

-PRESS RELEASE-

EXOTICA and 4 other cases of the self

17 September 2014 – 22 February 2015

me Collectors Room Berlin/Olbricht Foundation
Auguststraße 68, 10117 Berlin
Opening hours: Tue–Sun, 12–6 p.m.



As part of Berlin Art Week 2014, me Collectors Room/the Olbricht Foundation presents the exhibition 'EXOTICA and 4 other cases of the self', which explores questions of the self in the society, seen through the prism of contemporary works of art and historical Wunderkammer objects from the Olbricht Collection.

Wunderkammer artefacts dating from the Renaissance and Baroque were historically divided into five categories: 'exotica', precious artworks ('artificialia'), rare phenomena of nature ('naturalia'), scientific instruments ('scientifica'), and inexplicable items ('mirabilia') and reflected the collectors' desire to accumulate the entire knowledge of the world by representing it in miniature scale.

In 'EXOTICA and 4 other cases of the self' the individual is treated as a Wunderkammer of sorts and the latter's five traditional categories are applied to humans and redefined in the contemporary, becoming: 'instincts', 'mind', 'simulacra', 'oddities', and 'exotica'. From the wonders of the world to the wonders of the self – visitors are invited to further reflect on and question the way we relate to ourselves.

The exhibition combines artworks from different periods and in various media. Works by Eva Aeppli, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Erwin Wurm view the self in relationship to one's **instincts** and feelings, such as anger, fear, or sadness. The human thirst for knowledge and the drive to learn about the new are exemplified in scientific instruments and models taken from the Wunderkammer, as well as in Jan Fabre's *The Brain of a Messenger of Death*, all of which serve to illustrate the scientific exploration of the **mind**, the body, and the universe.

Several Wunderkammer objects cast light on human existence as a **simulacrum**, including, for example, a three-sided vanitas head, Philip-Lorca diCorcia's photographic work of a transsexual prostitute *Marilyn, 28 Years Old, Las Vegas, Nevada, \$30*, and a book by Jean-Paul Sartre,

illustrated by WOLS. Such works convey the impossibility of distinguishing in contemporary society between the original and copy, the model and replica, reality and imagination.

Matthew Barney's *CREMASTER 5: her Giant* and Cindy Sherman's *Untitled #302* conceive of the contemporary consciousness as a Wunderkammer of the mind, which simultaneously holds the **odd**, the unattainable, and the enigmatic. The conscious perception of this realm of the new and inexplicable gives rise to a sense of wonder of the self.

Marina Abramović, Juan Muñoz or Tony Oursler explore the theme of self-reflection on the ego as an **exoticum** in their works, in which they suggest that the most enigmatic and unfathomed thing known to humankind is itself, with much of our interiority left unexplored.

'EXOTICA and 4 other cases of the self' invites the visitor to reflect on the self in the contemporary and to newly understand, as Montaigne said, how 'to no longer care what the world tells one, but what one tells oneself'.¹

Featured artists: Marina Abramović, Eva Aeppli, Barry X Ball, Matthew Barney, Chuck Close, Graham Dolphin, Jan Fabre, Sylvie Fleury, Andreas Golder, Julie Heffernan, Krištof Kintera, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Terence Koh, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Juan Muñoz, Eadweard Muybridge, Tony Oursler, Gerhard Richter, Collier Schorr, Cindy Sherman, Helmut Stallaerts, Otto Steinert, Werner Rohde, Paloma Varga Weisz, WOLS, Erwin Wurm, and objects from the Wunderkammer.

Both the exhibition and the publication accompanying it are the product of a collaboration between the three curators Fanny Nina Borel, Myrto Katsimicha, and Elisabetta Rabajoli, as part of their Master's degree in 'Curating the Contemporary' at London Metropolitan University. The degree is led by Nico de Oliveira, with the Whitechapel Gallery and me Collectors Room/Olbricht Foundation as partners. This is the third time that the Foundation has invited young curators to develop their own ideas and perspectives on the Olbricht Collection, and to curate a show for me Collectors Room as part of their final-degree module.

A **companion publication** to 'EXOTICA and 4 other cases of the self' will be published through argobooks, priced €14.90.

In addition, me Collectors Room offers a range of **workshops** for young people with the three young curators of the exhibition (held in English), a **curator's tour** through the exhibition on Saturday, 20.09.2014 at 3 p.m. (exhibition and tour €7) and a **performance** with Faye Green, Emma Waltraud Howes, and Yurie Ido afterwards on 20.09.2014, 4 p.m. (free admission).

The curators are available for interviews and to discuss their show in person.

Press contacts:

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Marina Abramović *Self-portrait with Skull*, 2005, Courtesy Marina Abramović and Sean Kelly Gallery New York, Photo Paolo Canevari © Marina Abramović;
Muschelmann, German, 18th c. © Kunstkammer Georg Laue, Munich;
Jan Fabre, *The Brain of a Messenger of Death*, 2011, Courtesy Angelos Bvba, photo Pat Verbruggen;
Erwin Wurm, *man hiding in pullover* (59 positions), 2011, courtesy of Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman Innsbruck/Vienna, photo © Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman;
Matthew Barney, *CREMASTER 5: her Giant*, 1997, © Matthew Barney, Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels;
Terence Koh, *Boy by the Roman Sea*, 2010, courtesy of the artist, photo Valerio Brambilla;
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Kauern des Mädchen (Fränzi)*, 1910, photo Achim Kukulies, Düsseldorf

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¹ Michel de Montaigne, 'On Cannibals'.