

Beyeler Collection/ Remix

ROOM GUIDE
FONDATION **BEYELER**



BEYELER COLLECTION / REMIX
10 June – 3 September 2017
With works by Andy Warhol from
the Daros Collection

CAUTION: PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH THE ART WORKS!



1–20

***Where this symbol appears on the exhibit labels,
you will find the work discussed in detail under the
corresponding number in the guide.***

***Some of the works described below are not on display
throughout the entire duration of the exhibition.***

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, these examples of classic modernism and contemporary art, assembled with meticulous care from the 1950s onwards by dealers and collectors Ernst and Hildy Beyeler, were given a home in the new museum building, designed by Renzo Piano, in Riehen/Basel. Here they remain on permanent public display, in varying presentations, together with works subsequently donated by the founders. The collection of the Fondation Beyeler is constantly extended with carefully chosen purchases, donations, partnerships and long-term loans.

“*Remix*”, the second exhibition devoted to the Beyeler collection as a whole, provides an overview of its current activities and holdings. New acquisitions in recent years have augmented the previous collection with an additional focus on contemporary developments. Facilitating a dialogue between newly acquired works and the existing collection is a major criterion in decisions on purchases and the acceptance of loans. “*Remix*” seeks to provide a varied platform for this dialogue.

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the Daros Collection, the partnership between Daros and the Fondation Beyeler is celebrated with a presentation of outstanding works by Andy Warhol from the Daros Collection.

The exhibition is curated by Theodora Vischer, Senior Curator of the Fondation Beyeler.

Tino Sehgal

22 May – 12 November 2017

Parallel with “*Beyeler Collection / Remix*”, a succession of six specially created works by Tino Sehgal is presented in the park and in individual rooms of the museum.

1 • Jean Dubuffet***The Lost Traveller*, 1950**

The French artist Jean Dubuffet favoured art that was raw and untamed—art that had never been seen in a museum: graffiti, cartoon-like portraits, traces in the sand, tangled beards, archaic female nudes, etc.

In *The Lost Traveller*, the artist no longer depicts a landscape: the material of the picture is a landscape. Just as children draw streets, houses, mountains, people and animals in the sand, Dubuffet scratches and scores the outlines of his uncanny pictorial world directly into the thick impasto. “Art should be born from the material,” the painter wrote, “every material has its language, is a language. There is no need to give it a language or to make it serve a language.”

In the work shown here, the central figure appears to stand both in front *of* and *inside* the landscape. The “lost traveller” pauses to look out of the picture, as if seeking to make contact with us and inviting us to join him along his winding path of exploration through the wholly unknown terrain (of art).

2 • Georg Baselitz***Different Signs*, 1965**

“I was born into a destroyed order, a destroyed landscape, a destroyed people, a destroyed society. And I didn’t want to introduce a new order: I had seen enough of so-called order. I was forced to question everything, to be ‘naïve’, to start again.”

In 1965 and 1966, twenty years after the end of World War II, Georg Baselitz (born in 1938 in Deutschbaselitz, Saxony) created the series *Heroes* or *New Types*. These figures represent, in metaphorical terms, a blueprint for a human type that lacks a nationality or a sense of belonging, and whose broken, ragged appearance leads the megalomaniac lust for power of the Third Reich and the later socialist Utopias of East Germany ad absurdum. The *Heroes* typically appear alone in a barren landscape: genitals exposed, arms and legs naked, and hands opened in a beckoning gesture. Their attributes, such as the palette and brush of the protagonist in this work, are derived from the artist’s own biography.

3 • Franz West***On the Landing Stage*, 2012**

The Austrian artist Franz West (1947–2012) rose to prominence with his three-dimensional objects located between practical items and sculpture. Using the artistic tools of defamiliarisation and irony, he created chair and table-like pieces of furniture, as well amorphous forms, made of plaster, papier mâché and metal, that are reminiscent of artificial limbs.

On the Landing Stage calls to mind a table in an artist's studio, with three cans of paint lined up ready for use. The cans have expelled their contents in an explosive fashion and the airy, colourful papier mâché shapes have solidified into sculptures. In a state of suspense, as it were, between expanding and collapsing, the three objects have to prop themselves up on short sticks. The table, too, stands on crooked, unsteady legs. At first sight, the sculpture seems crudely fashioned and spontaneously put together. Upon closer inspection, however, it radiates both vulnerability and dignity with its cracked surfaces and colourful palette.

ROOM 2

This room features works by three female artists whose methods differ widely, but whose art shows the same degree of concentration and intensity in its confrontation with human existence, identity, history and vulnerability.

4 • Marlene Dumas

Nuclear Family, 2013

The large-format painting by the artist Marlene Dumas, who lives in Amsterdam, shows a Dutch couple with their two children. The adults are naked; the children are standing in their underwear. This was Dumas' first excursion into the family portrait, a genre that notably flourished in seventeenth-century Dutch painting. She translates the pictures of this period, shaped by the prevailing conceptions of society, into the terms of her own day and subjects them—in a process that typifies her oeuvre as a whole—to a complete reinterpretation. In *Nuclear Family*, she confronts the modern image of the traditional family with our own perception. Dumas always paints from photographs or artistic source material. The basis for this work was a photograph of a family in her circle of acquaintances.

5 • Louise Bourgeois*Lair*, 1962

In the 1960s, after a ten-year period of almost complete withdrawal from the art world, Louise Bourgeois began to work on the “Lairs”, a series of sculptures mounted on pedestals or hung from the ceiling. This spiralling tower of plaster is part of the same series; its organic structure lends it the appearance of a fossil or an ancient architectural form. With its porous surface, the work overtly distances itself from minimalism, the school that dominated the art of the early 1960s, and its closed materiality.

Bourgeois’ work takes its inspiration from personal sources, especially from childhood memories, as she has said in interviews. Widely differing themes and motifs such as anxiety, imprisonment and entrapment, caves and places of refuge, and the urge for security, play a role in her art. In the work seen here, these aspects find a remarkably delicate form of expression that is characteristic of Bourgeois’ oeuvre.

6 • Jenny Holzer

Living Series: It takes a while before you can..., 1989

Jenny Holzer's white granite bench is engraved with an aphorism from the collection of statements gathered by the American artist under the title *Living*:

IT TAKES A WHILE BEFORE YOU CAN STEP OVER INERT BODIES AND GO AHEAD WITH WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO DO

Holzer's written messages are found on posters and signs, in LED displays, on TV and the internet, or on sarcophagus-like blocks of stone. They refer, with an undertone shaped by a critique of the media, to everyday life and current political events, to power structures, war, and personal relationships.

Originally, Holzer printed the *Living* statements on bronze and aluminium panels, which were shown at her first exhibition, held at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York in 1982. The music broadcaster MTV presented parts of the series in 1988; the following year, Holzer created twenty-seven stone benches engraved with *Living* messages for a major retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 2009, the Fondation Beyeler devoted an individual exhibition to Holzer's work.

7 • Pablo Picasso*Head of a Woman*, 1939*Bust of Woman with Hat (Dora)*, 1939

Pablo Picasso continually referred to other pictorial traditions, which he reinterpreted in his own work. In his hands, the classic genre of individual portraiture became a central means of artistic innovation, revising established standards of beauty and appropriateness. Bodies and heads are fragmented, deformed and then reassembled—as in the case of these two female busts, whose faces appear literally split. Both women stare at us with wide-open, lozenge-shaped eyes; the mouths are open under the left eye, while the nostrils are sited on the other side of the face. The mask-like heads are crowned, in each case by a simple hat that appears as if fashioned by a child. Yet the faces are endowed with a certain softness by the wonderful sweep of the thick hair, falling to the shoulder and then turning back with a coquettish flick at the ends.

ROOM 4

The works by Andy Warhol shown in this room are loans from the Daros Collection, Zürich; only the paintings *Self-Portrait* (1967) and *Flowers* (1965) are from the Beyeler Collection.

8 • Andy Warhol

Do It Yourself (Flowers), 1962

The wonderfully ironic *Do It Yourself (Flowers)*, which hangs near the window looking onto the park, dates from the early 1960s. The picture is only half-finished. Yet the daffodils give us an idea of how the meadow would look when completed. The work is based on a paint-by-numbers kit, like those typically sold in handicraft shops. “Do it yourself”—yes, but in strict accordance with the instructions in the box. The Letraset numbers show which fields are to be painted in which colours. Warhol uses painting by numbers as a metaphor for the entire process of making pictures. Who will tell me what to paint and how to do it? The *Do It Yourself* works also represent an attempt to banish the artist’s hand from the picture. Can a painting be made to look as though it has been created mechanically?

9 • Andy Warhol***Suicide (Silver Jumping Man)*, 1963**

Between 1962 and 1965, Andy Warhol created a set of silk-screen prints—known as the *Death and Disaster* series—which mainly show car accidents and suicides. In *Suicide (Silver Jumping Man)*, Warhol uses various techniques to represent a sequence of events unfolding over time. A single found photograph is repeated five times, juxtaposing and overlaying the images in such a way as to suggest that there is a time lag between them. The figures appear to be moving. Our gaze follows the suicide victim plummeting to the ground in free fall. In the image at the bottom of the picture, the body is no longer visible: we can only guess at where it is.

The reproduction quality deteriorates as the sequence progresses, and at the end, the printing seems to have ground to a halt. The missing conclusion provokes the thought that not only the man falling to his death, but also the medium, the image, is extinguished.

10 • Gerhard Richter
Double Grey, 2014

Gerhard Richter has been exploring the variegated medial properties of picture, mirror, and glass pane for several decades. In *Double Grey*, made in 2014, he brings together the specific qualities of monochrome paintings and reflective surfaces, and thereby thematises the picture as a space of illusion in a new way. The grey initially evokes a kind of blank space, the absence of pictorial representation: “To me, grey is the welcome and only possible equivalent for indifference, non-commitment, absence of opinion, absence of shape.” These monochrome spaces are repeatedly filled, however, by their incorporation of the viewer and fragments of the surrounding space as reflections within them. The presence of the beholder in the pictures prevents them from being perceived as static objects. In *Double Grey*, Richter subtly illustrates the relationship between picture, space and viewer.

11 • Robert Rauschenberg***Windward*, 1963**

Robert Rauschenberg's silkscreen prints, realised in the short period between 1962 and 1964, are now among his most famous works. The artist began by combining pictures and details from various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, art books, and his own photographs. He then overpainted selected parts of the picture at breathtaking speed, uniting the gestural painting of Abstract Expressionism with a Warholian Pop Art aesthetic.

In *Windward*, central symbols and facets of American culture—such as the Statue of Liberty, the emblematic Bald Eagle, façades of historic New York buildings, and skyscrapers under construction—are surprisingly contrasted with images of the Papal election in the Sistine Chapel and photographs of banal orange crates. With a high degree of sophistication, the artist establishes a multilayered and richly associative dialogue between differing visual worlds.

12 • Jordan Wolfson***Untitled*, 2015*****Untitled*, 2015**

Jordan Wolfson, born in 1980 in New York, is the youngest of the artists represented in the Beyeler Collection. His works, which he describes as exercises in “digital painting”, are wall-mounted objects combining image and text in several layers. The images are created by the artist himself, or found via the internet and social media channels. The provocative texts are stickers, designed by Wolfson, which resemble the bumper stickers commonly fixed to American cars. In conversation, the artist has described how his work responds to the plethora of visual impressions in American everyday culture, processing these stimuli intuitively and impartially. His aim, taking personal perceptions and emotional reactions as his starting point, is to elicit a direct and unexpected response from the visitor in the exhibition space.

13 • Wilhelm Sasnal
Ten Paintings

Assembled in this room are ten oil paintings by Wilhelm Sasnal, dating from 2004 to 2015. They provide a general insight into the extensive oeuvre of the Polish painter, who was born in 1972. In many of his pictures, Sasnal processes material found in everyday life, taking his inspiration from sources that range from a sketch of a casual observation or a family photograph, to films, comics and press photographs. The paintings with personal motifs—such as the portraits of Sasnal’s wife Anka and son Kacper (both from 2012)—are complemented by other works that refer to current political events, and also to Polish history, especially during and since the Second World War. For example, *Partisans* (2005) shows the hollow-cheeked faces of those who fought against Nazism in the resistance movement, which held a central significance in the post-war era. The juxtaposition of images from differing fields continually generates new connections between the private, the public, the cultural and the political.

14 • Ellsworth Kelly***Blue Black Red Green*, 2000**

The painter Ellsworth Kelly moved beyond the idea of the rectangular canvas to compose pictures that consist of irregular coloured shapes. Lacking narrative content, these works are not abstractions or reductions of an object or an idea. Instead, they are formal events in their own right, detaching themselves from the wall on which they are mounted. Form, colour and contrast are the basic, but always variable, elements in the act of shaping.

Blue Black Red Green consists of four coloured shapes arranged in such a way that they appear to be dancing or turning around their own axis, although the centre of the shapes remains indeterminate. The forms attract and repel one another by turns, but nevertheless manage to maintain their balance. The size and shape of the sharp-edged areas of colour seem to vary with the viewing angle; the white wall is incorporated as ground, counter-form and intermediate space, into the action of the work itself. Kelly's *Blue Black Red Green* cannot be grasped at a single glance: the viewer has to walk along the entire length of the painting.

15 • Auguste Rodin

Iris, Messenger of the Gods (Flying Figure), 1890/91

Constantin Brancusi

The Bird, 1923/1947

The Beyeler Collection contains two sculptures of figures in flight: Auguste Rodin's *Iris, messagère des dieux (Figure volante)* and Constantin Brancusi's *L'oiseau*. Rodin's divine messenger seems to defy gravity, balancing her entire weight on the tip of her left foot—almost like a dancer. The fragmentary representation of the figure is a deliberate device to focus the viewer's attention on her body, which is imbued with an extraordinary tension, almost pulsating with life under the bronze skin. *Iris* is one of Rodin's most provocative and enigmatic sculptures.

In contrast to Rodin's flying figure, Brancusi's bird sculpture has a positively sleek surface. On either side of the greyish-blue marble, we see fine white veins, giving the appearance of wings, which lends softness and lightness to the hard stone. Brancusi's intention was not to depict the bird as such, but to convey the idea of flight, which he repeatedly sought to visualise. His first bird sculptures date from around 1910, and he continued to work on the motif until the 1940s. In his own words: "I have been searching all my life for only one thing: the essence of flight ... Flight, what happiness!"

In a letter of 1897, Auguste Rodin emphasised the extent to which his own work was indebted to that of his friend Claude Monet: “I still have the same admiration for the artist who helped me to understand light, clouds, the sea ...”

16 • Claude Monet

***Water Lilies*, 1916–1919**

From 1899 onwards, the water-lily pond that graced his garden in Giverny became Monet’s favourite motif. The garden’s layout was inspired by Japanese woodblock prints, which the artist collected at the time. A gardener arranged the water lilies every day in a predetermined pattern. One such arrangement is shown in this painting. Yet the view is unsettling—are only the plants depicted, or their reflections in the water as well? Rapid brushstrokes merge to form water lilies, algae, reeds and leaves. There is no horizon and no division between earth and sky. The visible section of the scene, in which only a few dangling branches hint at the surrounding vegetation, is so indeterminate that we are encouraged to complete the details in our own imagination.

17 • Roni Horn***Opposites of White*, 2006/07**

The art of Roni Horn reflects the mutability of people, places and things, whose form and natural state are subject to change. Her aim is to give tangible shape to such transformations, enabling the viewer to experience them in sensual terms. This is particularly apparent in the group of cylindrical glass objects that includes *Opposites of White*. The sides of the white and black glass elements are matte and rough, but the slightly sunken upper surfaces are mirror-smooth. The effect is as if the massive cylinders were filled with a clear liquid. Under favourable lighting conditions, the works become suffused with an inner glow, in a way that counters the extreme heaviness of the glass forms.

18 • Ferdinand Hodler***Lake Thun and the Stockhorn Mountains in Winter*,
c. 1913**

Roni Horn's glass sculptures are complemented by Ferdinand Hodler's painting *Lake Thun and the Stockhorn Mountains in Winter*. The colours of the atmospheric landscape vividly convey the sensations of winter and cold. The snow-covered mountain peaks are reflected in the blue water, whose surface is choppy yet static. The shoreline divides the picture into two clearly demarcated sections—the one naturalistic and the other almost abstract—whose effects are mutually enhancing.

19 • Felix Gonzalez-Torres*Untitled (For New York)*, 1992**Richard Serra***Cheever*, 2009

Despite their obvious differences, both of these works fascinate the viewer by their particular material presence. *Untitled (For New York)* by the Cuban-American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, strings together ordinary industrial light bulbs in a way that recalls a garden party, a dance floor or a festive occasion. At the same time, however, the work embodies a strange melancholy. The bulbs have a limited life: they burn out and are replaced in a continuous cycle that can be seen as a metaphor of death and renewal. With his installations, Gonzalez-Torres formulated an artistic response to a range of social and cultural themes connected with 1990s identity politics, the struggle for gay rights and recognition, and the AIDS crisis that raged through the USA.

Richard Serra is known above all for his monumental steel sculptures. With the large-format drawing *Cheever*, a tribute to the American writer John Cheever (1912–82), Serra redefined the limits of a different genre by melting down paint sticks and pouring the molten mixture of carbon black pigments, combined with oil and wax, into a round wooden form on a sheet of hand-made paper. He then placed a cloth over the mixture and pressed it down on the paper surface. The material makes the drawing exceptionally heavy and gives it a powerful physical presence.

20 • Max Ernst

Birth of a Galaxy, 1969

Lucio Fontana

Concetto spaziale, natura, 1959/60

In his late work, Max Ernst concerned himself intensively with the four elements—air, water, fire and earth—and with cosmic themes. He shows planets and stars, or entire galaxies, in their growth and decline. The infinity of the universe provides the starting point for his imagination, at a time when the conquest and scientific exploration of space was in fact under way. In 1969, the year of the first manned Moon landing, Ernst created *Birth of a Galaxy*, which shows a new system of glittering stars arising from the surrounding blue universe. The golden celestial bodies form a perfect pattern, shaped like a perforated disc—a motif frequently employed by the artist to symbolise the origin of the universe.

Lucio Fontana also endeavoured in his work to translate the experience of space, as a newly conquered dimension, into artistic terms. In the 1950s, he began to use the generic title *Concetto spaziale* (“spatial concept” or “concept of space”) for his sliced and perforated canvases, later extending it to his sculptures of the 1960s. Through the violent cutting and puncturing of the material, the works move beyond traditional notions of painting and overcome the boundaries of habitual perception.

GUIDED TOURS

Guided public tours through the exhibition (in German)

Beyeler Collection / Remix

Sundays, 14.00 to 15.00

2 July

6 August

3 September

Tickets are available at the cash desk.

Cost: general admission + CHF 7.00 surcharge

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