

Press release  
Zürich, 2 June 2009

### Kunsthaus Zürich shows Katharina Fritsch

**From 3 June to 30 August 2009, the Kunsthaus Zürich will host a retrospective devoted to the work of Katharina Fritsch, one of the most significant artists of our day. The show will also include new pieces by the artist. Famed for her large-scale sculptures, whose hypnotic effect the viewer experiences in the blink of an eye, Fritsch plays with humanity's primeval ideas, desires and fears. Her most recent art ventures into fresh artistic territory, including erotica as seen from the female point of view.**

Katharina Fritsch (born 1956) is among the most important artists working today. Her works – three-dimensional pictures only identifiable as sculptures on second glance – are energetic presences to be found in numerous public and private collections. With their succinct visual speech, works such as 'Warengestell mit Madonnen' (Display Stand with Madonnas), 1989, 'Tischgesellschaft' (Company at Table), 1988, and 'Elefant' (Elephant), 1987, firmly anchor themselves in the collective memory of the viewing public and are among the some 80 objects comprised by the retrospective at the Kunsthaus Zürich, where the artist has already been seen in the thematic exhibitions 'Hypermental' (2000) and 'Signs and Wonders' (1995), both of them, like the present show, curated by Bice Curiger.

#### INFLUENCES FROM MINIMAL ART TO POP CULTURE

From our vantage point in the present, we can make out an impressive coherence and profundity of subjects and motifs in Fritsch's oeuvre, a good thirty years in the making. Her pictures, sculptural 'apparitions' that nevertheless remain ineffable, take up space. The viewer grasps them immediately, and yet continues to wrestle with their latent meaning. Her process, which includes expunging any evidence of personality from her sculptural surfaces, meticulously calculating proportions and lending her more recent silk-screened pictures an immaterial cast, reveals Fritsch's debt to the severity of Minimal Art as well as her interest in artificial and cultural paradigms transcending the individual.

#### FROM COOK TO SMILING DOUBLE BED BY WAY OF GARDEN

The exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich is half composed of more recent and entirely new works, including large-format 'Raumbilder' (spatial images), which it presents as a precise interaction between sculptures and ethereally oversized silk-screens.

Visitors are greeted by a bright yellow cook bearing a bright yellow plate, on which are arrayed a bright yellow cutlet and similarly coloured potatoes and peas. The brilliant figure stands in front of a large image of a sinister-looking inn, the 'Schwarzwaldhaus'. The observers' very first encounter with the art of Katharina Fritsch, therefore, before they have even entered the exhibition proper, already stirs those contradictory feelings that are characteristic of so many of her works. While their eye is drawn by the realistic features of the cook, itself belied by his generic unreality, as well as by the seductively satin-black tones of the photograph, visitors are likely to ask themselves whether the museum is in fact an inn, and whether art is itself nothing more than a commodity, for all that it is ceremoniously presented to the 'consumer'. These first few seconds of consternation thus hold a mirror to the stereotypes of our own experience, and unite us all by rendering the slings and arrows of our fortune in an elementary iconography, one which schools us in the idiosyncratic rhetorical register, somewhere between dismal melancholy and subtle humour, that seems to hang over Fritsch's entire oeuvre.

A further prominent example is Fritsch's 'Frau mit Hund' (Woman with Dog), 2004, a large ensemble comprising a female figure composed of pink shells, 32 umbrellas floating on the ceiling, and magnified postcard views. The work conjures up the complex aura of a city like Paris, alludes to Rococo and to pop culture, and serenely evokes the difficult subject of simplicity. And while an older group of works by Fritsch constitutes a curious modern elegy to the subject of the 'garden', one of her most recent pieces invites the viewer into a 'meta-bedroom': in her 'smiling' double bed strewn with rose petals and adorned with male pinups, Fritsch ventures with subversive levity into a masculine preserve of art history.

### THE ARTIST

Katharina Fritsch was born in Essen in 1956. She studied general and art history in Münster before attending Fritz Schwegler's classes at the Art Academy of Düsseldorf, and showed her first sculptures in 1979. In the 1980s she frequently took her motifs from the world of commodities. Her international breakthrough came in 1984 at Düsseldorf's 'Von hier aus' (From Here On) exhibition. In 1988 she exhibited at the Kunsthalle Basel and in 1997 at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst. After representing Germany at the 1995 Venice Biennale she was the recipient of such major awards as the Aachen Prize for Art (1996) and the Piepenbrock Prize for Sculpture (2008).

Fritsch lives and works in Düsseldorf. In 2001 she was made a professor of sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts Münster, a post she holds to this day. That same year she was the subject of a major one-woman show at the Tate Modern in London, held in cooperation with Düsseldorf's K21.

### ARTIST IN CONVERSATION, AUDIOGUIDE, SUMMER WORKSHOP, CATALOGUE

The retrospective organized by the Kunsthaus Zürich is the first solo museum show devoted to Fritsch's work in Zurich, and the most comprehensive to date in Switzerland. It is accompanied by a catalogue (148 pages, Hatje Cantz Verlag, CHF 48.00 at the Museum Shop) with contributions by Bice Curiger, Robert Fleck, Suzanne Hudson and Milovan Farronato.

Visitors to the exhibition may take advantage of an audioguide, provided free of charge.

On Saturday, 6 June at 4 p.m., Katharina Fritsch will talk with art historians Laura Arici and Simon Baier as well as with the show's curator, Bice Curiger.

Public guided tours are available Sundays at 11 a.m. and Wednesdays at 6.30 p.m. (limited number of participants, CHF 4.00 not including admission). For private guided tours for up to 20 participants apply on +41 (0)44 253 84 06 (Mon-Fri 9 a.m.–12 noon), cost: CHF 175.00 not including admission.

Parallel to the exhibition a summer workshop is open to adults, families, children and young people, with special offers for school-classes. For information on all events please visit [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch).

Once it has concluded at the Kunsthaus, the show will move to Hamburg's Deichtorhallen (6 November 2009 to 31 January 2010).

Supported by Swiss Re – Partner for contemporary art.

### VISITOR INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich, [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch)

Open Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

Holidays: 1 August 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Admission including audioguide in English and German: CHF 18.00 / 12.00 concessions / 14.00 per head for groups of 20 or more.

Advance Sales: RailAway/SBB Kombi-Ticket, with reduction on travel and entrance to the museum. Available at local stations and by phoning Rail Service: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19 per min.), group rates possible. Magasins Fnac, tel. +33 1 4157 3212, [www.fnac.ch](http://www.fnac.ch).

For further information and visual material

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