

Media information

„Images in mind, bodies in space“

FRANZ ERHARD WALTHER

22 March until 28 July 2024

Due to its continuing actuality and relevance for contemporary art and also in honour of his 85th birthday, the Bundeskunsthalle is planning a major survey exhibition on the work of Franz Erhard Walther (*1939) for the year 2024. Especially in the Rhineland – an important place of study and activity – a retrospective is a desideratum.

At the beginning of the 1960s, Franz Erhard Walther formulated a new concept of the work - in the context of minimalism and beyond the classical understanding of sculpture and painting - that included the viewer as an actor: His First Set of Works (1963–1969), consisting of 58 activatable elements, is legendary. In this way, the artist fundamentally questions the concept of sculpture and that of the recipient and understands the executed "action as a form of work": Gestures and actions become an essential part of the work. Franz Erhard Walther became one of the most important and influential artists and teachers in Germany – not least due to his outstanding commitment as a professor at the Hamburg University of Fine Arts. The art-historical significance of his work is undisputed.

Even in his early work, the artist was concerned with the processual as a design principle; during his time in Düsseldorf, experimentation and innovation played a major role. Since the beginning of 1963, fabric – a hitherto uncommon artistic material – has been used for the production of almost all activation objects. In the *Wall Formations* of the 1980s, he achieves an incomparable interweaving of painting, sculpture and architecture that continues to this day.

The exhibition will present a concentrated, representative selection of action-based works as well as drawings "as an interior view" from different periods. Early works, such as the *Handstücke*, *Schreitsockel* or the *Raumelemente* lead to the First Work Set, which is followed by various *Wall Formations*, *Configurations*, the *New Alphabet* or the *Handlungsbahnen*.

Film documents, including new recordings on site, also document the temporality of the various actions / activations by the artist and the participants. Some exhibits in the exhibition, as well as specially made 'exhibition copies', can be activated. Through the interaction between body and object, each person becomes part of the artwork. The performers create their own narratives and the work is in a constant state of change: Work, body, place and space merge in an unusual way into a unity that generates new experiences in dealing with art and oneself.

A comprehensive catalogue will include new photographs of the work activations; an extensive social media campaign will also flank the exhibition.

Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland GmbH

Helmut-Kohl-Allee 4
53113 Bonn
T +49 228 9171-0
F +49 228 234154
www.bundeskunsthalle.de

Geschäftsführung
Dr. Eva-Christina Kraus
Oliver Hölken

Vorsitzender des Kuratoriums
Ingo Mix

HRB Nr. 5096
Amtsgericht Bonn
Umsatzsteuer ID Nr. DE811386971
Leitweg-ID 992-80160-58

Konto 3 177 177 00
Deutsche Bank Bonn
BLZ 380 700 59
IBAN DE03 3807 0059 0317 7177 00
BIC DEUT DE 380



The exhibition is a cooperation between the Bundeskunsthalle and the Franz Erhard Walther Foundation and is designed for further international venues.

Curators: Susanne Kleine, Eva Kraus, Susanne Walther

Sven Bergmann
Press officer / Management
T +49 228 9171-205
F +49 228 9171-211
bergmann@bundeskunsthalle.de