

PRESS RELEASE

August 2024

TOO MUCH FUTURE DONATION BY FLORIAN PETERS-MESSER

29 August 2024–5 January 2025

For the first time, the Kunstpalast is presenting a selection of the more than 300 works donated to the museum by Florian Peters-Messer. Collected over 30 years, the works – by well-known international contemporary artists, such as Kader Attia, Andrea Bowers, Sophie Calle and Thomas Hirschhorn, as well as emerging talents, from Harry Hachmeister to Henrike Naumann and Sophia Süßmilch – critically explore the upheavals of our time.

From the very beginning, Florian Peters-Messer's main interest has been socio-political works. In addition to urgent social challenges such as climate change, forced migration, war and the rise of extremism, the themes of gender, sex and identity are at the forefront of his collection. These focal points are reflected in the exhibition, which is divided into three monographic and five thematic rooms. The approximately 90 works on display include expansive installations as well as paintings, drawings, photographs and video artworks. What unites them all is a sense of urgency – they raise questions and shake things up, sometimes through provocative gestures, sometimes through their thoughtfulness.

"Florian Peters-Messer's collection represents a wonderful and highly significant addition to the Kunstpalast. I am extremely grateful that it has been entrusted to us! These are complex, provocative and challenging works that have entered our holdings through Peters-Messer's donation, which fills a gap in our collection. In light of current social developments, I think it is particularly important that these works will enable us

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist T +49
(0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

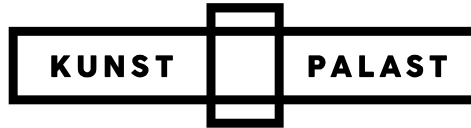
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

KUNSTPALAST

Ehrenhof 4-5
40479 Düsseldorf
www.kunstpalast.de

PAGE

1/5



PRESS RELEASE

August 2024

to reflect on contemporary issues in greater depth following the *Too Much Future* exhibition," explains a delighted Felix Krämer, general director of the Kunstpalast.

The Viersen entrepreneur was keen to make his collection accessible to the general public from the very beginning. "Art is there to be shown, to allow other perspectives on the world and to create spaces for thought," says Peters-Messer.

"All of the artists represented in the exhibition understand art as a political space. They call for solidarity, empathy and humanism while pointing out the injustices in our society and analysing or ironically dismantling them," explains Linda Peitz, an expert on the Peters-Messer Collection. Back in 2020, she curated the presentation *Empört Euch!* (Time for Outrage!).

Felicity Korn, head of the 20th and 21st century collection and co-curator of *Too Much Future*, emphasises the complexity of the works on display: "Florian Peters-Messer's interest lies in pieces that disrupt our usual ways of seeing and fundamentally challenge our understanding of art. Thanks to this donation, our collection of contemporary art has been significantly expanded and enhanced by the addition of critical, political artists. We now possess a selection of works by an artist as important as Thomas Hirschhorn that is unique in terms of both its scope and quality."

One of the three monographic rooms in the show is dedicated to **Thomas Hirschhorn**. The Swiss artist views his works as a call for change and transformation. With his complex, often brutal-looking pieces, he invites viewers to learn more, to take a stand or even to resist. Hirschhorn often uses simple materials, such as photographs from newspapers, philosophical texts and everyday objects, which he combines to create a wealth of complex content. The work *Arch (Growing Assertiveness)*, for example, explores journalism's claim to truth. A triumphal arch resembling a noticeboard is cluttered with buzzwords, comments, opinions and horrifying photos of war victims. The messages on

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist T +49
(0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

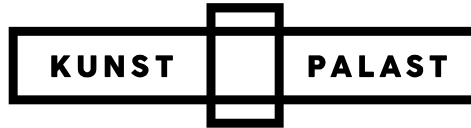
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

KUNSTPALAST

Ehrenhof 4-5
40479 Düsseldorf
www.kunstpalast.de

PAGE

2/5



PRESS RELEASE

August 2024

wooden panels and stickers are reminiscent of press headlines and fluctuate ambivalently between "news" and "fake news". Florian Peters-Messer's encounter with Thomas Hirschhorn's critical and political works was pivotal to the start of his collecting career.

Another artist from the early days is **Erik van Lieshout**, who also has his own room in the exhibition. The Dutch artist's multimedia works push the boundaries of personal, societal and social taboos. For his films, which oscillate between documentary and fiction, he ventures into the fringes of society and becomes part of them. The film *Happiness* and the drawings shown in parallel are the result of time spent in Heimerstein in the Netherlands, where he accepted an invitation to work with the residents of a psychiatric institution. The combination of voyeuristic and exhibitionist directness in van Lieshout's films is both shocking and touching in equal measure.

The intersections between private and public as well as between reality and fiction are also the subject of French conceptual artist **Sophie Calle**'s work. Her combination of photographs, text and installation creates complex narrative structures that link personal stories with overarching themes such as love, life and death. The concept of text and photo stories is explored in the 2004 series *Prenez soin de vous* (Take Care of Yourself); two of these works are on display in the exhibition. Sophie Calle transforms her former partner's break-up email into a conceptual series involving, among other things, having the text translated into Braille and shorthand. Calle's works prompt us to think about observation, identity and memory.

In addition to the three monographic rooms, the exhibition is divided into five thematic spaces. Political art plays a central role in the Peters-Messer Collection. Under the title **Art as Protest**, the show groups together artists such as Andrea Bowers, Šejla Kamerić, Henrike Naumann and Nicholas Warburg, whose works pose questions about power, powerlessness, inequality and social justice. For many of the artists represented in the collection, political engagement and artistic creation are inseparable. They combine

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist T +49
(0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

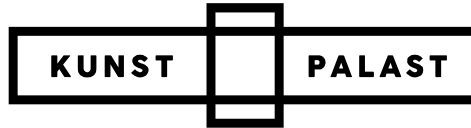
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

KUNSTPALAST

Ehrenhof 4-5
40479 Düsseldorf
www.kunstpalast.de

PAGE

3/5



PRESS RELEASE

August 2024

aesthetic practice with civil resistance, forms of non-violent protest or political activism. As the son of Algerian parents, the French-born artist Kader Attia addresses the complex contexts and consequences of colonialism. The photograph *Parabolic Self Poetry* from 2015 illuminates the connections between modern architecture, postcolonialism, media networks and cultural identity.

The exhibition title *Too Much Future* is borrowed from a work by artist Rebekka Benzenberg that interrogates patriarchal and social power structures. In this piece, she takes up a slogan previously used by the punk scene in the GDR to protest against the regime and predetermined life plans. At the same time, the phrase aptly reflects fundamental issues in our society today. On a series of fur coats, the artist has utilised bleach – which is also used to lighten hair – to apply these words to this luxurious material. The bleached fur coats subversively negotiate symbols of capitalist ideals of beauty. The repercussions of the capitalist economic system on our social fabric are another core theme of the collection. Alongside Rebekka Benzenberg, artists such as Peggy Buth, Iris Kettner and Sven Johné deal with social inequality and the depiction of power and exclusivity as well as poverty and social misery in their works. The room titled ***Solidarity vs. Exclusion*** presents art that confronts the audience with questions about our shared future and individual responsibilities.

In the chapter ***Myself and Others***, artists such as Harry Hachmeister, Murat Önen and Sonja Yakovleva explore sexual orientation and physicality, as well as how we perceive ourselves and are labelled by others. Against the backdrop of societal expectations, the works shed light on aspects of identity. Ever since his studies, Harry Hachmeister (Grit Hachmeister until 2019) has been examining his own body and the internal and external aspects of sexual identity in his artistic works. His self-portrait from 2007 depicts him as a boxer wearing goalkeeper gloves, football boots, knee socks and shorts. He playfully dismantles conceptions of masculinity and clichéd gender roles.

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist T +49
(0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

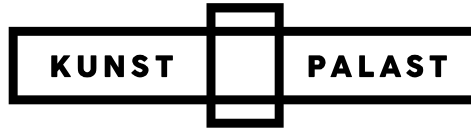
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

KUNSTPALAST

Ehrenhof 4-5
40479 Düsseldorf
www.kunstpalast.de

PAGE

4/5



PRESS RELEASE

August 2024

To explore the theme of *Originality and Obsession*, the exhibition presents artists such as John Bock, Bjarne Melgaard, Jaanus Samma and Sophie Süßmilch, who critically examine social norms and place individuals with all their intimate fantasies and fears at the forefront of their work. In his installation *Flaminio Station*, Estonian artist Jaanus Samma traces the history of gay cruising locations in Rome. He situates queer perception and desire in seemingly heteronormative, often public spaces. Sophia Süßmilch, on the other hand, addresses the patriarchal structures in our society and in the culture industry in a humorous and politically incorrect way in her work *Der romantische Schinkencowboy* (The Romantic Ham Cowboy).

Radical Aesthetics: another room in the exhibition is dedicated to formally reduced yet radical aesthetics and to interrogating our established understanding of art. How can we subvert the way art is received? What effect is created by deliberately raw and unfinished works? The works of the artists shown here, such as Sabine Hornig, Kris Lemsalu, Vivian Sauter and Hiroshi Sugito, make viewers aware of their open formal vocabulary and challenge them aesthetically.

As part of the exhibition, Sophia Süßmilch will be performing *The Awkward Hug – ein Denkmal für die unbeholfenen Umarmenden unter uns* (The Awkward Hug – A Monument to the Awkward Huggers Among Us) on 30 August. The audience is invited to interact with the artist and a jury will choose the three most creative hugs at the end. Participants have the chance to win original works of art by Sophia Süßmilch.

The artist Thomas Hirschhorn will be coming to the Kunstpalast on 12 December for a lecture performance. Hirschhorn will share insights into his work in conversation with curator Felicity Korn.

The exhibition is curated by Felicity Korn, head of the 20th and 21st century collection at the Kunstpalast, and Linda Peitz, an independent curator from Berlin.

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist T +49
(0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

KUNSTPALAST

Ehrenhof 4-5
40479 Düsseldorf
www.kunstpalast.de

PAGE

5/5