



Zentrum Paul Klee Bern, Switzerland

Eva Pauline Bossow
Head of Media Relations,
Marketing & Communication
evapauline.bossow@zpk.org
T +41 (0)31 359 01 88

Media Release

15/10/2015

Exhibition | Catalogue | Accompanying programme

Exhibition

ABOUT TREES

17/10/2015 – 24/01/2016

ZENTRUM PAUL KLEE, BERN, SWITZERLAND

Zentrum Paul Klee
Monument im Fruchtländ 3
Postfach
3000 Bern 31, Switzerland
T +41 (0)31 359 01 01
F +41 (0)31 359 01 02
www.zpk.org

'About Trees' is the third major temporary exhibition held during the 10th anniversary year of Zentrum Paul Klee. Following on to 'Henry Moore' and 'Klee & Kandinsky', 'About Trees' is the result of two years of preparation and close co-operation with over thirty international contemporary artists. The tree is both a complex symbol of existential interrelationships in our world, and a significant motif in the arts. Mediating between art and the public, the topic is immediately accessible and requires no prior knowledge or particular explanation. Interdisciplinary and participatory programmes accompany the wide-ranging exhibition project.

The Exhibition



John Isaacs, Thinking About It, 2002. Olbricht Collection.
© John Isaacs

'Thinking About It' – both by its title and its complex symbolism, John Isaacs' striking sculpture provides the exhibition motto. Evidently conceived as a self-portrait, the work underscores the artist's immediate involvement – and our own as his contemporaries. By alluding to the anatomical models from Italy's Baroque period, Isaacs also places his work in a cultural and historic tradition. His hyperrealist way of depicting a tree that literally grows from his head has brought the medieval symbol of knowledge forward into the present.

The subject of nature corresponds to one of Paul Klee's major interests, namely nature as a template for creative processes. And nature is inherent in Zentrum Paul Klee's focus on 'Fruchtländ – Nature Culture Agriculture'.

Aiming to transform us from passive bystanders into active participants, 'About Trees' unites exemplary pieces which not only illustrate certain meanings of 'the tree' in contemporary art but also raise fundamental existential questions.

In thematic terms, the exhibition ranges from the tree as a deeply resonant symbol in human history and culture (Louise Bourgeois, Anselm Kiefer, Ana Mendieta, Shirin Neshat, Shinji Turner-Yamamoto), to the tree as habitat and as an entity with which humans feel a close kinship (Berlinde De Bruyckere, Paul Klee, Pipilotti Rist, Wolfgang Tillmans), to the tree as a place-defining object (Mark Dion, Katie Holten, William Kentridge). Moreover, the tree also symbolises nature as such, either in the field of tension between nature and culture (Rosemary Laing, Naoko Ito), or between (natural) growth and (man-made) construction (Paul Klee, Peter Doig), or in an ecological context where the tree stands for endangered nature (Carlos Amoraes, Ursula Biemann, Julian Rosefeldt). Many artists, from Paul Klee to William Kentridge, also see the tree as a symbol of creative processes, as each tree is unique although its growth is governed by certain principles. Its naturally sculptural shape poses a great challenge to artists, as becomes clear from the masterly sculptures by Berlinde De Bruyckere and Ugo Rondinone.



Shirin Neshat, Tooba, 2002. Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels © Shirin Neshat



Carlos Amoraes, From The Bad Sleep Well #11, 2004, Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zürich © Carlos Amoraes



Berlinde De Bruyckere, After Cripplewood IV, 2014. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth © Berlinde de Bruyckere

Many of the participating artists are represented by key works which are displayed in associative groups to avoid merely thematic illustration. It is the intention of 'About Trees' to evoke certain atmospheres. Not least to encourage a dialogue among them, these works are given the scope and space to reach out openly and unfold in every conceivable direction. The exhibition hall at Zentrum Paul Klee with its 'porous' spatial structure will enable the public to weave their own limitless web from the threads that run between these works. In the words of curator Peter Fischer: 'In their works, artists resonate with the many fields of science and the humanities that man has created to circumscribe his existence, and artists encourage us to think about the world. "Thinking About Trees" means to think about our complex, ambiguous world that may even be full of contradictions.'

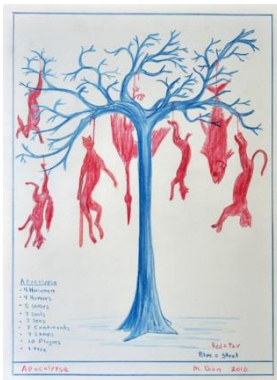
Several works were created especially for this exhibition. One of them is Shinji Turner-Yamamoto's installation 'Axis mundi'. There are also Paul Morrison's monumental wall piece, Valérie Favre's paintings and Katie Holten's drawings. Moreover, 'Growing Roots – Ten New Trees for ZPK', the planting of trees organized in collaboration with Renzo Piano, the architect of Zentrum Paul Klee, will be an integral part of the exhibition. In keeping with the multidisciplinary concept of Zentrum Paul Klee, topics are not only discussed in its exhibition hall but also in concerts, readings and discursive talks. During the exhibition, experts from various disciplines will explore the complex topic in a wide range of special events, as will a number of mediation programmes designed – also in co-operation with Kindermuseum Creaviva – for diverse groups of visitors.



Ugo Rondinone, wisdom? peace? blank? all of this?, 2007, Sammlung Maja Hoffmann, Schweiz © Ugo Rondinone

Nature is my teacher and trees are my friends.

Ugo Rondinone



Mark Dion, Apocalypse, 2010, Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna © Mark Dion

Symbolic or actual, trees are expressions of complexity, growth, and connectivity. They live in a timescape beyond our experience. They are living links to the past, a past beyond even human intervention. Trees are keystone organisms, supporting a vast diversity of life, even in their death, as they slowly release and make available the energy they have captured.

Mark Dion



Ana Mendieta, Tree of Life, 1976, Courtesy The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection and Galerie Lelong © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC

My art is grounded on the belief in one universal energy which runs through everything: from insect to man, from man to spectre, from spectre to plant, from plant to galaxy.

Ana Mendieta



Valérie Favre, Ghost, 2014/2015, Courtesy the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich © 2015, ProLitteris, Zurich

I dedicate this statement to all trees, those same trees that protect us with their very presence;

*To all trees planted by the roadside
and all trees still standing free;*

*To all trees that preserve human memories
and all trees yet to let the future flow through their leaves;*

To all trees reduced to planks and shavings.

Valérie Favre

Catalogue



Zentrum Paul Klee

Bern



ABOUT TREES

Published by Peter Fischer and Brigitt Bürgi.
With statements by the artists and texts from
Maria Bremer, Simone Büsch-Küng, Delphine
Calmettes, Peter Fischer.

184 pages with 83 color illustrations
German / English

Publishing House: Snoeck

ISBN 978-3-86442-146-4

CHF 35.00

Available in the museum shop.

We will be happy to send you a copy of the
catalogue and thank you for your promotion.
Please write an email to
evapauline.bossow@zpk.org



Zentrum Paul Klee

Bern

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

FR | 16/10/15 | 18:00

OPENING PARTY ABOUT TREES

Bernhard Pulver, Federal councillor, Canton Bern

Peter Fischer, Director of the Zentrum Paul Klee and curator of the exhibition

MUSIC

Hans Kennel—Baum Trio (musical programme during the opening ceremony): Hans Kennel (alphorn, büchel, bukkehorn), Regina Steiner (alphorn, büchel, bukkehorn), Leo Bachmann (tuba, didjeridoo)

Florian Möbes Trio (musical programme during the following party): Florian Möbes (electric guitar), Frederik Heisler (drums), Benjamin Krahel (bass)

At 5pm the Kindermuseum Creaviva invites to the opening of its new interactive exhibition «bäumig! » (17/10 / 15-11 / 01/16).

SA | 17/10 | 11:00

GROWING ROOTS - TEN NEW TREES FOR ZPK (AGRI-KULTUR-TAG WURZELN SCHLAGEN)

11:00 Public tree planting event with Renzo Piano, the architect of the Zentrum Paul Klee, as well as artists of the exhibition

14:00 Presentation of the «Global Tree Project» by Shinji Turner-Yamamoto, followed by a tour through the exhibition with the curators Peter Fischer and Brigitt Bürgi as well as participating artists Paul Morrison, Katie Holten, Rosemary Laing, John Isaacs, Merijn Bolink amongst others

SU | 18/10 | 11:00

GUIDED TOUR WITH THE CURATOR & CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ARTISTS

With the curator Peter Fischer and the artists Valérie Favre (in German) and Žilvinas Landzbergas (in English)

TU | 01/12—SU | 06/12 | 10:00—17:00

BONE PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL BERN

With an installation by Agnes Meyer-Brandis at Zentrum Paul Klee in the context of «About Trees».

www.bone-performance.com

SA | 26/12/15—SO | 10/01/16 | 10:00—17:00

NON-STOP SHORT FILM PROGRAMME BÄUME / ARBRES / ALBERI / TREES

Programmed by shnit International Short Film Festival