

Muzeum Susch Announces Inaugural Exhibition: *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women*

A group exhibition, featuring work by over 30 international artists, spanning painting, sculpture, film and performance



Muzeum Susch, a new contemporary art institution founded by Grażyna Kulczyk, will open on 2nd January 2019, inaugurated by a major group exhibition. *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women* is the first in a programme of exhibitions that will run at Muzeum Susch throughout the year.

A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women is curated by Kasia Redzisz, Senior Curator, Tate Liverpool, and borrows its title from Siri Hustvedt's 2012 essay of the same name which analyses the perceptual bias that affects how an individual reads art and the wider world. The exhibition at Muzeum Susch weaves the narrative of artists who, regardless of gender, have been able to challenge not only social norms but also the limitations of art and its restrictive categories. Central to the artists and works represented is a commitment to experimentation and to pushing the boundaries of artistic practice.

The exhibition takes its point of departure from the significant emphasis on women artists at the core of the Grażyna Kulczyk collection. It sets out to explore the notion of the feminine and its diverse facets: social, political and cultural. Redzisz brings together work by over 30 international artists, featuring loans drawn from public institutions, artists' estates, and private collections, as well as pieces from the Grażyna Kulczyk collection.

The themes of the exhibition address several issues central to feminist theory, moving from conventions of female representation through sexual emancipation to the challenging and subversion of traditional gender roles. Curator, Kasia Redzisz says, "rather than reiterating established polemics, this exhibition seeks to offer a fresh perspective on the paradoxes of the feminine expressed through art". In the selection of works on display, the female gaze predominates; the body is a source of pleasure rather than an ideological battlefield; and motherhood and domesticity are marked not only by tenderness but also by anxiety.

Hannah Wilke's iconic performance, *Hannah Wilke Through the Large Glass* 1976, opens a discourse on the politics of representation and paves the way to works by prominent feminist artists such as Marlene Dumas, Sarah Lucas, Betty Tompkins and Joan Semmel, which challenge the traditional dominance of the male gaze.

The narrative embedded in the exhibition is frequently conveyed through bodily gestures and sensations, from Maria Lassnig's "body awareness" paintings to Lucio Fontana's violently slashed canvases. Fontana's works have often been associated with the power and authority of (the male) artistic gesture. Here, his *Concetto Spaziale* (Spatial Concept) 1968 is juxtaposed with ground-breaking textile sculpture by Magdalena Abakanowicz, prompting reflections on female symbolism and the male-dominated art historical canon.

Departing from feminist iconography, the exhibition also celebrates pioneering women artists who challenged artistic categories in search of new means of expression. Carla Accardi, Helena Almeida, Laura Grisi and Kiki Kogelnik all questioned the notion of painting, breaking away from the constraints of its classical definition. Their experimental approach is mirrored in the sculptural practice of Alina Szapocznikow and Maria Bartusová, whose sensual works speaking of the body and desire are also on display. Other aspects of the feminine; sexuality, motherhood, the sphere of domesticity are further explored through groupings of works by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Geta Brătescu, Nicole Eisenman, Carol Rama and Erna Rosenstein; all of whom uncompromisingly challenged cultural taboos and contested the constrictions of their chosen media.

Grażyna Kulczyk says, "I am delighted to inaugurate my new museum with this exciting exhibition showing work by some of the most pioneering women artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Tracing a matrilineage through art history is a mission central to my collection and a personal passion. Many of the artists shown in this exhibition have been underrepresented previously. Through the ongoing activities of Muzeum Susch and its disruptive outlook to the future we now have a great chance to bring works such as these to a wider audience and the recognition they deserve."

Featured artists:

(Further names may be included)

Magdalena Abakanowicz
Carla Accardi
Helena Almeida
Ida Appelbroog
Evelyne Axell
Miroslaw Balka
Maria Bartusová
Renate Bertlmann
Judith Bernstein
Louise Bourgeois
Geta Brătescu
Ellen Cantor
Dadamaino

Marlene Dumas
Nicole Eisenman
Wojciech Fangor
Lucio Fontana
Laura Grisi
Dorothy Iannone
Birgit Jürgenssen
Kiki Kogelnik
Maria Lassnig
Natalia LL
Sarah Lucas
Roman Ondak
Teresa Pağowska

Carol Rama
Erna Rosenstein
Iris von Roten
Carolee Schneemann
Sylvia Sleigh
Joan Semmel
Alina Szapocznikow
Betty Tompkins
Julie Verhoeven
Hannah Wilke
Andrzej Wróblewski