

Media release
Basel, September 3, 2020

Isa Genzken Works from 1973 to 1983

September 5, 2020–January 24, 2021, Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart & Neubau
Curator: Søren Grammel

Isa Genzken (b. Bad Oldesloe, Germany, 1948) is one of the most important artists living today. The Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart mounts an exhibition dedicated to her outstanding early work, drawing attention to a period in her oeuvre that has never been the subject of a dedicated institutional presentation.

Genzken's output, which continues to inspire and challenge younger generations of artists, spans diverse disciplines such as sculpture, installation art, architecture, photography, film, and painting. Her works mix and match a wide range of media including wood, concrete, acrylic glass, metal, fabrics, and paper, often in combination with everyday objects from her own collection. Keen attention to the experiential qualities of urban architecture, openness to contemporary lifestyles, and enthusiasm for music are key sources of influence and inspiration in Genzken's art. The exhibition seeks to turn the spotlight on the outstanding early oeuvre the artist built in the first decade of her career.

Internationally acclaimed solo exhibitions have presented surveys of major tendencies in Genzken's oeuvre or showcased spectacular new productions. The presentation at the Kunstmuseum Basel, by contrast, focuses on a comprehensive examination of her output between 1973 and 1983. It was during this time that she created the *Ellipsoids* and *Hyperbolos*, series of singular sculptures based on subtle mathematical calculations that exude an aesthetic unburdened by the weight of subjectivity. An unprecedentedly large gathering of works from these series will be center stage in the Genzken exhibition.

A second emphasis in the presentation will be on the drawings, some in very large formats, and the computer printouts on continuous paper that played a vital role in the development of the *Ellipsoids* and *Hyperbolos* and are also of eminent artistic value in themselves. They illustrate Genzken's deft play with algorithmic figures and conceptual approaches. They will be complemented in the exhibition by drawings from extensive series whose line patterns first probed the elegantly curved horizontal shape that the artist subsequently translated into the abovementioned sculptures.

The bodies of work selected for the exhibition highlight the influence of conceptual and post-minimalist approaches in Genzken's early work. Considered in the context of the Kunstmuseum Basel's collection and its holdings of minimalist art, they will show that the artist built on the most advanced tendencies of her time in this early stage of her career.

Other works from the same decade to be presented include the 120-part series of gouaches *The Form Derives from the Fact That Each of the Five Colors Touches Every Other Color* (1973), the early film *Two Women in Combat* (1974), the so-called Hi-Fis (1979), and sculptural works like *World Receiver* (1982) and *Rhine Bridge* (1983).

All in all, the exhibition will showcase more than sixty works—including drawing series encompassing up to one hundred and twenty sheets—on loan from thirty international lenders, among them renowned museums and exclusive private collections. Many of the works that will be on display have never been seen by the public. With this large selection of works of the first rank, the show will retrace key strands in the art and life of one of Germany's leading living artists during a formative period in her career.

A comprehensive catalogue accompanying the exhibition, with contributions by the Holberg Prize laureate Griselda Pollock, Jutta Koether, and Simon Baier, will be released by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König.

The exhibition is supported by:

Trafina Privatbank AG

Isaac Dreyfus Bernheim Stiftung

Foundation for the Kunstmuseum Basel

Fonds für künstlerische Aktivitäten im Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Christoph Merian Stiftung

Media conference

Thursday, September 3, 2020, 11 am

Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, St. Alban-Rheinweg 60, 4052 Basel

Opening day

Friday, September 4, 2020, 10am to 8 pm

Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart & Neubau

Imagery and information on the exhibition

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/medien

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