

*Marina ABRAMOVIC, Nobuyoshi ARAKI, Francis BACON, Hans BELLMER, Pierre BONNARD, Louise BOURGEOIS, Jan BRUEGHEL THE ELDER, John CURRIN, Eugène DELACROIX, Otto DIX, Valie EXPORT, Eric FISCHL, Artemisia GENTILESCHI, Jean-Léon GÉRÔME, Ernst Ludwig KIRCHNER, Pierre KLOSSOWSKI, Pablo PICASSO, Nicolas POUSSIN, REMBRANDT, Auguste RODIN, Peter Paul RUBENS, Thomas RUFF, Egon SCHIELE, Cindy SHERMAN and others*

## ***Diana and Actaeon. The forbidden glimpse of the naked body***

**October 25, 2008 – February 15, 2009**

Idea and draft: Beat Wismer

Curators: Beat Wismer with Sandra Badelt and Mattijs Visser

An exhibition mounted with the support of E.ON AG, METRO Group and Evonik Industries AG

Around a core of works of art that explicitly relate to the myth of Artemis/Diana and Aktaion/Actaeon as told by Ovid, this exhibition brings together over 300 works in a scope to be shown as such only in Düsseldorf. On its agenda is that view afforded at all periods of art, upon 'The forbidden glimpse of the naked body'. Diana's fate is also that of Venus, Susanna, Bathsheba, Nyssia, Phryne, Potiphar's Wife, Baubo, Sheela-na-Gig and a host of unnamed nudes in modes classical and explicit who pass before the visitor's eye.

They do so now in works by more than 200 artists, as paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs and videos from German and international private and public collections. Together they provide a unique account of a broad field interesting from both an art-historical and cultural-historical angle – of chastity and desire, of seeing and being seen, voyeurism and exhibitionism.

*The exhibition tells first of attraction and desire, that is to say, as much of the tangle of connections between sexuality and sex, and beauty, truth, ecstasy – and death; it tells of taboos and their breaching, of guilt and retribution and of knowledge that cannot be had in innocence. The show looks, too, at the ambivalent fascination of the beautiful female body exposed to view, in other words both the erotic and eroticising relish, the sensuous charge in beholding and the horror that the beholder may sense in looking on the naked truth of the demonstratively, shamelessly unconcealed female sex: the apotropaic effect, then, of Baubo. The exhibition tells of the exhibitionism, but so too of the voyeurism of works of art and of artists male or female, of eyes cast upon the naked body and again of representation – the presentation and provocative exposition of the unveiled sex. (Beat Wismer)*

In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid relates the story handed down from Classical Greece, of the hunter, Aktaion/Actaeon, who surprises Artemis/Diana, goddess of hunting and the guardian deity of feminine chastity, at her bath together with her nymphs. He looks on; she punishes him, the mortal who has looked

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upon her, the goddess, in her nakedness, by changing him into a stag: his own hounds spontaneously hunt him down, to the kill.

With progressing interest in Classical Antiquity, this fatal, conceivably chance meeting with Diana, culminating in Actaeon's death, became a favourite subject for artists from the Renaissance to the Classicists. By the twentieth century this myth had already passed out of general knowledge and become in principle the preserve of exclusive epistemological circles, of psychologists and those with an iconological interest, with some few artists processing the concept in various media. One of those to have engaged with the Diana-and-Actaeon myth consistently if not indeed obsessively over several years as a painter and draughtsman as well as a philosophical writer, is Pierre Klossowski – grounds enough for his work to be given its own area within the exhibition.

In exploring the mythological sources of erotic art the exhibition describes a wide radius, traces the complex question of the forbidden gaze into the art of our own day, presents the progress of the female nude through the ages from a figure of chastity to one flirting with her nakedness and sensuality; light is cast on the voyeuristic traits inherent in images of the nude all the way to the playgrounds of erotic and pornographic art.

Besides works from Classical Greece and Rome and by the 'classics' of older art history, for example Artemisia Gentileschi, Rembrandt, Peter Paul Rubens and Paolo Veronese, the show presents works by masters such as Pierre Bonnard, Lovis Corinth, Marcel Duchamp, Ferdinand Hodler, Gustav Klimt, Pierre Klossowski, Pablo Picasso, Auguste Rodin, Egon Schiele and, from the realm of contemporary art, standpoints represented by Nobuyoshi Araki, Balthasar Burkhard, Judy Chicago, Marlene Dumas, Noritoshi Hirakawa, Robert Mapplethorpe, Markus Raetz, Arnulf Rainer, Cindy Sherman and others.

Marlene Dumas, the winner of this year's City of Düsseldorf Art Award, will be installing her own gallery with her latest works for this exhibition.

To accompany the show a comprehensive publication is being prepared with plates of all the works in the exhibition. This catalogue contains texts by authors whose take on the subject is not only art-historical but also incorporates philosophical and literary perspectives.

**General Director and co-ordinating curator of the exhibition:** Beat Wismer

**Co-curators:** Sandra Badelt, Mattijs Visser

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**Scale of exhibition:** approx. 250 archaeological artefacts, paintings, drawings, sculptures, prints, photographs, videos, installations

**Lenders** (selection)

Antikensammlung Berlin  
Fürst zu Salm-Salm, Museum Wasserburg Anholt  
Nationalmuseet – National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen  
Musée Rodin, Paris  
Galleria Borghese, Rome  
Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen  
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart  
Nationalmuseum Stockholm, Stockholm  
Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich  
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam  
MMK - Museum für moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna  
Städel - Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt  
Kunstmuseum und Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel  
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Amsterdam  
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid  
Kunsthalle Emden - Stiftung Henri und Eske Nannen und Schenkung Otto van de Loo, Emden  
Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery - Kunstmuseum Ateneum, Staatliches Kunstmuseum (Finnland), Helsinki  
and private collections

**Catalogue**

A richly illustrated catalogue is being published to accompany the exhibition, encompassing some 320 pages. Texts by Beat Wismer, Sandra Badelt-Pörschmann, Jean-Christophe Bailly, Bettina Baumgärtel, Claudia Delank, François Grundbacher, Karla Höß, Stefanie Ippendorf, Pia Jauch, Maria Moog-Grünewald, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Katja Stolarow, Gabriele Uerscheln, Miriam von Gehren, Stefan Zweifel.  
Price approx. 36.00 euros

**Audio Guide**

An Audio Guide will be issued in German and English by AntennaAudio to accompany the exhibition.  
Price 4.00 euros, students 3.00 euros.  
The Museum also has available a summary guide to the exhibition (booklet).

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**Film:** To coincide with the exhibition a film will be broadcast, produced by Werner Raeune for the 3sat and ZDF television channels for this occasion.

**Museum open** Tu. – Sun. 11 am – 6 pm; Sun. 11 am -6 pm; closed Mondays and 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008. Open on public holidays

**Curator's Tour:** Tour of the exhibition with Beat Wismer, General Director of museum kunst palast on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 at 5 pm

**Public guided tours :** Sundays 3pm, Wednesdays 4 pm

### **Supporting Programme**

There will be a varied programme of events to accompany the exhibition with concerts, performances, talks and readings

**MAIN SPONSORS:** E.ON AG. METRO Group and Evonik Industries AG

**Further Sponsors:** UBS Deutschland AG

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**Hotel Partners:** Intercontinental Düsseldorf, Lindner Hotel Rhein Residence, Hotel Nikko Düsseldorf

### **Media Partners**

*Die Welt | Welt am Sonntag, Weltkunst*

**Partners in the Arts** WDR 3

[www.DerverboteneBlick.de](http://www.DerverboteneBlick.de) (from 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008)

*The Stiftung museum kunst palast Foundation is a Public-Private-Partnership between The City of Düsseldorf, E.ON AG, METRO Group and Evonik Industries AG.*

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