

ENSEMBLE. CENTRE POMPIDOU — MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA
(6 APRIL – 29 SEPTEMBER 2019)



MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA PRESENTS A MAJOR BINATIONAL EXHIBITION TO MARK ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY AND CLOSE NEIGHBOURLY TIES WITH FRANCE

For the first time since 1998, Centre Pompidou is showing parts of its collection in dialogue with exhibits from another museum. Personal relations, historical ties and topographical proximity: Museum Frieder Burda, which has always paid close attention to French cultural and artistic production, is looking forward to this high-caliber exchange, featuring big names such as Pablo Picasso, Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke, Andreas Gursky and others. The exhibition, which presents some 100 works from the two collections, is appropriately entitled **ENSEMBLE** – “together.”

Curated by **Brigitte Leal**, the deputy director of the Musée national d’art moderne in Centre Pompidou, and including top-class loans from Paris, **ENSEMBLE** stimulates an interaction between the collections of the two houses. In the process, the show develops a complex dialogue between German and French positions. Masterpieces by German Expressionists, such as August Macke, who was killed in Champagne in World War I in 1914, meet works by the fathers of French Modernism: **Pierre Bonnard’s** late *Self Portrait in a Shaving Mirror* (1939-45), in which he appears highly vulnerable, or **Pablo Picasso’s** *Le Rocking Chair* (1943) both speak of doubt and isolation during the German occupation. **Marc Chagall’s** painting *On Sundays* (1952-1954) combines poetry and spirituality, the ingredients that made his work so incredibly popular in post-war Germany. At the same time, however, the painting echoes the irreversible loss of Jewish culture in eastern and central Europe.

Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter are central pillars of the Frieder Burda Collection. Just as **Anselm Kiefer** did later, they adopt a critical approach not just to Germany’s repressed past but also to the media and to remembrance culture – thus laying the foundations for the international success of German painting. Centre Pompidou is contributing its own spectacular examples of these great painters’ works to **ENSEMBLE** – such as Kiefer’s gigantic tableau *The Secret Life of Plants* (2001-2002) or Baselitz’ early work, both famous and notorious, *Ralf III* (1965).

One special highlight representing another aspect of Franco-German exchange is the section on **Modernist Photography**. While Paris became a center of new photography between the wars, it was to a large extent immigrants from Germany, Hungary, other parts of Europe and the World – often women such as **Germaine Krull, Marianne Breslauer or Ilse Bing** – who added their own insights and perspectives to the great picture machine of Paris, along with eccentric fashion photographers such as **Erwin Blumenfeld** or German-trained photographers like **René Zuber** and **Florence Henri**.

But the section is by no means a one-way street. The exchange continues with pieces by French artists, like that of **Maurice Tabard**, whose work was shown at the important exhibition “Film und Foto” in Stuttgart in 1929.

ENSEMBLE unites their works with **Andreas Gursky’s** 2003 Paris photograph, in which he pays tribute to the avant-garde. A presentation of works by the French street artist **JR**, who was invited to the city of Baden-Baden in 2014 by Museum Frieder Burda, rounds off the show.

Thus, the collaborative exhibition “Ensemble”, true to the approach of Frieder Burda himself, is based on a border-transcending ideal, triggers a new debate about a European History of Art and Ideas and once again celebrates the triumph of the artist with a nuanced and critical approach.

On the History of Franco-German Relations in Baden-Baden

Baden-Baden has always been a place where the Franco-German friendship has been actively practiced and enjoyed. It was here that peace negotiations between the two countries took place after World War II. It was also home to one of the most important centers of French occupation policy, which aimed to encourage reconciliation through culture and art. And it was here, too, close to neighboring France and its unique *savoir vivre*, that Frieder Burda found the ideal base from which to give expression to his love of France.

The 15th anniversary of the founding of Museum Frieder Burda therefore offers a great opportunity to celebrate this living friendship. As a Francophile art collector, Frieder Burda has always nurtured close and friendly ties with the Centre Pompidou, where he was the first and only German so far to be appointed to the purchasing commission. In the foreword to the catalogue, **Frieder Burda** writes: “Reflecting the two collections and juxtaposing the individual works of German and French artists demonstrates how closely connected art can be and that art can complement and influence itself across all borders.” He goes on to say “This pleases me and confirms my belief in the universal bonding power of art, which always retains its validity and relevance despite all crises.”

And Henning Schaper, director of Museum Frieder Burda, adds: “In today’s times, binational cultural exchange has the task not only of making masterpieces from different collections available to the public in both countries. Such a project also assumes a symbolic character when it sets out to demonstrate the connections between the two national cultural and artistic traditions within a modern Europe.”

On the Concept of the Exhibition by Brigitte Leal

Featuring high-caliber loans from Paris, Ensemble stimulates an interaction between the two museums’ collections. The exhibition engenders a complex dialogue between German and French positions: from **Pierre Bonnard, Pablo Picasso and Marc Chagall** to the great German masters of recent decades, such as **Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter and Anselm Kiefer**. Brigitte Leal followed three guiding principles in choosing the works and how they would be laid out in the light-flooded museum, designed by architect Richard Meier:

Resonances

Some great French and German masters are shown more under aesthetic than historical considerations. The section about resonances combines works by Pierre Bonnard and August Macke or Max Beckmann and Marc Chagall to reflect the durability and resilience of the artistic affinities that Germany and France shared despite the wars and tragedies that divided them.

Confrontations

Pictures and sculptures by major German contemporary artists from both collections are placed directly opposite each other: again, some of the greatest painters of our time are represented: Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lupertz, A. R. Penck, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter and the photographer Andreas Gursky. These were artists of one generation, some of whom were briefly united under the ephemeral name of "capitalist realism", but whose strong and individual identities survived the fiction of a single, national style. With the help of all sorts of formal experiences, including painting, sculpture, collage, film, photography and hybrid works, which blend and combine heterogeneous sources and contradictory, at times provocative universes, they have one thing in common: they all question the current status of pictures and the ambiguity of representation.

Selection

Ever since the invention of photography, Paris has always been one of its most vibrant centers. No wonder, then, that the art institutions of Paris, with their rich traditions, hold major collections of photographs. Now, a selection has been curated for Baden-Baden by the **German curator and photography expert at the Centre Pompidou, Florian Ebner**. He has taken works from the collection of the Cabinet de la Photographie des Musée national d'art moderne to create a convolute of images by German and French photographers who were active in 1930s Paris. On show in the mezzanine of the museum in Baden-Baden are photographs by artists such as Ilse Bing, Marianne Bresslauer, Erwin Blumenfeld, Florence Henri, Germaine Krull, Maurice Tabard and René Zuber, illustrating the atmosphere in Paris between the two World Wars.

The Photography Section, curated by Florian Ebner

Photographic border-crossings between France and Germany in the interwar years: just as we speak of the painting of an *École de Paris*, there was also an international "class of photography" in the French capital in the years between the two World Wars. It boasted a large "communauté allemande," including many young women who practiced a *New Photography*.

Well-versed in revolution and the vagaries of world history, **Germaine Krull** arrived in Paris in the mid-1920s and went on to become the leading photographer of the newly founded magazine *VU*. **Ilse Bing and Marianne Bresslauer**, both from Jewish backgrounds, discovered photography as a medium of professional and social emancipation. The former art history student Bing and Bresslauer, who received her training at Berlin's Lette-Verein, were enthused not just by the classical iconography of the French capital but also by Paris as a forerunner of modernist photography, depicting scenes from the *quais* of the Seine and the elegance of fashion.

These cross-border photographic excursions between Germany and France were two-directional. The pianist **Florence Henri**, who was studying painting at Fernand Leger's *Académie moderne*, attended a preliminary course at the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1927, where she was introduced to photography by Josef Albers and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, while the young **René Zuber** from Alsace studied at the *Staatliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe* in Leipzig. Both brought the perspectives of *New Seeing* and *New Objectivity* with them when they returned to France, where they continued to develop the concepts.

In the mid-1930s, the Berlin-born Dadaist **Erwin Blumenfeld** left the Netherlands, where he had worked in a leather factory, to try his luck at fashion photography in Paris – where he enjoyed great success. At this time, National Socialism and fascism were already casting long shadows over Europe, consigning the productive exchange of the photographic avant-garde to oblivion until it was revived for the exhibitions on *Subjective Photography* in the 1950s.

Press Contacts:

Kathrin Luz
+49 (0)171 3102472, presse@museum-frieder-burda.de

Ute Rosenfeld
+49 (0)7221 39898-33, rosenfeld@museum-frieder-burda.de

Opening Hours

Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am – 6pm
Open on all public holidays

Information and photo material:

www.museum-frieder-burda.de -> "PRESSE / Login".
Please log in with your Email address and existing password or register a new account. You will promptly receive a password with which you can access the download section.

Preview

KARIN KNEFFEL (12 OCTOBER 2019 – 8 MARCH 2020)