

BUNDESKUNSTHALLE



TOUCHDOWN

An Exhibition with and about People with Down's Syndrome

29 October 2016 to 12 March 2017

Media Conference: 28 October 2016, 11 a.m.

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Exhibition Dates

Exhibition	29 October 2016 to 12 March 2017
Director	Rein Wolfs
Managing Director	Bernhard Spies
Exhibition Manager	Henriette Pleiger
Curators	Katja de Bragança Heinz Greuling Rikola-Gunnar Lüttgenau
Advisory Board	Julia Bertmann Anne Leichtfuß Heinz Schott
Illustrator	Vincent Burmeister
Exhibition Design	harry vetter team, Stuttgart
Head of Corporate Communications / Press Officer	Sven Bergmann
Publication	€ 7
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	€ 4 / € 3 / € 7.50
Happy Hour-Ticket (for individuals only)	€ 7 Tuesday and Wednesday: 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday to Sunday: 5 to 7 p.m.
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'.

General Information
(German / English)

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In cooperation with the research project TOUCHDOWN 21
www.touchdown21.info



Mobility Partner Deutsche Bahn



It can either be purchased together with or in addition to a ticket to the exhibition. Second class tickets start at € 39 and first class tickets start at € 49. For further information please visit www.bahn.de/kultur

Cultural Partner



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Information on the Exhibition

As the first of its kind this exhibition with and about people with Down's syndrome takes its visitors on a cultural and experimental journey through our past and present. Besides providing the first account of the history of Down's syndrome, this show also tells the story of a complex relationship. It describes how people lived, live, and want to live – people with and without Down's syndrome.

People with Trisomy 21 are the best experts on Down's syndrome. (Julia Bertmann)

Developed and presented in active collaboration with people with Down's syndrome – as experts in their own right – the show comprises scientific and artistic exhibits from archaeology, contemporary history, medicine, genetics, film, and art. With its depth and lively heterogeneity, the exhibition aims at contributing to a more effective and intelligent debate on social diversity and participation, instead of providing ready answers.

The exhibition is divided into seven chapters and comprises over 100 exhibits. The language used in the texts in the exhibition, but also in the accompanying publication *TOUCHDOWN. Die Geschichte des Down-Syndroms* (TOUCHDOWN. The History of Down's Syndrome), which was developed in cooperation with the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, is clear and comprehensible.

Besides historical and scientific exhibits from archives, memorial sites, museums, and university research projects in Germany, Austria, and Great Britain, the show includes works by the following artists with and without Down's syndrome:

Authors of the magazine *Ohrenkuss*, Mathias Bothor (photographer), Zora Schemm, Jonas Sippel and Sebastian Urbanski (Atelier / Theatre RambaZamba in Berlin), Susanne Kümpel and Nico Randel (KUNSTHAUS KAT18 in Cologne), Markus Keuler (artist), Jeanne-Marie Mohn and Elizabeth Coleman-Link (Raw Art Foundation in Frankfurt am Main), Britt Schilling (photographer), Judith Scott (Collection de l'art brut, Lausanne), Christa Sauer and Birgit Ziegert (Atelier Goldstein in Frankfurt am Main), Samuel Cariaux, Luc Eyen, Patrick Hanocq, and Pascal Tassini (Atelier Créahm, Liège, Belgium), Rita Arimont, Richard Bawin, Marie Bodson, Erik Derkenne, Pascal Leyder (La „S“ – Grand Atelier, Vielsalm, Belgium), and many more.

People with and without Down's syndrome developed this exhibition together. People with Down's syndrome were consulted as experts on a matter with which they are well acquainted. For the first time, they are not merely the recipients of education and assistance, but take on an instructive role themselves. This communal aim required extensive preparation and training of people with and without Down's syndrome, who guide visitors through the exhibition in so-called tandem tours three times a week. The pioneering educational concept of



the exhibition – a cooperation between the Bundeskunsthalle and the research project TOUCHDOWN 21 – is supported by Aktion Mensch e.V.

It's a difficult word for me: participative. But I can explain what participative means: people with Down's syndrome are part of it. In the team. To make every decision themselves.
(Verena Günnel)



Tour of the Exhibition

1. Touchdown – The Landing

To begin with, there is a strange event: the arrival of a “foreign intelligence” which occupies the light, lofty halls of the Bundeskunsthalle. It looks like the strangers just landed on the roof and then moved on. There is a giant spaceship. The area is strewn with pieces of luggage and equipment, and a flag has been rammed into the floor. Their figures appear on the white walls. Foreign astronauts have landed – astronauts with Down’s syndrome. The artist Vincent Burmeister drew this scene as a life-size comic.

The aliens call themselves the “Second Mission”, because 5.000 years ago, their first settlers arrived on Earth. The Second Mission’s task is to find out how the first mission went, and what life is like for its descendants on Earth today.

The following frame story outlines the Second Mission’s expedition and serves as a report to a commission back home. This story is continued in further life-size comic scenes throughout the exhibition. The book supplementing the exhibition is the logbook of this expedition.

Down’s syndrome for others don’t know I came from the Moon or fell from the sky.
(Ruth Schilling)

2. Today – Here and Now

This room serves as a first encounter with people with Down’s syndrome and contains descriptions of individual biographies and life situations. Upon entering, visitors see an impressive series of portraits of people with Down’s syndrome by the photographer Britt Schilling. Artworks raise questions.

How do people with Down’s syndrome live in our society today, in Germany, and in other countries? Do they love, do they work, do they have their own bank account, a driving license? Are they allowed to get married and have children? Are they allowed to vote? What about their human dignity, their right to grow up?

This room enables both experiences: direct contact, but also reflection on this encounter. It is about the relationship between people with and without Down’s syndrome in our society. It is about a yearning for both normality and individuality.

3. The Invisibles – Searching for Traces in the Past

In a separate room, the first thing visitors notice is a sitting ceramic figure. Then, a bit further along, a skeleton, a find from an excavation. On one of the walls, a back-lit reproduction of a historical painting with the title *Adoration of the Infant Jesus* (around 1515) illuminates the room. One of the angels looking at Jesus has that special face, that mouth, those eyes. Involuntarily, the viewer glances back at the ceramic figure. It also has the typical mouth and eyes. It is about 3.000 years



old and comes from the region which is known as Mexico today.

The skeleton next to it is over 2.500 years old. The first analysis of ancient DNA, which was recently conducted on the skeleton especially for this exhibition, was searching for evidence of Trisomy 21 (i.e. Down's syndrome) – a scientific premiere.

The figure, the skeleton, and the historical painting are among the few indications that obviously people with this genetic variation also existed in former times. But why are their traces so rare? As if they had led a hidden existence for all those centuries.

This shows that our past has almost always been told and portrayed as the story of “normal” people without “anomalies”. The search for traces is laborious and also makes us question ourselves:

To what extent are the changing categories of our perception of “otherness” responsible for creating a “Down's syndrome problem”?

4. The Great Appearance – John Langdon Down

All of a sudden, they make a historical appearance. In 1866, the English physician, Dr John Langdon Down (1828-1896), was the first to describe them and to take impressive photographs of them. Which are their defining physical characteristics?

In the middle of the room, the visitors see an old camera – similar to the one John Langdon Down might have used. It is directed towards a large canvas attached to the wall, like in an old photo studio, a chair has been placed in front of it. The canvas shows an interior view of the Victorian theatre in Normansfield near London, Langdon Down's institution for people with learning disabilities. Langdon Down photographed the residents of his two institutions Earlswood and Normansfield – to date an undiscovered treasure from English archives. This is their first big appearance. Now they have become visible, the people, their talents, their gifts, with dignity. The original patient casebooks provide insights into the biographies of people living with Down's syndrome in the 19th century.

With his concepts and methods designed to assist and enable people with Down's syndrome to lead more independent lives, John Langdon Down was ahead of his time. We are only starting to realise how pioneering his views and achievements actually were.

In this room, Langdon Down's touching and dignified photos are harshly contrasted by his colleagues' medical representations of people with Down's syndrome. These degrading portrayals of so-called “Mongolian idiots” were already common in his life time, but continued to be way into the 20th century. Explanations of the history of the terms “mongolism” and “mongoloid”, which today are perceived as derogatory and discriminating, are supplemented by an account of a trip to Mongolia undertaken by the authors of *Ohrenkuss*, a magazine created by people with Down's syndrome. In the course of his life,



John Langdon Down himself realised that the term “mongolism”, which he had helped to coin on the basis of Blumenbach’s race theory in 1866, was derogatory and misleading, and eventually stopped using it.

5. In the Twilight – The Extermination

Not long after John Langdon Down, they had to face the threat of extermination in Germany. People with Down’s syndrome could now be disposed of as “burdening existences”. At birth they were registered, categorised, and finally put into institutions. They became cases in files, were diagnosed (“mongoloid debility”), “treated”, killed.

The atmosphere in this room is oppressive – people with Down’s syndrome were made to disappear. It is hard to make out their faces, names, and stories. Doctors, nurses, and parents speak in fragmented sentences and allusions. They try to cover up their actions. And yet these deeds are irreversible. The exhibits give an idea of the insinuations and arguments that were used. A line of reasoning becomes apparent that is still common enough today.

6. Research – I am what I am

The centre of the room is occupied by a mysterious object created by the deceased artist Judith Scott who also had Down’s syndrome – a sculpture made of scraps of material and threads that seem to be concealing something (like yet to be deciphered DNA material). At some point, scientists discovered the cause of the “syndrome”: they have an extra chromosome.

What is Trisomy 21? People with 46 and with 47 chromosomes provide explanations. Visitors are given the opportunity to explore traits of the similar and of the extraordinary, also under the microscope.

“I am what they call special”, a woman with Down’s syndrome once wrote. Have we started to see people with Down’s syndrome as no more than a genetic phenomenon?

Other scientists have found out how the Down’s syndrome can be easily recognised at a prenatal stage (ultrasound, prenatal test) and diagnosed (chromosome analysis). Doctors examine their hearts, psychologists study their perception, their thoughts, and feelings, linguists analyse their writing and their special sense of language. These new insights provide new options: possibilities of support, possibilities of new, inspiring encounters between people with and without Down’s syndrome. However, this newfound knowledge also necessitates new decisions and leads to uncertainties.

New questions arise: what kind of assistance do people with Down’s syndrome need in order to lead an independent life? Which people and which familial and social structures surround and support them? How do they contribute to the diversity of our society?

In this room, the focus is once again on the present, and predominantly on familial, communal, and social issues. The terms “support” and “extermination”,



which surfaced in the course of the exhibition, have become more topical than ever. Socio-political and economic ambitions to optimise the human genome are at odds with individual wishes for integration. The artistic and scientific exhibits will trigger questions to which there can only be more than one answer.

7. The Discussion – Staying or Leaving?

At the end of the exhibition, the “Second Mission” wonders which research results the report to the “Commission at Home” should contain. After following their discussion, visitors will hopefully leave the exhibition feeling fortified and willing to engage in this social discourse.

The life-size comic figures of the “Second Mission” debate with descendants of the “First Mission”, both visually and in an audio piece. All of them are people with Down’s syndrome. Together they ponder and comment on their own history and present.



Information on the Exhibition in clear language

For the first time, this exhibition tells the history of Down's syndrome. It traces people with Down's syndrome through different ages and different countries.

In the arts and in science.

It tells the story of how people with Down's syndrome live in our society today, how they used to live and how they would like to live in the future.

And the exhibition tells a fantastic story.

About astronauts with Down's syndrome who explore life on earth.

In October 2016, 7 astronauts from a distant planet are landing on earth.

They call themselves the "Second Mission".

They all have Down's syndrome.

5,000 years ago, the first astronauts of their kind have landed on earth.

Now, the Second Mission has the task to check on the first settlers and see how their descendants are living today.

As life-sized comic figures, the astronauts join the visitors on their tour through the exhibition.

The illustrator Vincent Burmeister has created the fantastic comic figures.

In 7 rooms, the Second Mission explores how people with Down's syndrome live today and how they used to live in the past.

They discover traces of people with Down's syndrome in the centuries before Christ, in the Middle Ages and in the 19th century.

They learn about the English doctor, John Langdon Down (1828–1896), who lent his name to Down's syndrome.

Throughout his life, he tried to support people with Down's syndrome.

The exhibition also tells about people with Down's syndrome who were murdered in Germany during the Nazi era.

The Second Mission also looks at new scientific research about trisomy 21.

The exhibition wants to ask questions.

About differences and similarities.

About diversity. And about how people with and without a handicap can have a good life together.

The exhibition is a joint project.

Many people, some with and some without Down's syndrome, have created it together.

During the whole exhibition period, people with and without Down's syndrome will give joint tours of the exhibition 3 times a week.

Publication



TOUCHDOWN

Publication in clear language

German edition

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www.bpb.de/shop

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€ 7



Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

THE RHINE

**The Biography of a European River
until 22 January 2017**

The Rhine is one of the world's busiest rivers. For thousands of years it has carried not only coal, building material and people, but also luxury goods and art treasures, weapons, ideas, fairytales and myths through the western half of Europe. Its course is lined by imposing cities, monasteries and cathedrals as well as by conurbations and industrial zones. Dividing line and nexus in equal measure, it continues to mark the people who have settled on its banks. It has been regulated, straightened, polluted, fought over, conquered and occupied. The European Union was founded in Strasbourg on the Rhine, and the exhibition heeds its cultural and political imperative of cross-border cooperation between the riparian states of Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Following the course of the Rhine from its sources to the Rhine-Meuse-Schelde delta, the exhibition sheds light on many of the momentous and often dramatic events that punctuate more than 2000 years of cultural history.

An exhibition of the Bundeskunsthalle in cooperation with the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn

Concurrently, the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn presents the exhibition *bilderstrom – Der Rhein und die Fotografie 2016–1853*

PINA BAUSCH

and the Tanztheater

until 9 January 2017 at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin

www.pina-bausch-ausstellung.de

Pina Bausch (1940–2009) is recognised as a pioneer of modern dance theatre and as one of the most influential choreographers of the twentieth century. The exhibition at the Art and Exhibition Hall is the first to present her work to a wider public. Together with her company, Pina Bausch developed the artistic form of dance theatre which combines theatre, dance and performance art. Her novel approach not only roundly rejected the conventions of classical ballet, but also went far beyond the preoccupations with formal principles that characterise much of modern dance.

The objects, installations, photographs and videos presented are drawn from the unique holdings of the Pina Bausch Archives. At the heart of the exhibition is the reconstruction of the 'Lichtburg', the legendary rehearsal space in an old Wuppertal cinema, in which Pina Bausch developed most of her pieces in collaboration with her dancers. Outsiders are rarely admitted to this intimate space. At the Martin-Gropius-Bau it becomes a platform for inspiration and exchange. Members of the company will introduce visitors to the quality of dance theatre movements and short sequences of dance moves. Performances, dance workshops, public rehearsals, conversations, films and much more transform the rehearsal studio into a vibrant, experiential space for visitors.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND

100 000 Years of Cultural History

22 November 2016 to 26 March 2017

A Brief History of Humankind is the subtitle of the bestselling book by the Israeli historian Yuval Harari that sets the narrative structure of the exhibition of the same title. Developed to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and featuring a selection of outstanding objects from its encyclopaedic holdings, the exhibition now makes its first appearance in Europe.

The archaeological objects from the Israel Museum recount the history of humankind from the dawn of civilization to the present. Among these objects are the remains of the first use of fire in a communal setting, the first tools used by humankind, rare evidence for the co-existence of Homo sapiens and Neanderthals, the earliest examples of the use of writing and numerals, the first coins, a facsimile of a copy of the Ten Commandments, a copy of the Gutenberg bible, a replica of Edison's lightbulb and the manuscript of Albert Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity.

A particular treasure are the thirty-six sculptures of gods and goddesses from all over the world, from Neolithic stone and clay figures, ancient Egyptian deities, figures from Greek and Roman mythology to deities from South America and sculptures from Asia and Africa. These artefacts are juxtaposed with select examples of contemporary art that link past and present. Among the artists represented are Mirosław Bałka, Bruce Conner, Mark Dion, Douglas Gordon, Aernout Mik, Adrian Paci, Paul Pfeiffer, Charles Ray, Haim Steinbach and Mark Wallinger.

An exhibition of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, in cooperation with Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn.

GREGOR SCHNEIDER

Wall before Wall

2 December 2016 to 19 February 2017

Gregor Schneider, born in 1969, is an internationally renowned radical artist whose work frequently gives rise to heated debate. Working in different media, he has developed a complex and self-referential oeuvre that crosses recent German history with the dystopian places of personal existence. In the mid-1980s the artist began building complete rooms inside of existing rooms, the new room replicating the space that houses it. Since then he has created a large body of spatial constructions that divests everyday places of their familiarity. In 2001 he won the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale for his installation *Haus u r* in the German Pavilion. The installation consisted of a total of twenty-four rooms of his childhood home in Rheydt, which has been central to his creative practice since 1985 and which he has gradually developed in different directions. For the Bundeskunsthalle the artist is designing a display that traces the course of his career in key works: a selection of paintings (1982–1985) and the documentation of early works (1984–1985) are followed by complete rooms from *Haus u r* as well as recent works involving culturally and historically important buildings. Films, duplicate sculptures and staged situations with



actors complete the presentation.

Subject to change!

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