



Fotografieprojekte
Frankfurt/RheinMain

Eine Initiative des
Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain

Press release

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MAKING HISTORY A Fresh Look at International Contemporary Photography

MAKING HISTORY, the main exhibition of the **RAY Fotografieprojekte Frankfurt/ RheinMain**—a collaborative project initiated by the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain—presents outstanding examples of international contemporary photography and video art at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, the MMK Zollamt, and in the public space.

“After two years of concentrated preparation, we are pleased to be able to offer with MAKING HISTORY a fresh look at international contemporary photography. Featuring superior works of art, the exhibition highlights the international reach and appeal of Frankfurt and the Rhine Main Region as a center of photography,” says Luminita Sabau, spokeswoman for RAY 2012.

Presented in over 2150 square meters of space, the exhibition addresses the power of public images today: how are historical events reflected in images?; how do photographs shape our view of history—and which images are withheld from us? The works included in MAKING HISTORY supply answers to these questions: thirty-eight artists from twelve different countries explore the present-day historical image—today’s history painting—from a variety of different perspectives. Thirteen of the works on display are being shown for the first time in Germany. By using forms of reportage, staging, and fictional narration, the participating artists investigate the way in which media images influence reality. The three venues of MAKING HISTORY each focus on different aspects of the overarching exhibition theme.

Frankfurter Kunstverein

The works exhibited at the Frankfurter Kunstverein primarily investigate media images and the phenomena of broadcasting events via the media. The presentation shows that today’s photojournalism has in many instances taken over what used to be the function of history painting, that is, the capturing of an historic moment. It is also evident that more and more artists are focusing on the mediatization of events rather than on the events themselves. With his archive of newspaper photographs, for example, artist **Peter Piller** illustrates the visual stereotypes that are used over and over again by the regional press in its production of news. Artists such as **Luc Delahaye** and **Simon Norfolk** create sumptuous, large-scale works in which the historical image is all but wrested from the realm of photojournalism and returned to the context of art. **David LaChapelle**, who is known primarily as a celebrity photographer, presents a mythological portrayal of the gods Mars and Venus reinterpreted as a contemporary historical painting. And **Manit Sriwanichpoom** appropriates photojournalistic photos and restages them to test the present-day relevance of high-profile visual material.



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In her series *Suspicious Minds*, **Viktoria Binschtok** focuses attention on the members of politicians' entourages who otherwise remain in the background. By contrast, **Alfredo Jaar** investigates the potential effect and ideological power of published photographic icons in his work *May 1, 2011* as well as in another large-scale installation. Complementing the artists' works, well-known media images from photo agencies are also on display at the Frankfurter Kunstverein—images that show how the writing of history arises from the dissemination of the same images over and over again.

MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main

The works on display at the MMK explore the use of photographic images to reconstruct history and make it experienceable. **Gustav Metzger's** *Historic Photographs* are massively enlarged press photographs with individual pictorial elements transferred to the exhibition space; these photographic sculptures confront the viewer with the three-dimensional presence of historic press images. **Jeff Wall's** large-scale light box *Restoration* offers a view inside the Bourbaki Panorama in Lucerne—a view of an early form of faithful but ultimately illusionistic reproduction of an historic event. Other works in the exhibition construct history by meticulously assembling and staging nonexistent photographic images, as in **Thomas Demand's** installation *Embassy*. The Swiss artist duo **Köhle / Vermot** breaks down archival photographs into the spatial and thematic contexts in which they were taken. And in *Secrets in the Open Sea* **Walid Raad / The Atlas Group** focuses on the disappearance of the image and its value as evidence in the context of the Lebanese Civil War.

MMK Zollamt

The MMK Zollamt features works that explore stylizations and distortions in advertising, glamour, and paparazzi photography. The encoding of media imagery is deciphered and disclosed by means of a variety of artistic techniques—for example, through omission in **Hank Willis Thomas's** work or through the appropriation and reconstruction of images in the photographs of **Samuel Fosso** and **Kathrin Günter**. **Armin Linke's** multimedia installations center around Italian paparazzi photographs, referencing the pictorial politics of former Prime Minister Berlusconi and investigating the political relevance of such images. As early as the 1980s, **Oliviero Toscani** drew attention to the moral boundaries of the commercialization of images more visibly than anyone had ever done before in his ad campaign for Benetton; examples from this campaign are on view in the MMK Zollamt.

The public space as link

Two projects by **Michael Wolf** and **Frank Schramm** in public outdoor locations connect the three MAKING HISTORY venues and present artists whose works address different forms of public pictorial space.

Participating artists: Taysir Batniji (PS/FR), Nina Berman (US), Viktoria Binschtok (RU/DE), Robert Boyd (US), Black.Light Project / W. Böwig, C. Ermisch, and others (DE), Luc Delahaye (FR), Thomas Demand (DE), Harun Farocki (DE), Omer Fast (IL/US), Samuel Fosso (CF), Kathrin Günter (DE), Hofmann&Lindholm (DE), James Howard (GB), Alfredo Jaar (US), Sven Johne (DE), William E. Jones



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(US), Barbara Klemm (DE), Petra Köhle & Nicolas Vermot Petit-Outhenin (CH), David LaChapelle (US), Eva Leitolf (DE), Armin Linke (IT), Gustav Metzger (DE/GB), James Mollison (GB), Simon Norfolk (GB), Peter Piller (DE), Elodie Pong (US/CH), Paul Qaysi (US), The Atlas Group / Walid Raad (LB), Jo Ractliffe (ZA), Doug Rickard (US), Martha Rosler (US), Michael Schmidt (DE), Frank Schramm (US), Manit Sriwanichpoom (TH), Hank Willis Thomas (US), Oliviero Toscani (IT), Jeff Wall (CA), Michael Wolf (DE/US)

Curators of the main exhibition: Anne-Marie Beckmann (Art Collection Deutsche Börse), Lilian Engelmann (Frankfurter Kunstverein), Peter Gorschlüter (MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main), Dr. Holger Kube Ventura (Frankfurter Kunstverein), Alexandra Lechner (Darmstädter Tage der Fotografie), and Celina Lunsford (Fotografie Forum Frankfurt). The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt is the executing organization of the RAY 2012 project.

MAKING HISTORY exhibition dates: April 20 – July 8, 2012

MAKING HISTORY exhibition venues: Frankfurter Kunstverein, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, MMK Zollamt, and two public outdoor locations.

MAKING HISTORY is accompanied by a **comprehensive, richly illustrated catalogue** published by Hatje Cantz Verlag. Available in bookshops for 29.80 €.

Press images and additional information about the program can be downloaded at: www.ray2012.de.

A **film** has been made in conjunction with the exhibition. Footage available on request.



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RAY 2012 is an initiative of Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain and a cooperation of Art Collection Deutsche Börse, Darmstädter Tage der Fotografie, DZ BANK Kunstsammlung, Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Marta Hoepffner-Gesellschaft für Fotografie/Stadtmuseum Hofheim, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum and Stiftung Opelvillen.

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