

**GRASSI**

**MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS LEIPZIG**

## **Press release**

### **6UL. Lust and Desire in Art and Design**

**Exhibition 29 April – 27 September 2020**

**There are many sides to sexuality. It is closely connected to the strongest feelings people can have. With love, lust, passion, desire and longing as well as with jealousy, fear, hatred, oppression and the exercise of power. The energy sexuality is bursting with not only determines our fantasies and desires, but is the drive of almost every activity. Ultimately, it is the driving force of life itself.**

**The GRASSI Museum of Applied Arts will host the interdisciplinary exhibition "6UL. Lust and Desire in Art and Design" starting from 29 April. Around 200 works by international artists from the past 30 years will present diverse forms and expressions of sexuality in art and design: in works by visual artists as well as (fashion) designers. The interdisciplinary approach of the exhibition corresponds to the current working method of many artists who like to cross the boundaries between various media.**

**The exhibition title 6UL refers, in an intricate way, to its subject matter. Phonetically, both sexual and sexuality are inscribed in the title. The encryption was invented by the artist duo Günther Meyer. Uwe Karsten Günther, initiator of the LADEN FUER NICHTS in Leipzig, and Clemens Meyer, a writer and recipient of numerous literary awards, have been performing as a team under this pseudonym for several years now.**

#### **Sexuality today**

There has been a major reassessment of sexuality in the past 30 years. In the period of the so-called sexual revolution from late 1960s until late 1970s, people in Western Societies hoped to be freed from social constraints by living sexuality freely. In East Germany, however, the development was different. As a result of their professional equality with the opposite sex, women in socialism lived their sexuality more freely. Both in the West and in the East, sexuality is no longer associated only with happiness, enjoyment and freedom, but, increasingly, also with a lack of freedom, inequality and aggression. At the same time, tolerance towards multisexual identities and the acceptance of these identities beyond heterosexuality has been ever more apparent. The Internet as a space for the satisfaction of sexual desires has also led to a further lifting of taboos surrounding sexual orientations and practices and has shifted the boundaries between private and public.

## **Themes and artists of the exhibition**

The exhibition reflects social debates on sexual self-determination, biological and social gender roles, power structures and sexual violence based on four thematic groups:

- Lust and Passion
- Power and Abuse
- Transformation and Diversity
- Eros and Mortality

Having paved the way, established artists such as Tracey Emin, Marilyn Minter, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Vivienne Westwood, Cindy Sherman, Sarah Lucas, Elsa Schiaparelli, Jürgen Klauke, Leigh Bowery and Araki stand in opposition to younger artists such as Kris Lemsalu, Namilia, Signe Pierce, Anna Uddenberg or Los Carpinteros.

The interdisciplinary approach of the exhibition is expressed in an installation by the Canadian musician Peaches who first exhibited as artist at the Kunstverein in Hamburg in 2019.

The second part of the exhibition is the large-scale room-in-room sculpture **MANOLITO**, designed by the Leipzig artist duo Günther Meyer and friends, among others Moritz Schleime, Marco Wagner, Liam Scully, Rigo Schmidt.

### **Lust and Passion**

The largest part of the exhibition revolves around eroticism and sexuality: desire, seduction, sensuality. The associated ideas are often shaped by role clichés and a specifically male view. Feminist artists offered their own images in reply to the patriarchal, heterosexual control of sexuality. The exhibited works address the positive energy of Eros and Sexus on the one hand and a possible threat coming from their often uncontrollable power on the other.

### **Power and Abuse**

Hardly any other topic receives more attention in feminist art than power and abuse of power. This part is therefore dominated by female artists, including pioneers such as Cindy Sherman, Sarah Lucas or Monica Bonvicini. On the other hand, male artists deal with violence against men or violence originating from men much less frequently. A notable example is a lying figure by Gregor Schneider.

### **Transformation and Diversity**

This part of the exhibition is devoted to the current delimitation of conventional sex categories. Works from the field of art and fashion illustrate the deconstruction of hetero-, homo- and bisexuality. The criticism of this terminology gave rise to abbreviation LGBTQ (for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer). Queer theory, in particular, regards sexual identity as provisional and unstable. This is also where old standpoints such as those of Leigh Bowery, Jürgen Klauke and Walter van Beirendonck mix with the more recent ones such as those of Zuhra Hilal.

### **Eros and Mortality**

The connection between Eros and death has been present in art from antiquity to modern days. At first glance, they seem to contradict each other, but it is the knowledge of how perishable the bodies we desire actually are that creates a connection between these two phenomena. The desired permanence of erotic moments of happiness is also reflected in death as a symbol of finitude. Labelling orgasm "little death" is another way this connection materialises.

Using representative examples, the smallest part of the exhibition depicts different connections between Eros and death.

**Publication**

A bilingual catalogue (German/English) is published with texts by Clemens Meyer and Dr. Bettina Ruhrberg and a foreword by Dr. Olaf Thormann.

**Opening of the exhibition:**

Tue, 28 April, 7 p.m.

**Press conference for the exhibition:**

Tue, 28 April, 11 a.m.

**Duration:**

29 April – 27 September 2020

**Events accompanying the exhibition:**

There will be a large number of events accompanying the exhibition. For more information, see <http://www.grassimak.de/programm/kalender/>

**Exhibition curators:**

Dr. Bettina Ruhrberg / Director of Mönchehaus Museum Goslar and  
Uwe Karsten Günther / Laden fuer Nichts Leipzig  
Artistic contribution by Clemens Meyer / Leipzig  
project assistant Luise Richter / scientific volunteer at GRASSI  
Museum of Applied Arts Leipzig

**Exhibition design:**

bka bucher koop architektur (Claudia Sucher, Gregor Wenzel)

**Graphic design:**

Tobias Wenig/ Berlin

**Opening times and admission prices:**

Tue – Sun, holidays 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., closed on Mondays  
Admission: Free up to 18 years, adults € 8 (reduced € 5.50 or € 4), evening-  
ticket from 5 p.m. for € 4, free entry on the first Wednesday of each month

**Social media of the museum**

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, BLOG

**Exhibition venue**

GRASSI Museum of Applied Arts, Johannisplatz 5 – 11. 04103 Leipzig, Germany  
[www.grassimak.de](http://www.grassimak.de), [grassimuseum@leipzig.de](mailto:grassimuseum@leipzig.de), phone: +49 (0)341/ 22 29 100

Leipzig, 6 March 2020

If you have any questions, please contact:

GRASSI Museum of Applied Arts

Johannisplatz 5-11, 04103 Leipzig, [www.grassimak.de](http://www.grassimak.de)

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