

29 JANUARY – 26 JUNE 2022
VALUE AND TRANSFORMATION OF CORALS

MARGARET AND CHRISTINE WERTHEIM



MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA
BADEN-BADEN

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The cnidarians are dying. Corals everywhere are being killed by global warming. Refusing to capitulate in the face of loss, Australian-born, California-based sister-artists Margaret and Christine Wertheim have fabulated a response using traditional handicraft techniques: their crochet reefs shimmer and swell in colors and shapes inspired by the Great Barrier Reef.

Like the living reefs they emulate, the sisters have created a collaborative installation to which over 20,000 people in 50 cities and countries have contributed. Art, science, mathematics and community practice are synthesized in work that reflects the possibilities of stitchery and the hidden history of using craft techniques for scientific representation.

Exhibited at the 2019 Venice Biennale, the sisters' *Crochet Coral Reef* is now the subject of a museum-wide retrospective at Museum Frieder Burda. On the ground floor are a series of works they began in 2005, into which are incorporated crochet pieces from a group of skilled craft collaborators. Here we encounter a grove of giant *Coral Forests* (made from yarns, videotape, tinsel and other detritus), a *Bleached Reef*, an all-plastic *Toxic Reef*, a collection of miniature coral *Pod Worlds*, and new sculptures for this exhibition, including a large-scale embroidered sampler paying homage to the projects' contributors and domestic female labor.



Margaret and Christine Wertheim and the Institute For Figuring, *Red Nudibranch Reef*, 2022.

Photo © IFF by Rebecca Rickman



Margaret and Christine Wertheim and the Institute For Figuring, *Coral Forest* at Lehigh University Art Galleries, PA.
Photo courtesy LUAG by Stephanie Veto

Alongside reefs made by the Wertheims, the project also includes *Satellite Reefs* generated by citizens of many countries. For Museum Frieder Burda, a new *Baden-Baden Satellite Reef* transforms the upper floor into a kaleidoscopic underwater world. With more than 40,000 coral pieces made by 4,000 participants from Germany and beyond, this is by far the largest *Satellite Reef*. Throughout Germany, people gathered to crochet and draw attention to the crisis unfolding in the world's oceans. At the Museum, with guidance from Margaret and Christine Wertheim, a dedicated team transformed this wooly outpouring into a collection of three-dimensional coral islands and vast wall-mounted sculptures.

Underlying the project is also a mathematical dimension, for many of the ruffling shapes found in both marine organisms and their crocheted siblings are based on hyperbolic geometry, an alternative to the Euclidean variety we typically learn. The *Crochet Coral Reef* may thus be seen as an exercise in applied mathematics melding handicraft with geometrical exploration.

At the same time, the project demonstrates parallels between biological and social evolution. For in the process of crocheting corals, each maker becomes part of a comprehensive whole, analogous to the individual polyps of living reefs that together grow collective forms blurring the boundaries between the 'individual' and the 'communal.' Collaborative, figurative, material, conceptual, artistic, scientific, feminist and playful, the *Crochet Coral Reef* alerts us to the reality that life on Earth is nothing if not entangled.



Margaret and Christine Wertheim and the Institute For Figuring, *Coral Forest* at Lehigh University Art Galleries, PA.
Photo courtesy LUAG by Stephanie Veto



Margaret and Christine Wertheim and the Institute For Figuring, *Pod World – Hyperbolic* at the 2019 Venice Biennale.
Photo courtesy 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia ‘May You Live In Interesting Times’ by Francesco Galli



PREVIEW



Henri Rousseau, *La rivière*, undated. Oil on cardboard, 27,5 × 29 cm.
Collection Zander

THE PAINTERS OF THE SACRED HEART

ANDRÉ BAUCHANT, CAMILLE BOMBOIS, SÉRAPHINE LOUIS
AND HENRI ROUSSEAU

16 JULY — 20 NOVEMBER 2022

In real life, they were mercenaries, gardeners or market wrestlers. As artists, they were auto-didacts. Who created a cosmos of pictures that impresses with its direct sensuality to this day and secures a permanent place for academically untrained artists in art history: Henri Rousseau (1844–1910), Camille Bombois (1883–1970), André Bauchant (1873–1958) and above all Séraphine Louis (1864–1942). They count among the circle of artists known as the “Painters of the Sacred Heart”. Their scenarios, often inspired by nature, especially flowers and fruit, but also people in parks and landscapes, testify to a direct bond with nature, a sensitive awareness of the things in their immediate surroundings, through which they would appear to have sought and escape from the coldness of incipient modernity.

This French forerunner to an authentic form of art was discovered by the German art historian and dealer Wilhelm Uhde. He played a crucial role as mentor to the “Painters of the Sacred Heart” and organized their first joint exhibition, which was held in Paris in 1928. Uhde had recognized the fascination of an artistic approach not dominated by academic training or the art canon at an early stage. He proclaimed a kind of art that directly touched people’s hearts.

The exhibition is based on works from the collection of Charlotte Zander (1930–2014) and is deliberately and consciously in the tradition of Museum Frieder Burda, which constantly strives to reinvigorate and accentuate its strong ties with French art.

A cooperation with



INSTITUTE FOR FIGURING

EXHIBITION CATALOG

The comprehensive catalog (German/English) with numerous illustrations as well as essays by Margaret Wertheim, Christine Wertheim, Donna Haraway, Heather Davis, Amita Deshpande, Doug Harvey, Kayleigh Perkov, Cord Riechelmann and Udo Kittelmann is published by Wienand Verlag; 241 pages; available at the museum or online; 39 euros

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

TALKS, ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS, READINGS

Information on the extensive program accompanying the exhibition can be found on our website museum-frieder-burda.de

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS (GERMAN) – IN THE MUSEUM

Sat, Sun and public holidays, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Approx. 60 min., guide fee: 4 euros, no registration

PUBLIC GUIDES TOURS (GERMAN) – DIGITAL

Experience a live exhibition tour at home using Zoom.

Tue and Sat, 16.00 h

Approx. 60 min., guide fee: 5 euros

Tickets: museum-frieder-burda.de

STAATLICHE KUNSTHALLE BADEN-BADEN

18 February – 16 May 2022, Ulrike Ottinger

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OPENING HOURS

Tu – Su, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Open on all public holidays

TICKETS

Regular ticket 14 euros

Reduced 11 euros

(students, the disabled, unemployed, groups of 15 or more)

Combi-Ticket with the Staatliche Kunsthalle 18 euros, reduced 14 euros

Parents with children 27 euros

Children aged 8 and under free of charge

Children aged 9 and over 5 euros

Groups of school children 2 euros

ICOM free of charge

GROUPS AND PRIVATE GUIDED TOURS

+49 7221 39898 -38, fuehrungen@museum-frieder-burda.de

Fee for guided tours: 75 euros, 60 min

In addition to guided tours in the museum, digital tours can also be booked.

ARRIVAL

We recommend a sustainable and climate-friendly journey by train or public transport. With individual or group bwtarif tickets, you can use all public transportation in Baden-Württemberg, including regional trains, commuter trains, light rail, and buses. On presentation of a bwegt ticket valid for the day, you will receive reduced admission to the museum.

Information and tickets: bwegt.de