

BUNDESKUNSTHALLE

Media information

ANNA OPPERMANN

8 December 2023 – 7 April 2024

Anna Oppermann (1940–1993) left behind a large oeuvre that can be rediscovered. After studying at the Hamburg University of Fine Arts, she was a key figure in German conceptual art from the 1960s onwards and engaged in constructive exchange with artists of her time; her participation in documenta 6 and 8 in Kassel, among others, made her known in an international context at an early stage.

The Bundeskunsthalle has set itself the task of organising the first comprehensive retrospective of the rich and complex oeuvre of the German conceptual artist. In addition to her installation ensembles, the exhibition will trace her artistic practice back to her early visual work of the 1960s, which reveals her early interest in questions of perception. The results of the research that has grown in recent years will also be incorporated into the retrospective.

The term "ensemble", coined by Oppermann in the early 1970s for her process-based arrangements, encompasses both the installed work and the underlying method: "Ensemble is what I call the documentation of a certain method of proceeding in exercises of perception and (or) cognition." The constant questioning of the understanding of art, of a work, but also of an artist, is part of her artistic practice. The ensembles of notes, drawings, photographs, printed matter and objects demonstrate her radical understanding of a work: it is open as well as dialogical and the process is part of the work. Language is an essential component of the ensembles alongside the visual parts of the work. Overbearing, complex, but also smaller assemblages, rhizome-like constellations allow an immersion in their search for traces and safeguards. Their individual mythologies as a starting point are an offer of intellectual participation in fundamental social and general human themes.

Contrasting, unfinished, private, everyday, traditional, fragmentary, but also sensual or kitschy things are presented with extensive variety in the ensembles, which reveal an idea of the occasion or the idea of the work through their titles. The focus is not on the Foucaultian "order of things", but on reduction, addition and constant supplementation.

The exhibition is a cooperation with the Anna Oppermann estate, Barbara Thumm Gallery.

Curators: Susanne Kleine, Anna Schäffler

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