

Exhibitions 2015 / 2016

An Artist Couple of Contrasts

Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation

23.10.2015 – 21.02.2016

Art of a Border Crosser

Ricco Wassmer (1915-1972). Commemorating His Centenary Birthday

27.11.2015 – 13.03.2016

Exhibitions 2016

Chinese Contemporary Art

Chinese Whispers. Recent art of the Sigg and M+ Sigg Collections

An Exhibition organized by Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee in dialogue with M+, West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong and Dr. Uli Sigg

19.02 - 19.06.2016, Opening: Thursday, 18.02.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 17.02.2016

Modern Masters. "Degenerate" Art at the Museum of Fine Arts Berne

07.04.2016 - 21.08.2016, Opening: Wednesday, 06.04.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 06.04.2016

Contemporary Mexican art

Without Restraint. Works by Mexican Women Artists from the Daros Latinamerica Collection

03.06. - 23.10.2016, Opening: Thursday, 02.06.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 01.06.2016

Bern's Lost Altar. Niklaus Manuel and the Panels of Dominican Church in Bern

17.08.2016 – 30.04.2017, Opening: Tuesday, 16.08.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Monday, 15.08.2016

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“What Remains”. The World of Cesare Lucchini

23.09.2016 - 08.01.2017, Opening: Thursday, 22.09.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 21.09.2016

LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections

12.11. - 26.03.2017, Opening: Thursday, 11.11.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 10.11.2016

Ted Scapa. The artist

18.11.2016 - 19.02.2017, Opening: Thursday, 17.11.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 16.11.2016

**Presentations with Works from the Kunstmuseum Bern
Collection**

Window on Contemporary Art

Kunstmuseum Bern @ PROGR: Changing Presentations

Jan. 2016 - Dec. 2016

Credit Suisse Förderpreis Videokunst 2016 (Credit Swiss video art incentive award)

Feb. 26 - March 26, 2016, Opening: Thursday, Feb. 25, 2016, 6:00 p.m.

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Chinese Contemporary Art

Chinese Whispers. Recent art of the Sigg and M+ Sigg Collections

An Exhibition organized by Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee in dialogue with M+, West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong and Dr. Uli Sigg

19.02 - 19.06.2016

Opening: Thursday, 18.02.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: 17.02.2016

The exhibition *Chinese Whispers* of works from the Uli Sigg Collection offers an in-depth view of art production in China over the last 15 years and the opportunity of exploring the country from the angle of artists ranging from Ai Weiwei through to Zhuang Hui. It picks up the thread of the *Mahjong* exhibition, which Bernhard Fibicher and Ai Weiwei curated at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, in 2005 and received international renown as the first large-scale show of Chinese contemporary art to be presented in the West.

The title *Chinese Whispers* refers to the children's game bearing the name. In it the players pass on messages that become distorted as they are whispered from person to person. This idea of transmission, exchange, misunderstanding, and distortion underlies the exhibition too. Thus it illustrates the impact of contemporary art in the West on that of China on the one hand, while, on the other, it reflects on living conditions in present-day China and on approaches to indigenous traditions. The exhibition additionally scrutinizes Western views of China, the largest single cultural region in the world, which is increasingly also asserting itself as the greatest global economic power. And, while it comes more and more within our reach, remains a mystery to us due to its cultural, historical, and political otherness.

The exhibition gives a palpable impression of how Chinese artists explore positions lying between those of the West and the East, between progress and tradition. Artists in China confidently strive to unite these opposing poles and secure their own identity within the global art market. At the same time, their art poignantly articulates the impact of the drastic changes in China's urban spaces, the nation's use of resources, and supplies a documentation of recent history, criticizes the political system, or gives a voice to emotional introspection.

Uli Sigg—an economics writer, entrepreneur, Swiss ambassador to China (1995 through 1998), and art collector—became interested in Chinese contemporary art in the late 1970s, resulting in his being the first person to systematically accrue art of this kind. His collection of over 2,200 works by some 350 artists is considered to be the most comprehensive of Chinese contemporary art in the world. From the very beginning, it was Uli Sigg's ambition to return this unique aggregation of artworks to the land of its origins. He discovered the ideal home for it in the newly founded M+ museum for visual culture in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District and donated a large part of his collection to this institution in 2012. The M+ museum building, designed by the Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron, will be opened in 2019.

An exhibition organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, and the Paul Klee Center in dialogue with M+, West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong, and Dr. Uli Sigg. The exhibition will be on show in the spring of 2017 at MAK—Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art—in Vienna.

Curator: Dr. Kathleen Bühler

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Modern Masters. "Degenerate" Art at the Museum of Fine Arts Berne

07.04.2016 - 21.08.2016

Opening: Wednesday, 06.04.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 06.04.2016

As is the case with all public collections, the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, regards the study and presentation of the history of its holdings as a vital goal. In this exhibition we seek to show the public what makes up our internationally outstanding collection of modern masters at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, and how their works came to be part of it as art that the Nazi dictatorship officially considered undesirable in the German Reich. At the same time, this angle on our collection provides a backdrop for asking questions about the circumstances that ultimately led to great losses regarding cultural legacy for German museums and private collectors too. Some of these works also found their way to the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.

An incentive for the choice of title for the exhibition was the historically momentous and well-researched auction that took place in June 1939 at Fischer Gallery in Lucerne: "Gemälde und Plastiken moderner Meister aus deutschen Museen" (Paintings and sculptures of modern masters from German museums). Since 1938, a law was in force in the German Reich allowing the seizure of art deemed degenerate. It retrospectively legitimated the confiscation and decimation of much of the modern masters collections in German museums, as was ruthlessly carried out from 1937 onwards. What was vilified and rejected in the German Reich as "degenerate art" was designated as "works of modern masters" in Switzerland and offered for sale. To make it clear: there is no such thing as "degenerate art." The term was coined by the Nazis in their censorship of modernist trends in art. In citing the term in the exhibition title, the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, is, of course, referring to its historical usage. In the eyes of the museum there can be no question of the existence of a "degenerate art" and never was; it has always, since its very beginnings, actively engaged with contemporary art and its manifestations in the respective epochs. Although the term has this pernicious background, in the discussion we seek to initiate it sums up all the irrational arguments directed at modern art. We are not embracing this line of argumentation as our own, and instead it is our goal, through it, to illustrate the struggle for acceptance of modern art, of the works which are today among the Berne's Museum of Fine Arts' greatest treasures.

Curator: Dr. Daniel Spanke

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Contemporary Mexican art

Without Restraint. Works by Mexican Women Artists from the Daros Latinamerica Collection

03.06. - 23.10.2016

Opening: Thursday, 02.06.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 01.06.2016

Without Restraint presents together for the first time contemporary Mexican art by women from the Daros Latinamerica Collection (Zurich), Europe's largest and most important collection of its kind. More than 30 works, including photographs, videos, objects, and installations by the following internationally acclaimed women artists are exhibited: Teresa Serrano (*1936), Ximena Cuevas (*1963), Betsabeé Romero (*1963), Teresa Margolles (*1963), Claudia Fernández (*1965), Melanie Smith (*1965), and Maruch Sántiz Gómez (*1975).

These multifaceted and thought-provoking works provide an overview of the most characteristic features of the Mexican contemporary art scene and of its development in recent decades. At the same time, the exhibition offers the opportunity to critically reflect upon and contextualize women artists' production in contemporary Mexico. The works of these seven artists engage with the concept of *mexicanidad*—of national identity—and challenge the traditional roles and social spaces assigned to women and to minorities by the dominant hierarchies of power. By using different medias, these artists overthrow the existing order of everyday life and routine which traps women in a labyrinth of traditional archetypes. Topics such as life and death, the violated body, identity and migration, nature and the metropolis are critically examined and discussed in their works.

This exhibition in Bern coincides with the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relation between Mexico and Switzerland and is realized under the patronage of the Mexican Embassy to Switzerland. It is made possible in part by the artEdu Foundation, the Prof. Otto Beisheim-Stiftung, and by private and anonymous donors. The Zurich Insurance Company Ltd. is generously supporting this exhibition.

Curator: Dr Valentina Locatelli (Kunstmuseum Bern).

Accompanying Programm: Films with Mexican women in front of and behind the camera will be screened at Kino Rex. A rich programme of artists' talks and thematic guided tours will be held.

Catalogue: An illustrated catalogue with texts and interviews will be published by Hatje Cantz (German / English).

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Bern's Lost Altar. Niklaus Manuel and the Panels of Dominican Church in Bern

17.08.2016 – 30.04.2017

Opening: Tuesday, 16.08.2016, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Monday, 15.08.2016

The Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, and what today is called the Französische Kirche (French church) share a special bond. Not only did the church's presbytery house the first Museum of the Fine Arts Berne from 1849, before the latter institution acquired a building of its own. Also three panels of Bern's leading artist of early modern times, Niklaus Manuel, alias Deutsch, are part of the Berne's Museum of Fine Arts Collection. We presume that these panels, together with two further ones at the Kunsthaus Zürich and the Kunstmuseum Basel, belonged to the high altar of this former Dominican church. The circumstances that enabled the survival of a larger part of the altarpiece panels in their present state at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, are very closely linked to Berne's history in early modern times and one of the most dramatic cultural upheavals to affect Europe.

Research today acknowledges that the three panels were formerly part of an altarpiece. The fact that a relationship between the panels was ever the subject of academic debate, however, is a result of the fate of this set of paintings on which the exhibition is focusing. The process of a loss of correlation between individual panels is not a matter of course and is instead tied to a fundamental reassignment of the paintings. The exhibition zeroes in on precisely this process of redefining pictures, the metamorphosis of altarpiece panels into individual works of art.

Manuel's panels at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, were originally not considered individual artworks but parts of a kind of "sacred piece of furniture" that fulfilled specific functions in Christian practice and worship. If we dare to believe that a reconstruction of the high altarpiece of Berne's former Dominican Church was possible, at the very least one of the outer panels together with the complete centerpiece of carved figures have been lost. The rest has been passed down to us in a more or less fragmentary state. The painted panels that have survived did so not as visual instruments serving Catholic religious practices but as works of art by Niklaus Manuel. This mode of interpretation secured their existence as objects of European material culture. The panels were detached from the altarpiece structure, which is now lost, and individually framed, sold, and preserved. As a leading masterpiece of Bernese art from around 1500 and by the city's leading artist, the panels were purchased for the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, by the Gottfried Keller Foundation and Berne's Burgergemeinde.

Curator: Dr. Daniel Spanke

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"What Remains". The World of Cesare Lucchini

23.09.2016 - 08.01.2017

Opening: Thursday, 22.09.2016

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 21.09.2016

The Ticinese artist Cesare Lucchini (born 1941) studied in the mid-1960s at the Accademia di Brera in Milan, where he lived and worked until 1988. Subsequently he lived for many years in Düsseldorf and Cologne, and today lives and works in Lugarno. For decades, galleries specializing in contemporary art represent this artist in Switzerland and internationally, serving as agents in the procurement of artworks for private collections and museums, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, is among them. Two exhibitions that took place in public institutions, at Casa Rusca in Locarno in 1992 and at Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz in 2008, have provided insights into this artist's extensive oeuvre, much of which, however, has remained hidden to the public eye. For the exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, and Ulm Museum, the artist's entire oeuvre will be reviewed and its place and relevance in international painting over the latter half of the 20th century determined.

Cesare Lucchini's contribution to abstract-expressionist art since the 1960s is acknowledged and respected internationally. His imaginative compositions gain their vitality from enigmatic signs and characters, from phantom-like manifestations, and color as a sensitive and emotional medium. At a practical level, Lucchini views painting as an experimental trial setup and a searching process. His confrontation with self and his personal investigation of reality find their concretization between the many layers of paint. He depicts a frangible, poetic world packed with fleeting visions and pressing issues.

The exhibition illustrates the development of Lucchini's oeuvre and is mounting various series of his works that date from the last two decades, bearing titles such as *Quasi una testa (Like a Head)*, *Qualcosa si muove (Something is Moving)* or, the most recent series, *Quello che rimane (What Remains)*, the latter inspiring the museum title. The exhibition discusses Lucchini's work in the context of existential art and, for this reason, integrates sculptures by Alberto Giacometti, Robert Müller, Hans Josephsohn, and others.

The second venue of the exhibition is Ulm Museum.

Publication: A catalogue will be published by the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, for the exhibition.

Curators: Dr. Matthias Frehner and Dr. Simon Oberholzer

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LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections

12.11.-26.03.2017

Opening: Thursday, 11.11.2016**Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release:** Wednesday, 10.11.2016

One of the most superb private collections in the world is opening up its chest of treasures to the public in a way never yet attempted in an exhibition in Switzerland. In a presentation planned on a grand scale, the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, is honing in on the collecting policy of the Princes of Liechtenstein and a centuries-old tradition. With the planned exhibition we are opening up a window on a rare and splendid world, one that isn't to be found otherwise in Switzerland, where there are no "royal collections," where rather cultural assets are distributed over various cantons and institutions, each pursuing their own collecting strategies. Hidden away in the collections of the Princes of Liechtenstein are masterpieces of European art of the most outstanding quality from a timespan of five centuries.

The Museum of Fine Arts will palpably illustrate the history of the collections, which goes back many centuries, engaging with the protagonists as well as their changing roles and offices—and no less with the various presentation venues and concepts that were followed therein. The show will address the various emphases placed by the respective princes in collecting and present this via a prescribed tour of the exhibition rooms, with each of them focusing on a specific topic. Among other major artworks, our visitors will find paintings by Peter Paul Rubens featuring mythological subjects, interior scenes by Adriaen von Ostade, landscapes by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, pieces addressing religious themes by Jacques Jordaens and Anthony van Dyck, portraits by Raphael and Tintoretto, hunting scenes by Johann Georg de Hamilton, as well as breathtaking tapestries and handcrafted treasures like small sculptures, porcelain, and weaponry. The presentation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, will spread over two levels of the museum's space and provide a representative cross-section of the grand troves of the Princes of Liechtenstein.

The exhibition concept enabled the various items of the collection to be fittingly displayed in special environments. In doing this, the curators concentrated not only on individual masterpieces and thus on celebrating breathtaking objects, but they also opened up a view on the collection in its totality, revealing the uniqueness of this family's legacy.

Curators: Matthias Frehner, Regula Berger, and Simon Oberholzer

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Ted Scapa. The artist

18.11.2016 – 19.02.2017

Opening: Thursday, 17.11.2016**Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release:** Wednesday, 16.11.2016

Ted Scapa, by birth Edouard Schaap, was born in 1931 in Amsterdam. After completing his art studies at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, he married Meret Meyer in 1962, the daughter of the publisher Hans Meyer-Benteli, and moved to Switzerland. Here he was director of the Benteli publishing house and became famous for his children's program *Das Spielhaus* (The playhouse) on Swiss television. His cartoon and children's books as well, as the caricatures he executed for domestic and international newspapers, such as the *Nebenspalter* or *Weltwoche*, brought his comic visual language widespread popularity and bore his unmistakable signature.

Ted Scapa's life and work presents an extensive universe that is alive with exuberant creativity. The exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, engages with Scapa's career as a fine artist, which has hitherto been obscured by his media presence as a TV moderator and cartoonist: it focuses on the paintings, sculptures, and design objects produced by the artist from 1992 onwards. Closely interlinked with his other occupations, he created a fine-art oeuvre that is characterized by wit and spontaneity, by vitality and playfulness. Scapa's art transformed the everyday into pictorial inventions packed with deeper meaning and a zest for life. He invented a narrative visual language that is remarkably simple and packs everyone directly as if by magic. Scapa's art and his person are definitely quite a phenomenon.

Catalogue: A catalogue will be published by the Museum of Fine Arts, Berne, for the exhibition.

Curators: Dr. Matthias Frehner

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Presentations with Works from the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection

The Contemporary Art Collection

Kunstmuseum@PROGR: Windows on the Present

The exhibition room Kunstmuseum Bern @ PROGR is a non-commercial space for contemporary art. At this venue, the Kunstmuseum Bern, in collaboration with the Stadtgalerie, annually mounts around six presentations with works from the museum's collection. Marina Abramovic, Raymond Pettibon, Stefan Burger, Denis Savary, Pascal Danz, and Lena Maria Thüring are among the artists exhibited there in the past.

Credit Suisse Förderpreis Videokunst 2016 (Credit Swiss video art incentive award)

Feb. 26 – March 26, 2016, Opening: Thursday, Feb. 25, 2016, 6:00 p.m.

The Credit Suisse Förderpreis Videokunst is now an established video art award and, for the fifth time, calling for entries, which it advertises at Swiss applied science universities. The national video-art competition targets students using the medium of video in an innovative way. In February 2016, a jury of well-known individuals will decide who wins the prize of 8,000.00 Swiss francs and a place in the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection.

The Kunstmuseum Bern and Credit Suisse initiated this award in 2011 as an incentive for talented young artists on the occasion of the 15-year partnership of the two institutions. The prize winner will be announced on February 25, 2016. Afterwards, the work of the prize winner will be on show until March 26 at our exhibition space and subsequently at Credit Suisse's head office in Bern on Museum Night 201.

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