

Books in the Brandhorst Collection

"Spot On" exhibition series at Museum Brandhorst from 2 May 2020

Richard Artschwager, Jacqueline Humphries, Arthur Jafa, Kara Walker, Ed Ruscha, Andy Warhol, Lawrence Weiner, Laura Owens, Paul Chan and Michael Krebber & Mayo Thompson.

Munich, April 23, 2020 – Artist publications play an important role in both the collection and the program of Museum Brandhorst. With exhibitions such as "[Reading Andy Warhol](#)" (2014), "[Ed Ruscha: Books & Paintings](#)" (2013) or "[Picasso Artists' Books](#)" (2010), the importance of books as an artistic medium has repeatedly been brought into focus.

Books are containers for information, prose and poetry, they are fetish objects and a means of communication, and they represent the democratization of knowledge like no other medium. Their cultural, social as well as historical significance has not dimmed in the digital age and explains the ongoing engagement of artists with the object and the idea of the "book".

From the beginning of May, seminal new acquisitions from the last years will be on view on the ground floor of the museum: They address the book as a space for reflection and as a formal means on the one hand, and as a place of political debate on the other hand – with books and artworks by Richard Artschwager, Jacqueline Humphries, Arthur Jafa, Kara Walker, Ed Ruscha, Andy Warhol, Lawrence Weiner, Laura Owens, and others: "Books are cultural history. We notice their significance especially in times like these, when we are thrown back on ourselves in such an unusual way. Although the end of the book has often been bemoaned, we get a different picture in the field of artists' publications. The artist's book as a medium and a space for thinking seems to be more alive than in a long time, often in experimental forms and formats," say Monika Bayer-Wermuth and Patrizia Dander, curators of the exhibition. In order to make the two new "Spot On" spaces available during the museum's COVID-19-related closure, they will be accompanied with a digital program.

Artists' Books between Concept and Object

Artists' books are a comparatively young medium and only took on a more prominent role from the 1960s onwards – especially in Conceptual Art, where they have attracted attention as artworks in their own rights. Ed Ruscha's early artist books, with which he established himself as one of the most important representatives of the medium, are a good example. His publications from "Twentysix Gasoline Stations" (1963) to "Hard Light" (1978) play ironically with viewing and reading habits, deliberately evoke boredom where drama is

expected, or break the linearity of a narrative by means of a seemingly paradoxical end. Pictures dominate in the artists' publications assembled in the exhibition: photographs, collages, silhouettes, paintings. While Ruscha focuses on (clichéd) images of everyday American life, Lawrence Weiner and Paul Chan, for instance, address political subjects. Arthur Jafa and Kara Walker, in turn, focus on Black cultural history.

Nothing to Read: Book as Subject

In addition to artists' publications, a second exhibition room will show works by Ed Ruscha and Richard Artschwager that treat the book as a painterly motif or sculptural object. Artschwager's "Encyclopedia Britannica" (1963) plays with its double presence: as a bookshelf and as a depiction of the same. Ed Ruscha, on the other hand, creates a tension between content and pictoriality with his bleach-treated book objects of the 1990s. In his monumental paintings of blank book pages from 2011 and 2012, Ruscha prompts us to think about the relationship between reality and image, between that which is depicted in the image and its metaphorical meaning, between seeing and reading – and thus about fundamental questions in the field of painting.

Curators: Patrizia Dander, Monika Bayer-Wermuth

"Spot On" at Museum Brandhorst

Under the title "Spot On", recently acquired groups of works by different artists will be shown in two rooms on the ground floor. The presentations will alternate during – and beyond – the anniversary year and its accompanying exhibition "Forever Young – 10 Years Museum Brandhorst".

Further information on the events and the COVID-19-related closure can also be found at museum-brandhorst.de. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) to make sure you never miss any news from Museum Brandhorst again.

About Museum Brandhorst

With over 1,200 artworks, [Museum Brandhorst](#) houses one of the most important museum collections of contemporary art in Europe, with numerous important artists such as Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, Bruce Nauman, Cady Noland and Wolfgang Tillmans. The tenth anniversary of the museum in May 2019 is the occasion for a show of works from the collection: "Forever Young - 10 Years Museum Brandhorst" which spans an arc from the early 1960s to the present day. In addition to well-known and popular highlights, numerous new acquisitions that have joined the Brandhorst Collection over the last ten years are now on view for the first time at the museum.

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