

Press release
Zurich, 18 January 2018

Kunsthhaus Zürich presents 'Fashion Drive. Extreme Clothing in the Visual Arts'.

From 20 April to 15 July 2018, visitors to the Kunsthhaus Zürich can look forward to 'Fashion Drive. Extreme Clothing in the Visual Arts'. Two hundred exhibits – including everything from slashed clothing and codpieces to haute couture and street wear – testify the many ways artists have viewed, commented on and shaped the world of fashion through the centuries.

The exhibition spans art in multiple media from the Renaissance to the present day, with paintings, sculptures, installations, prints and watercolours, photographs, films, costumes and armour by some sixty artists.

ASTONISHING LOANS MAKING THEIR SWISS DEBUT

Curators Cathérine Hug and Christoph Becker have secured the loan of some truly eye-catching exhibits, including a set of Austrian folded skirt armour from around 1526 that has never before been seen in Switzerland. Works by the English School are also leaving their homeland for the first time; others, like the painting by Robert Peake depicting the 'Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Elizabeth I' (around 1600) in a lavishly embroidered silk dress, have only recently emerged from private collections.

A BALANCED, CRITICAL VIEW

The exhibition gives equal weight to male and female fashions, and includes a strong element of critique. Caricatures from the Lipperheidesche Kostümbibliothek costume library in Berlin take aim at the fashionistas and designers of the 19th century, while 'high art' comes under scrutiny too, as Jakob Lena Knebl (b. 1970) clothes sculptures by Maillol and Rodin that otherwise proudly display their nakedness. Artists and audiences know full well that there are two sides to fashion – or rather, the fashion business: inspiration, innovation and individual self-empowerment on the one, exclusion and profligacy on the other. The arrangement of works at the Kunsthhaus reflects these subtle distinctions.

RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE

The presentation opens with magnificent paintings from the 16th century. In the Renaissance, slashed clothing and codpieces were all the rage; indeed the appeal of ripped garments, which has its origins in that era, is still with us to this day. The subsequent Baroque period saw the ruff vie with the décolleté: in

contemporary portraits of introvert and extrovert personalities they represent enlightenment and the rejection of constraints imposed by religion and social status. Monarchs such as Elizabeth I and Louis XIV were among the first rulers to achieve global status, and they systematically employed their wardrobe to project and consolidate their power. They were imitated throughout Europe, including Switzerland.

ROCOCO AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The section on Rococo to the French Revolution shows how fashion and design blend into a hedonistic lifestyle from which others are excluded. The phenomenon of artists inspiring fashion is already in evidence here: the idiosyncratic pleat of the gown at the back of the shoulder is named after the painter Antoine Watteau! These innovations and extremes are strikingly illustrated in the paintings of Marie-Antoinette, the female 'Merveilleuses' ('Marvellous Ones') and their male counterparts, the 'Incroyables' ('Unbelievables').

FIRST EMPIRE AND CONGRESS OF VIENNA

The First Empire and the Congress of Vienna that ended it see a reversion to older values. Service uniforms appear alongside military in the art of the time. Influential salon ladies such as Juliette Récamier have their portraits painted, inspiring their circle not only to invest in new furniture but also to adopt a neoclassical appearance. Napoleon may have fallen, but Paris still dictates what is fashionable. At the same time, the exhibition sheds new light on the significance of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) to Europe's new order. For the first time, powerful rulers turn up accompanied by their wives. Negotiations are conducted, but even more energy is devoted to festivities, which require a wardrobe to match and create plentiful work for local producers. The forms and techniques of the tailor's art are present in everything from depictions of martyrs to the poses of victors.

PROGRESSION AND REGRESSION IN THE ERA OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

Visitors with a keen eye for nuances can try to spot the details in academic painting that distinguish the gentleman from the dandy. While such male types are considered modern, remarkably, ladies of the era revert to wearing the crinoline. Artists respond with a mixture of perplexity and amusement, readily visible in the paintings of Édouard Manet, Félix Vallotton, Contessa di Castiglione and, today, John Baldessari in which representation tips over into caricature.

FASHION SETS STANDARDS

Consequently, the liberation of the body at the start of the 20th century does not come as a surprise. Fashion is opened up to a wider audience as it becomes affordable and is sold in department stores. Progressive artists such as Gustav

Klimt and Emilie Flöge, Henry van de Velde and the Futurists Giacomo Balla and Filippo Marinetti all design clothes. Just as they tried to do with language, the Dadaists redefine the purpose of clothing. Man Ray and Erwin Blumenfeld narrow the gap between art photography and fashion photography, and Russian and French avant-gardists Natalia Goncharova and Sonia Delaunay respond with designs of their own. Ornament becomes fashionable and is woven or printed into both Art Nouveau imagery and clothing. Now the initially idealistic marriage of art and fashion has taken on a commercial dimension. Fashion designers and Pop Artists are linked by the cult of personality: both employ icons and use strident, bold symbols and slogans, as the works of James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol and Franz Gertsch testify. Youth cultures and subcultures become as inspirational for artists as they are for fashion designers. Fashion is now very much a material for artists.

BEYOND FASHION. A NEW REFLECTIVENESS

From haute couture via prêt-à-porter to fast fashion: the final section of the exhibition spans the arc to sustainability and post-human visions. Artificiality, the (de)construction of the body and a critique of the cult of brands are the hallmarks of 21st-century artistic production. Since Michelangelo Pistoletto, a young generation has been using installations, performances and videos to argue the case for ethically, ecologically and politically sustainable behaviour.

THE POINT OF IT ALL: FASHION AND WHAT IT MEANS

In this exhibition, the Kunsthaus Zürich sets out to synthesize and invite reflection on several centuries of art, fashion and social history and transform them into a sensual experience. Works from past eras are presented in surprisingly fresh ways, enabling visitors to rediscover their original meaning in a present-day context. Organized as part of the Festspiele Zürich, this attractive, humorous and instructive show is spread over 1000m² and is accompanied by a publication and events. A catwalk full of potholes!

ARTISTS FROM 1500 TO THE PRESENT DAY

With works by around sixty artists – some familiar, some previously undiscovered – the exhibition is a logistical tour de force. It includes pieces by Hans Asper, Charles Atlas and Leigh Bowery, Hugo Ball, Giacomo Balla, John Baldessari, Joseph Beuys, Erwin Blumenfeld, Giovanni Boldini, Pierre Bonnard, Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, Daniele Buetti, Paul Camenisch, Joos van Cleve, Contessa di Castiglione and Pierre-Louis Pierson, Isaac George Cruikshank, Salvador Dalí, Honoré Daumier, Albrecht Dürer, Nik Emch, Esther Eppstein, Max Ernst, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Sylvie Fleury, Emilie Flöge & Gustav Klimt, Heinrich Füssli, Franz Gertsch, James Gillray, Natalia Gontscharowa, Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, George Grosz, Richard Hamilton, Hannah Höch, Johann Nepomuk Höchle, Beat Huber, Jean Baptiste Isabey, Tobias Kaspar,

Franz Krüger, William Larkin, Tamara de Lempicka, Les Frères Lumière, K8 Hardy, Jakob Lena Knebl, Herlinde Koelbl, Jirí Kovanda and Eva Kotátková, Inez van Lamsweerde & Vinoodh Matadin, Peter Lindbergh, Nicolaes Maes, Édouard Manet, Manon, Malcom McLaren & Vivienne Westwood, Anna Muthesius, Meret Oppenheim, Robert Peake, Mai-Thu Perret, Suzanne Perrottet, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Charles Ray, Man Ray, Hyacinthe Rigaud, James Rosenquist, Tula Roy and Christoph Wirsing, Hans Ashley Scheirl, Michael E. Smith, Karl Stauffer-Bern, Elsa Schiaparelli, Wolfgang Tillmans, James Tissot, Félix Vallotton, Carle Vernet, Madeleine Vionnet, Édouard Vuillard, Andy Warhol, Jan Weenix, Mary Wigman, Charles Frederick Worth, Erwin Wurm and Andreas Züst. Loans come from public and private collections in Europe and from New York.

FROM PODIUM TO BALL TO SHELF: ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME AND PUBLICATION

'Let's Talk' with Viennese artist Jakob Lena Knebl in association with the Zurich University of the Arts: Tuesday 17 April, 5 p.m., Toni Areal.

'Fashion ball'. Party time for style icons and fashion gurus, queens and victims! Saturday 5 May from 8 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich.

'Fashion in literature', with Marlene Streeruwitz (writer, Vienna) in association with the Literaturhaus Zurich: Wednesday 6 June, 6.30 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich.

'Silk symposium'. Organized by the Festspiele Zürich: Sunday 10 June from 1 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich.

'Clothing in art: a tour d'horizon', guided tour with curator Cathérine Hug: Wednesday 13 June, 6.30 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich.

'Fashion and prohibition in the 17th and 18th centuries', a special guided tour with catalogue author Janine Jakob: Wednesday 20 June, 6.30 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich.

Details of this and other events, as public guided tours and workshops, will be available from March at www.kunsthaus.ch.

The catalogue 'Fashion Drive. Extreme Clothing in the Visual Arts' (published by Kerber, Bielefeld) will be available from the Kunsthaus shop when the exhibition opens. This new reference work comprises 300 pages with several hundred illustrations and contributions from Christoph Becker, Sonja Eismann, Nora Gomringer, Cathérine Hug, Janine Jakob, Elfriede Jelinek, Inessa Kouteinikova, Monika Kurzel, Peter McNeal, Aileen Ribeiro, Franz Schuh, Werner Telesko, Katharina Tietze, Barbara Vinken and Peter Zitzlsperger.

A co-production with the Festspiele Zürich.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthhaus.ch.

Fri-Sun/Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Public holiday opening see www.kunsthhaus.ch

Admission to the exhibition: CHF 23 / CHF 18 (concessions and groups).

Combination tickets including the collection and exhibition CHF 26 / CHF 19.

Admission free to visitors up to the age of 16.

Advance sales: SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by land line), www.sbb.ch/kunsthhaus-zuerich.

Zurich Tourism: hotel room reservations and ticket sales, Tourist Service at Zurich Main Railway Station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, information@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

CONTACT AND INVITATION TO EDITORS

The press conference with Cathérine Hug (curator) and Kunsthhaus Director Christoph Becker takes place at 11 a.m. on Thursday 19 April (doors open at 10.30 a.m.). Kindly register in advance for interviews, radio and TV recordings.

Visual materials are available at www.kunsthhaus.ch > Information > Press.

Contact: Kunsthhaus Zürich, Press and Public Relations, Kristin Steiner, kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch, tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 13