Admission Exhibition standard / reduced / family ticket | € 10 / € 6.50 / € 16 |
| Happy Hour-Ticket | € 7 Tuesday and Wednesday: 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 5 to 7 p.m. (for individuals only) |
| Guided Group Tours information and registration | T +49 228 9171-243 F +49 228 9171-244 kunstvermittlung@bundeskunsthalle.de |
| Public Transport | Underground lines 16, 63, 66 and bus lines 610, 611 and 630 to Heussallee / Museumsmeile. |
| Parking | There is a car and coach park on Emil- Nolde-Straße behind the Bundeskunsthalle. Navigation: Emil-Nolde-Straße 11, 53113 Bonn |

Press Information (German / English) www.bundeskunsthalle.de
For press files follow 'press'.

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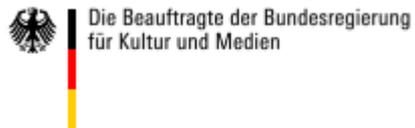
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Information on the Exhibition

With more than 300 exhibits from the United States, Europe and Japan, *Comics! Mangas! Graphic Novels!* is the most comprehensive exhibition about the genre to be held in Germany. Although the history of European comics is often traced back to illustrated stories by artists such as Rodolphe Toepffer, Gustave Doré and Wilhelm Busch – none of whom used speech bubbles – it was in New York that comics emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Drawing on the richly diverse immigrant cultures of the metropolitan melting pot, they were the first visual mass medium. Separate sections of the exhibition are devoted to Europe and Japan, where modern comics belatedly took off after the end of the Second World War, developing an intriguing range of highly distinctive national traditions. While cartoonists in Europe tightened and concentrated the visual language of comics, manga artists expanded it, introducing cinematic, multi-perspectival modes of representation and narrative that embedded themselves deeply in the current global youth culture.

By the early twentieth century, the major American daily newspapers brought comic strips to millions of readers – day in, day out, and in colour on Sundays. They were primarily targeted at the papers' adult readership rather than children and teenagers. Series like Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* or George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* continue to captivate audiences with their exquisite draughtsmanship and signal the cultural significance of the medium. With the rise of the comic book and the superheroes in the second half of the 1930s, comics became an integral part of the first media-related youth culture – long before the advent of Bill Haley and rock 'n' roll.

As such, comics were soon singled out as the root cause for the rise in juvenile delinquency and illiteracy. A United States Senate Subcommittee hearing on the potential corruption of minors through comic books took place in 1954 and was televised nationwide. To forestall government regulation, publishers decided to form a self-regulatory body. Compliance with its rules, commonly called the Comics Code, was certified with a seal on the cover of the comic book. As a result, comics lost much of the bite and subversiveness that had previously distinguished them and actually turned into the 'trivial pap for illiterates' they had always been derided as.

In the 1960s, thanks to artists like Robert Crumb or Will Eisner and figures like Asterix or Barbarella, comics once again began to attract an older readership. In the wake of the cultural upheaval of 1968, comics came to be seen as the 'ninth art', and with the phenomenon of the graphic novel, we now witness the discovery of its hitherto ignored literary potential. At the same time, manga has established itself as a global phenomenon.



Wall quotations

Superman, Mickey Mouse, Asterix or Charlie Brown – the popular comics characters are ubiquitous. For a long time, comics were dismissed as trashy; today they are celebrated as the ‘ninth art’ (*le neuvième art*) and have become a subject worthy of the arts and culture pages of respected newspapers.

The genre emerged around 1900. The first comic strip series were published in the illustrated humour supplements of American newspapers. Their heroes were the precursors of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton and just as popular. In the ethnic melting pot of New York, the comic strip quickly established itself as an integral part of modern mass culture.

The form of the comic strip is rooted in stylistic devices of the caricature and illustrated stories that became popular in nineteenth-century Europe. Comics characters were not only set ‘in motion’ through the ‘filmic’ sequence of images, they were also given a voice through the direct link between text and image – at a time when the nascent film industry produced only silent films.

Europe was familiar with illustrated stories of the Wilhelm Busch kind and ignored comics. It was not until the mid-1920s that a few European cartoonists adopted the speech bubble. The influx of American ideas and the development of more home-grown ones ground to a sudden halt with the outbreak of the Second World War. Modern comics did not take root in Europe until after the end of the war.

The situation was similar in Japan, which emerged as the third important centre of comics production in the 1950s. For a long time, the West took no notice of the manga, not least because it is read ‘back to front’ and from right to left.

Whether as a newspaper strip, a comic book or as a volume of a series of albums, comics are first and foremost a product of the entertainment industry. For the most part of their history, the parameters of this industry kept a check on artistic freedom and novel ideas. Yet despite these restrictions, many artists worked miracles and pushed the envelope of the narrative and graphic potential of the genre. It was not until relatively recently that a new generation of comics artists broke with all conventions and brought forth the comics we know today.

The history of comics is thus above all the history of the phenomenally gifted creators of its imagery.

1. Comic Strips

For almost thirty years, comics were the near-exclusive domain of American daily newspapers: from around 1896 as colour supplements to the Sunday edition and from 1907 as black-and-white strips every day. Thus, instead of serving the interests of ‘high culture’, the world’s most advanced and fastest



printing presses provided millions of readers with light entertainment – on a grand scale and in colour! In a world without radio, television or Internet, this was a sensation. Humour and visual ‘special effects’ for the price of a newspaper. The medium quickly wielded considerable power, and successful cartoonists made a great deal of money. The number of copies a newspaper sold rose and fell with the appeal of its comic strip series.

This radical democratisation of visual culture was bound to raise concerns in some quarters. Pictures that were popular and could be consumed by everybody – and their wives and children – were deeply suspect to the defenders of highbrow notions of culture. The endless stream of accessible, instantly disposable pictures they decried laid the foundation for our own rapid consumption of images and our throw-away attitude towards them.

Beginnings

The primary purpose of the early comic strips was to entertain the reader. But even burlesque slapstick can have a political edge, if its protagonists gleefully break every social norm: ‘Society is nix!’ Comics were never meant to be art with a capital ‘A’, but they became art in the hands of outstanding cartoonists like Winsor McCay, whose surreal dream sequences predate Salvador Dalí and René Magritte by some twenty years.

The early years of the comic strip were marked by wild experiments and boundless inventiveness. Anything and everything was permitted, as long as it sold papers and promoted reader loyalty.

The Joys of Family Life

The earliest comics series tended to focus on characters on the fringes of society, for example children, vagrants or animals. They took on the traditional role of the court jester, whose position of powerlessness allowed him/her to mock those in power with relative impunity. But when the obsession with comics began to grip the middle classes as well, the family strip was born. It parodied life in apartment buildings, the problems of young families and the American Dream, the rise from rags to riches, that provided a running gag at the heart of George McManus’s strip *Bringing Up Father*.

Anthropomorphised Animals

Animals behaving like humans were a constant of comics stories from the very beginning. George Herriman’s *Krazy Kat* provided not only the blueprint for every cat and mouse ever since – from Felix to Mickey Mouse – it was also an absolute masterpiece. Comics don’t get better or more complex than that. In his full-page Sunday cartoons, launched in 1916, when Samuel Becket was a ten-year-old schoolboy, Herriman created a veritable ‘theatre of the absurd’ and celebrated the artistic freedom of his pen.

Heroes and Adventurers

In the 1930s, newspaper comics still held their own in the entertainment market, but faced increasing competition from the rise of radio with its exciting audio



dramas as well as from cinema, cheap paperback novels and the nascent comic book industry. More serious themes – like those addressed in Dick Tracy – and new realistic genres such as adventure and science fiction stories were the order of the day. Moreover, America was in the throes of the Great Depression. Exotic settings and strong heroes offered a welcome escape from the privations of everyday reality.

Comic Strips Today

With each passing decade, the importance of newspaper comic strips went into deeper decline. The space allocated to them shrank and was reserved for more lucrative marketing deals and advertising customers. Even bestselling authors like Charles M. Schulz, creator of the celebrated Peanuts, had to accept that his daily strip was cut from four to three panels in 1988. Today, it is primarily the rights to merchandising articles and licensing deals that earn the authors of successful strips like Garfield millions of dollars every year.

2. Comic Books

With the invention of the comic book at the end of the 1930s, newspaper comic strips came under threat from a new competitor. Originally conceived to reprint earlier newspaper strips, the comic book quickly became a major industry, and the introduction of Superman launched the new genre of superhero fiction. Newspapers came under pressure to buy licenses to popular figures such as Superman or Batman. Rising to the challenge, a newspaper syndicate commissioned Will Eisner with a comic book insert to replace the traditional Sunday supplement – Eisner's *The Spirit* was launched in 1940.

The rise of the comic books produced an entirely new audience. Whereas newspapers were bought by adults, comic books tended to target adolescents and their pocket money. The new medium played an important role in shaping the first youth culture of the twentieth century. Equally radical was the change in the way in which comics were produced. The focus shifted from the figure of the ingenious creator to studios run by cartoonists or publishers who transformed the production process into a sort of assembly line in which the tasks of writing, pencilling, inking, lettering and colouring were performed by different hands.

Superheroes

The success of Superman quickly spawned an entire army of heroes, among them Batman, Captain America, Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel, who fought Nazis and the Japanese during the Second World War. Circulation figures exploded, as the popularity of comic books soared – both on the home front and abroad, as vast quantities of comics were shipped to buoy the spirits of GIs fighting overseas.

Every time the superhero boom seemed to abate, publishers hired fresh cartoonists or engineered a canny reboot to keep the audience hooked. A case in point is Marvel's creation of the Fantastic Four and Spider-Man, who represented



a new type of flawed and self-doubting superhero that electrified a new generation of adolescent readers in the 1960s.

Romance

Considering that Jack Kirby and Joe Simon are remembered today as the creators of Captain America, the Fantastic Four, Hulk, Thor and Iron Man, it is not without a certain irony that it was their studio that launched the wave of romance comics in 1947. Between 1947 and 1956, Kirby produced a good 3300 comic book pages. More than half of them were for romance stories. Now, for the first time in history, there were comics that targeted a predominantly female audience, a phenomenon that was not to repeat itself until the manga boom hit the West at the end of the twentieth century.

Walt Disney

Animated films were always the very heart of Walt Disney's empire. Using his characters in comic books was a way of popularising the films that featured them and worked well with Mickey Mouse (from 1930) and Donald Duck (from 1942). The important early cartoonists, among them Floyd Gottfredson and Carl Barks, all came up through Disney's animation studio. Although Disney comics no longer play a role in today's American market – the last series ceased publication some twenty years ago – they are as popular as ever in Europe.

Crime and Horror

Comics producers of the 1950s were looking for themes that would allow them to hold their own against the fierce competition from dime novels, B-movies and radio dramas. Tough crime, horror, war and science fiction stories were very popular with audiences, but also prompted opponents of comics to voice their concern. Initially these protests were confined to the church, schools and parent associations, but politicians soon felt called upon to set up a series of United States Senate Subcommittee Hearings on the link between comic books and juvenile delinquency. The witch hunt ended in 1954 with the institution of the 'Comics Code', which allowed comics publishers to self-regulate and to prohibit the depiction of violence, sexuality, drugs, divorce and profanity.

MAD Magazine

EC Comics bore the brunt of the Comic Code strictures. Its horror titles – dark tales about the evils lurking in the human mind and soul, which had formed the economic backbone of the company – ceased publication. The only survivor was MAD, a satirical comic magazine launched by EC editor Harvey Kurtzman in 1952. For the next two decades, it was a bastion of subversive comics culture. Its influence reached all the way to Europe. The Belgian cartoonist Morris, who had moved to the US in 1948 and did not return to Belgium until six years later, was inspired by MAD to make his cowboy Lucky Luke even more cheeky and mischievous.

3. Europe

The ground on which the comic was to thrive in Europe had been tilled and prepared throughout the nineteenth century. Lithography, invented by Alois Senefelder in 1798, allowed for the reproduction of drawings. The rise of literacy produced a new audience. Illustrated broadsheets established themselves as a mass medium. Draughtsmen like Rodolphe Toepffer, Gustave Doré, Wilhelm Busch and Heinrich Hoffmann developed new forms of illustrated stories. But it was Richard Outcault's fusion of text and image by means of the speech bubble that finally launched the modern comic in New York at the end of the nineteenth century.

While comics rapidly spread across the US and Canada, Europe remained wedded to the more traditional forms of the illustrated story. It was not until 1925 that here too, inspired by reprints of successful US newspaper strips, a few cartoonists adopted the speech bubble. Among the first was the Belgian Hergé, whose clean line style ('ligne claire') was to play a key role in shaping the European comic. But just as the comic was beginning to take root in Europe, the outbreak of the Second World War brought its development to a sudden halt.

Hergé and the 'Ligne Claire'

The first stories Hergé drew as a teenager for Belgian Scouting magazines were conceived as classic illustrated stories. He did not start using speech bubbles until 1929, when he embarked on Tintin. Hergé soon developed a highly distinctive style that would come to be described as 'ligne claire'. The enormous success of the Tintin comic book series, followed by the Tintin magazine (launched in 1946) and the Hergé Studio (founded in 1950) made Hergé the most influential comic book artist in Europe.

Spirou, Lucky Luke, the Smurfs & Co.

Unlike the Tintin magazine, Le Journal de Spirou is still in publication. Launched in 1938, it fell victim to censorship and paper shortages during the German Occupation and did not resume publication until the end of 1944. It spawned several of the most successful European comics characters, among them Lucky Luke, the Smurfs and the Marsupilami. Whereas Tintin postulated an ordered and rational world, Spirou was home to a poetic and somewhat burlesque chaos that is epitomised by the character of the office junior Gaston Lagaffe created by André Franquin in 1957.

The Comic is Coming of Age

The first spark of a European comics culture was lit in the French-speaking countries and quickly spread to the Netherlands, Spain and Italy. In the 1960s, the Belgian magazine format established itself alongside that of the standard American thirty-two-page comic books as a standard European format. The weekly serialised publications were followed by albums. However, a similar concentration of outstanding talents as in Belgium and a little later in France could not be found anywhere else in Europe.

4. Manga

Today, manga are an integral part of youth culture all over the world, but for a long time its influence remained confined to Japan. The term ‘manga’ – ‘whimsical’ or ‘diverse’ pictures – was popularised by Hokusai’s woodcut books, which were published between 1814 and 1878. The first newspaper series appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century, and very soon the vertical ‘strips’ had a standard length of four panels. The 1930s saw the emergence of the narrative ‘story manga’, pioneered after the war by Osamu Tezuka, who is now revered as ‘manga no kamisama’ (the god of manga).

Initially manga were intended for children. Manga magazines were marketed in two stylistically and thematically different genres, shōnen manga for boys and shōjo manga for girls. At the end of the 1950s, younger manga artists began to produce stories for adults and to develop the gekiga (‘dramatic pictures’) format with its grittier and often dark themes. Today, there are so many genres and styles that it is difficult to present a comprehensive overview. Marketed as part of a multimedia package that also includes anime, computer games and light novels, some series sell many millions of copies.

Tezuka – The ‘God of Manga’

Osamu Tezuka was as important for the development of Japanese manga as Hergé was for the European comic. He pioneered and helped establish the dynamic form of the story manga. His first foray into the genre in 1947 ran to two hundred pages. Fascinated by Walt Disney, Tezuka had originally wanted to become an animator, but lacked the necessary funds. In 1961, parallel to his activity as a mangaka, he set up an anime studio and began to work on the film adaptation of his successful series *Astro Boy*.

Gekiga – Dramatic Pictures

In the 1950s, a young generation of cartoonists began telling stories whose purpose, mood and style differed sharply from those of the children’s manga. Targeted at young adults, they dealt with despair and poverty in Japanese post-war society, with violence and frequently with sex. Among the best-known cartoonists is Yoshihiro Tatsumi, who is credited with coining the term gekiga (‘dramatic pictures’) for the new genre in 1957.

Manga Today

Nowhere else in the world are comics as popular as they are in Japan. For decades, they have constituted a third of all printed matter consumed in the country. The secret of the success of manga lies chiefly in the fact that they deal with the existential condition and conflicts of their target audience and that they are diverse enough to answer to a wide range of predilections and interests. Only a tiny fraction of the manga on offer are published outside Japan.



5. Underground and Independent

The Comics Code, instituted in the interest of child welfare in 1954, subjected comic books to strict censorship. As a result, comics lost much of the spark that had previously distinguished them. The backlash finally set in in the Summer of Love, when the San Francisco Bay Area began to establish itself as the epicentre of the underground comics movement. The cartoonists referred to their books as 'comix' to differentiate them from mainstream publications and to emphasise the X-rated contents.

Printed privately and distributed through underground outlets, comix were uncensored and gave free expression to the counterculture views and attitudes of the period. The themes were 'sex & drugs & rock 'n' roll', but soon new narrative and expressive forms emerged: comic books by women for women and autobiographic comics, which can be described as one of the earliest precursors of the graphic novel. In Europe, too, the comic was coming of age and surprised audiences for whom there simply had not been any comics with new narrative forms and subjects.

The 1960s and their Repercussions

On 25 February 1968 at a San Francisco street party, Robert Crumb hawked the first copies of his comic from a baby carriage. Printed in the basement of a friend and hastily stapled together, Crumb's *ZAP Comix* launched the underground comics movement. His irreverent 'freak out funnies' radiate the anarchic sense of mission of the *Spaßguerilla* ('Fun Guerilla', a creative grouping within the 1960s German student protest movement). But Crumb soon began to move towards autobiographical subjects and confronted the reader with his own conflicts and obsessions.

European Repercussions

Launched as a magazine comic strip in 1962 and published as a stand-alone book in 1964, *Barbarella* was the first comic in Europe to target an adult audience. It caused an immediate scandal and incurred the wrath of the censor. The hastily imposed ban backfired and made the book even more popular. It went on to sell some 200,000 copies. The conflict with the censor eventually led to legislation which ruled that not all comics had to be suitable for minors and that they could contain material more suitable for an adult audience. The decision heralded a new chapter in the history of the comic.

6. Graphic Novels

The 1970s presided not only over the fading of the hippie dream, they also saw off underground comics. Just a handful survived, among them iconic comics like *Fritz the Cat* and *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*. What also made it into the next decade, however, was the realisation that cartoonists could publish comics under their own steam, without recourse to mainstream publishing houses, and that there was an audience for these comics. Niche publishing enterprises for alternative comics sprang up in the US, and in the wake of the events of May



1968, Pop Art and the Nouvelle Vague, established publishers in France discovered an intellectual student clientele.

Enshrined as the 'ninth art' in a French dictionary entry in 1971, the comic continued to go from strength to strength. A generation of young cartoonists broke with the *ligne claire* tradition and experimented with new graphic and narrative techniques. The concept of the 'graphic novel' emerged in the US – the comic discovered itself as a form of literature. Shedding its serial character, it assumed the mantle of the novel, which it increasingly resembled in both format and length.

Today, the comic presents itself in a wider range of forms than ever before in its history.

New Departures

In 1967, around the time that Robert Crumb published his first *ZAP Comix* in the US, Hugo Pratt, working in Italy, created his *Ballad of the Salt Sea* about the adventurer Corto Maltese, which has since come to be seen as the first modern graphic novel. Over the course of the following years, Pratt 'reinvented' the comic, investing it with fresh ideas, approaching it from new angles and experimenting with novel techniques that resulted in an unprecedented explosion of inventive imagery.

The 'Ninth Art'

In 1967, the Louvre showed the exhibition *Bande dessinée et figuration narrative*. Four years later, the *Grand encyclopédie alphabétique Larousse* added an entry that described the comic as the 'ninth art' (*neuvième art*). In 1989, the first museum devoted to comics was opened in Brussels; it now attracts some 200,000 visitors per year. Nowhere else is the sheer artistry of comics draughtsmanship as appreciated as it is in France and Belgium. 'Bandes dessinées' (literally drawn strips) flourished and developed an individual and hugely diverse visual language.

Fresh Momentum

The appetite for change that had spurred the developments in France and Belgium in the 1960s and 70s was also felt by comic book artists in other countries, above all in Italy. Their efforts, however, were not received with the same enthusiasm, so that much of the innovative creative drive was stunted. Most of the best British cartoonist today work for US publishers. Elsewhere, it was the political situation that held back development. The Spanish comics scene did not take off until after the end of the Franco era.

Graphic Literature

While comics were celebrated as the 'ninth art' in Europe, American comics artists brought the lessons of the underground experience to bear on new narrative approaches and intentions. Will Eisner established the concept of the 'graphic novel'. Autobiographical content was part of the narrative strategy right



from the start. Much like a personal style of handwriting, the expressive drawings allowed the comic book to convey a sense of immediacy and intimacy. Among the subgenres that sprang from the graphic novel are comics / graphic journalism, reportage and diaries.

In Germany

The emancipation of comics as 'sequential art' and 'graphic literature' is a worldwide phenomenon. Graphic novels suddenly begin to emerge from countries without an established comics tradition. Germany, like many other European countries not known for the exuberance of its home-grown comics culture, has caught up in recent years. More and more graphic novels by a young generation of artists now appear in other languages as well.



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Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

KATHARINA SIEVERDING

Art and capital from 1967 to 2017

until 16 July 2017

Internationally renowned as a pioneer of unconventional visual strategies and her innovative media-led practice, Katharina Sieverding has revitalised the artistic potential of photography. She introduced the super-sized format as a key element of her exhibitions at a time when this was far from common.

Since the 1960s, using film and photography, Sieverding has employed her portrait with unparalleled consistency, often blowing it up to monumental size and manipulating it in myriad ways. In the 1970s, with astonishing prescience, she began to develop her large-format multilayer montages on the state of the world. Her creative practice not only reproduces the accelerated visual processes of the present, it also scrutinises them in terms of responsibility, not least her own.

The retrospective exhibition presents a survey of Katharina Sieverding's serial photographic works from 1967 to today complemented by floor-to-ceiling projections that allow the artist to visualise the innovative power of her archive of images.

IRAN

Ancient culture between water and desert

until 20 August 2017

The exhibition draws the veil from the long hidden treasures of the early Iranian civilisations that flourished between the seventh millennium BC and the rise of the Achaemenids in the first millennium BC.

From the snow-capped peaks of the Alborz and Zagros mountain ranges to the blazing heat of the Loot Desert, Iran is a country of contrasts. But those forbidding deserts and mountain ranges shelter fertile valleys that have been inhabited by people ever since sedentism. These valleys were the cradle of the Iranian civilisations, which culminated in the rise of the Achaemenid Empire. The mountains provided shelter and raw materials. The wild animals and mythical creatures that populated the wilderness found visual representation in scenes of animals fighting on stone vessels from the gravesites of Jiroft, on imaginatively painted ceramics from Susa and in the battle scenes on the gold bowl from Hasanlu.

The exhibition opens a window onto a country that has been inaccessible for decades and whose imagery is little known in Europe. The treasures from the graves of two Elamite princesses and the spectacular finds from the burial grounds of Jiroft are shown outside Iran for the first time. In partnership with the National Museum of Iran and the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization



THE PERSIAN GARDEN

The Invention of Paradise

until 15 October 2017

Opening with the exhibition *Iran. Ancient Cultures between Water and Desert*, a Persian garden on the piazza in front of the museum beckons visitors to linger and enjoy its pleasures.

Several gardens in Iran have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites. Rather than replicate a specific garden, our garden demonstrates that the art of garden design, developed in Persia in antiquity, continues to shape our idea of an ideal garden – in the East as much as in the West.

Light and shade, heat and cool freshness, the soothing burbling of water, the heady scent of flowers – a garden is a manmade paradise. And indeed, the very word ‘paradise’ has come down to us from ancient Persia. Do come in and enjoy the paradisiac atmosphere of the Persian Garden, an oasis for the mind and the senses!

JUERGEN TELLER

Enjoy Your Life!

until 3 July 2017 at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin

Juergen Teller is one of the world’s most sought-after contemporary photographers. His pictures have straddled the interface of art and commercial photography. His stylistic device of choice is the portrait. Working in the areas of music, fashion and celebrities as well as everyday scenes and landscape, he draws on his intuitive feel for people, situations, milieus and clichés to create images of great immediacy and deceptive simplicity.

Deliberately distancing himself from the relentless glamour of fashion and people photography, Juergen Teller forged his own distinctive path. In his shoots for well-known fashion designers, he not only placed supermodels, pop stars and other celebrities in unexpected and often disturbing contexts, he also allowed their individuality to shine through, thus lifting the images out of established visual codes and preconceived expectations. Teller applies the same artistic principle to his non-commercial work. The resulting images – now more than ever – are baffling, unpredictable, cliché-defying, intimate, seemingly transgressive and in-your-face, but never compromising, because they are informed by great empathy and sensitivity.

Subject to change!

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