

Press release, 13 March 2019

Japan Room
Anne Pöhlmann

&

A Sublime World
Japanese Art from the Collection of Viktor and Marianne Langen

Opening of both exhibitions: 7 April 2019, 12 to 5 pm

Duration: 8 April – 25 August 2019



Anne Pöhlmann · Entry#06 superb fence Kyoto , 2018, Courtesy Clages Gallery



Taima Mandala, Edo Period, 18th century, Viktor and Marianne Langen Collection

Japan Room
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In showing the work of Anne Pöhlmann, the Langen Foundation is presenting an artist who works with the various languages and modalities of photography. In the process, she applies methods to her work that originate from our culture of everyday life and define photography as a mass medium. On the occasion of her solo presentation in the Japan Room of the Langen Foundation, the Duesseldorf-based artist Anne Pöhlmann is presenting a selection of works that she created during her three-month fellowship in Japan (2017) organised by the Goethe-Institut. These works are being shown in the same room as new wall pieces and installative works developed especially for this exhibition. The site-specific installation includes photographs printed on fabric and then woven into garments or combined with various found textiles. The artist worked with many different materials, such as Japanese silk or reused fashion items from her personal archive which she has integrated into her artistic practice.

Pöhlmann's works of art engage in an open dialogue with the unique architecture of the building designed by Tadao Ando, the Japanese architect and recipient of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. They interact with closed structures and open spaces in order to interlace sound and silence and to create an immersive experience. The artwork in the exhibition – including wall and installative works – deal with various motifs, ranging from urban architecture and natural landscapes to portraits and abstract compositions. At the same time, they explore questions related to the material conditions of photography. Folded and draped photographs or photo fabrics are presented as flowing architectural formations in which the image coalesces with its pictorial carrier. The title Japan Room alludes to the name given to the exhibition space by Tadao Ando himself. He was referencing a cultural space that Anne Pöhlmann got to know first-hand, which now serves as an important point of reference for her.

Pöhlmann illuminates new possibilities for investigating Japanese culture from the vantage point of the West. Instead of pursuing a distant and cliché-laden approach, the artist focuses on a personal exploration of the politicised relationship between photography and Japanese visual culture. In the process, she challenges the status of a silent documentary device and uses the camera as a subjective medium. In rediscovering her own experiences and memories, Pöhlmann compiles fragments from her personal viewpoint and suggests critical approaches related to the mediatic conditions of the photographic image.

Anne Pöhlmann attended the Duesseldorf Art Academy and works as a freelance artist. Her work has received various awards and been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions. She is currently teaching at Braunschweig University of Art.

A Sublime World

Japanese Art from the Collection of Viktor and Marianne Langen

In parallel to the revolving exhibition Japan Room, the Langen Foundation is presenting the show A Sublime World, featuring a selection of over eighty objects from the extensive collection inventory. On the occasion of this presentation, the collection is working with an external curator and is pleased to welcome the renowned Japan expert Dr Khanh Trinh from the Museum Rietberg in Zurich, who will provide a new perspective on the fundament of the Langen Foundation.

The works of this presentation from the collection are divided into three thematic areas: religious art, flowers and birds, and landscapes. The focus lies on revealing the stylistic and form-related diversity within each of the categories. For instance, detailed naturalistic renderings of flora and fauna from the Kano school are juxtaposed with stylised, abstract compositions from the Rinpa tradition.

In selecting the exhibited works, a focus has also been placed on Japan's love of polychromy and opulence. This aspect may seem surprising since we often associate Japanese art with the minimalist, reticent aesthetics of Zen Buddhist art and monochromatic ink painting. A Sublime World is a free translation of Uragami Shunkin's work title for the representation of an imaginary, paradisiacal landscape splendidly painted with malachite and azurite.

With around 350 artworks originating from the twelfth to twentieth centuries, the collection of Japanese art compiled by Viktor and Marianne Langen over four decades counts among the most comprehensive and renowned of its kind in Europe. A business trip to Japan in the 1960s initially sparked Viktor Langen's interest in Japanese art and culture. The cosmopolitan couple travelled around the country many times, always on a quest for exceptional art objects. While underway, they trusted in their intuitive feel for art and first acquired picture scrolls before later purchasing Buddhist sculptures and artisan objects. Their appreciation of beauty was on the mark. Today, the Langen Foundation owns numerous paintings and sculptures of rare iconographic origins and outstanding artistic quality.

LANGEN FOUNDATION

Press conference: 4 April 2019, 11:30 am

The artist Anne Pöhlmann and the curator Dr Khanh Trinh will be available to answer questions.

The exhibitions will be accompanied by a small publication.
Individual tours prior to the opening are possible on request.

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Opening hours: daily from 10 am to 6 pm

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