

WONDERFUL – Humboldt, Krokodil & Polke Die Olbricht Collection

Extended until 25 August 2013

me Collectors Room Berlin / Olbricht Foundation, Auguststrasse 68, 10117 Berlin
Opening hours: Tuesday–Sunday, 12 p.m.–6 p.m.



Wolfe von Lenkiewicz, Garden of Earthly Delights, 2012 © Courtesy All Visual Arts and the artist, photography Stephen White

The Wunderkammer has been a permanent part of me Collectors Room in Auguststrasse since the opening of the exhibition space in 2010 and is currently the only one of its kind in Berlin. With **'WONDERFUL – Humboldt, Krokodil & Polke'** the Wunderkammer presents **spectacular artworks that have been recently acquired**, along with several **contemporary works from the Olbricht Collection** that center on the theme of the Wunderkammer or historical 'cabinet of curiosities'.

Among the **new additions** is the 'Humboldt chalice' (dating from the period between 1648 and 1653), which was later owned by Alexander von Humboldt. The object is a rare example of a coconut, mounted and adorned with carvings of Brazilian cannibals; only four comparable objects are preserved in public collections today.

With the addition of one new room, the Wunderkammer will also introduce many other *exotica* that have not previously been on display, including preserved specimens of a Nile crocodile, some 470 cm in length, and a great blue turaco, both from the 19th century; Joachim Johann Nepomuk Spalowsky's *Beytrag zur Naturgeschichte der Vögel* from 1791-1792, in several volumes with excellent illustrations of birds; a ray-skin powder horn dating from the 17th century from the Ottoman Empire and even a turbo snail goblet set in a fire-gilded copper mount from ca. 1580. These artifacts evoke the spirit of discovery and exploration, curiosity and adventure—of new trade routes and trade relations, foreign cultures, exotic animals and plants—and not least the thirst for knowledge.

Wunderkammer or 'cabinets of curiosities' first evolved during the Renaissance to house collections of exquisite artworks (*artificialia*), rare objects from the natural world (*naturalia*), scientific

instruments (*scientifica*), objects from foreign lands (*exotica*), as well as the mysterious and unexplainable (*mirabilia*). Berlin also had its own art cabinet, which was founded by Prince-electoral Joachim II (reigned 1535-1571). However, the few surviving objects have since been dispersed throughout various museums. The Wunderkammer Olbricht at me Collectors Room has revived the old tradition of cabinets of art and curiosities in Berlin. It gives us a deeper insight into the past, and is still capable today of achieving exactly what it did 200-300 years ago: astonishing and captivating an audience.

Alongside to the traditional objects in the Wunderkammer, a selection of previously unshown **contemporary works from the Olbricht Collection** will also be on display in the two big exhibition halls. These works, many of which are recent acquisitions, revolve around the subject of the Wunderkammer and are themselves objects of wonder.

One such work is Wolfe von Lenkiewicz's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. At first glance the painting looks like a copy of the original by Hieronymus Bosch, but upon closer inspection the viewer recognizes that the garden is awash with art-historical and pop-cultural references and is populated by such figures as the painter Francis Bacon and Pokémon characters.

Also on show are works by:

Eva Aeppli, Bertozzi & Casoni, Guillaume Bijl, Domenico Bissoni, Reinhold Brendel, GL Brierley, Glenn Brown, Pieter Brueghel (the elder), Maurizio Cattelan, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Mat Collishaw, George Condo, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Thierry De Cordier, Elmgreen & Dragset, Albrecht Dürer, Adam Eck, Cerith Wyn Evans, Claire Fontaine, Philips Galle, Conrad Gesner, Laurent Grasso, Veit Grauppenberger, Paul Hazelton, Julie Heffernan, Carl Hinrich Hering, Georg Hornemann, John Isaacs, Abraham Jansz. van Diepenbeeck, Paul Jenkins, Terence Koh, Friedrich Kunath, David LaChapelle, Hans Leucker, Los Carpinteros, Liza Lou, Alastair Mackie, Esko Männikkö, Kris Martin, Charles Matton, Kate MccGwire, Ryan McGinness, Robert McNally, Jaroslaw Modzelewski, David Nicholson, Grayson Perry, Patricia Piccinini, Sigmar Polke, Ged Quinn, Antoine Roegiers, Mark Ryden, Gitte Schäfer, Andres Serrano, Simmons & Burke, Carolein Smit, Joachim Johann Nepomuk Spalowsky, Sebastian Stoskopff, Sam Taylor-Wood, Leopold Vogtner, Corinne von Lebusa, Wolfe von Lenkiewicz, Peter Anton von Verschaffelt, Richard Wathen, Ai Weiwei, Kehinde Wiley, Barry X Ball, et al.

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