

K20

Press kit  
July 4, 2024  
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## Press Kit: Your Museum! Your Collection! Masterpieces from Etel Adnan to Andy Warhol

*Your Museum! Your Collection!*  
*Masterpieces from Etel Adnan to Andy Warhol*  
from July 6, 2024  
K20

Press preview and press conference  
Thursday, July 4, 2024, 10 am, K20

With:

- Susanne Gaensheimer, Director Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf
- Vivien Trommer, Curator

K21

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*#K20YourMuseumYourCollection*  
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## **Your Museum! Your Collection!** **Masterpieces from Etel Adnan to Andy Warhol**

**New perspectives on art history: Under the title “Your Museum! Your Collection!” the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is showing its collection at K20 with masterpieces from Etel Adnan to Andy Warhol in a comprehensive new presentation beginning on July 6, 2024. With the reopening, visitors to the museum can look forward to several new offerings. The new collection tour takes visitors through twenty rooms featuring more than 180 works of art created between 1904 and 2023. Highlights include the new acquisitions that have entered the museum since 2017, under the direction of Susanne Gaensheimer. Numerous juxtapositions of historical and contemporary works invite visitors to take a fresh look at history and the present. A comprehensive digital guide allows visitors to put together their own tour of the collection, learn more about internationally renowned artists through audio talks, or let DJ Wolfram (DFA Records/Public Possession/Live from Earth) accompany them through the collection with his soundtrack “The Sound of the Collection,” produced especially for K20. The new “Collection Online” will also be available from July 6. Nearly 300 works can be rediscovered and explored through a digital gallery.**

### **K21**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is one of the most important museums in Europe. Founded in 1961, it houses a unique collection of twentieth and twenty-first century art at its two locations, K20 and K21. For the first time in the museum’s history, the new presentation of the collection at K20 breaks down the boundaries of the Western canon and presents the history of modern art from a more global perspective. On view are more than 180 works of classical modern and postwar art, including seminal masterpieces by artists such as Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, and Andy Warhol, as well as new acquisitions by important women artists such as Etel Adnan, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Gabriele Münter, Alice Neel, and Lygia Pape, and works by non-European artists acquired in recent years. With works such as these, the collection now exemplifies the history of modern abstraction, making it one of the world’s most prominent and polyphonic collections of modern art and expanding the art historical canon to include positions by women and non-Western artists.

For the director of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Prof. Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer, the new presentation of the collection is a milestone for the museum: “I am delighted that we are finally able to present our intensive work of recent years to visitors and send them on a journey through global art history. With this new presentation of the collection, we are illuminating a history in which important works by non-European artists will be shown alongside well-known icons of Western art. With this new collection presentation, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen enables us all to find ourselves in the history of modernism from different perspectives of the present and to engage with it.”

### **The Museum in Transition**

Since Susanne Gaensheimer took over as director in 2017, the Kunstsammlung has been engaged in a programmatic process of opening itself up under the motto “Rethinking the Collection.” One of its central tasks is to honor the legacy of this unique collection, while at the same time rethinking the museum against the backdrop of current challenges and continuously developing the collection in the context of polyphony, globality, and digitality. In this process of transition, the Kunstsammlung has significantly expanded its holdings over the past seven years through targeted new acquisitions of modern painters and non-Western artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

For many decades, the profile of the collection of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen was shaped by the Western canon and the idea of the male artistic genius. From 1962 to 1990, under the founding director Werner Schmalenbach, only three works by women artists entered the collection: two paintings by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and a wall piece by Lee Bontecou as a donation. Between 2017 and 2024, Susanne Gaensheimer acquired more than 100 works and groups of works by women artists for the collection, including seminal art historical works by Etel Adnan, Sonia Delaunay, Noa Eshkol, Helen Frankenthaler, Simone Fattal, Isa Genzken, Carmen Herrera, Alice Neel, Henrike Naumann, Lygia Pape, Charlotte Posenenske, Anne Truitt, and Marianne Werefkin. During the same period, more than sixty-five works by non-Western artists were added to the public collection, including important works by Arpita Akhanda, Rasheed Araeen, Kader Attia, Anna Boghiguiian, Martha Boto, Park Seo-Bo, Cao Fei, Isaac Julien, Fouad Kamel, Senzeni Marasela, Mayo, Zanele Muholi, the Raqs Media Collective, Dayanita Singh, Hassan El-Telmissani, Wang Tuo, Ai Weiwei, and Akram Zaatari.

### **Visions of Tomorrow. Reflections on Yesterday**

Throughout the twentieth century, artists responded to the radical upheavals and crises of their time. Their ideas accompanied the dawn of a world dominated by technology. Inventions such as the X-ray, radioactivity, space travel, television, computers, and the Internet and the changes they brought about provoked fears as well as visions of the future. But it was not only technological innovations that affected life: At the same time, wars were raging in different parts of the world. Many artists had to flee and find new homes in other places. In the face of the radical changes of the twentieth century, art was also challenged to constantly redefine its meaning and role. The seminal works in the collection reflect the visions and innovations, the crises and destruction, the liberation and pain, and thus the dawn of the modern world in the twentieth century.

The tour of the collection follows a loose chronological structure. It interweaves thematic rooms with intergenerational dialogues. Two of the rooms were designed by the artists Anys Reimann (b. 1965, lives in Düsseldorf) and Peter Uka (b. 1975, lives in Cologne). With its various focal points, the tour traces the history of the founding of the Kunstsammlung and its unique collection: What were the conditions that led to the emergence of modernism in Europe, Latin America, and North Africa? And what role did the

cosmopolitan city of Paris play in the emergence of the avant-garde? The themes have been chosen to reveal influential connections between the past and the present. They shed light on a history of modern art that tells of a global transformation characterized by ruptures, repetitions, and continuities that occurred not in a straight line but in loops. On the one hand, the historical works are embedded in the context in which they were created and, on the other, they are presented in such a way that they can be seen anew from different contemporary perspectives.

On view are works by Etel Adnan, Arpita Akhanda, Nevin Aladağ, Hans Arp, Rasheed Araeen, Francis Bacon, Max Beckmann, Joseph Beuys, Dara Birnbaum, Pierre Bonnard, Lee Bontecou, Martha Boto, Louise Bourgeois, Georges Braque, Carlo Carrà, Marc Chagall, Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dalí, Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay, André Derain, Otto Dix, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Noa Eshkol, Simone Fattal, Lyonel Feininger, Lucio Fontana, Helen Frankenthaler, Isa Genzken, Alberto Giacometti, Juan Gris, George Grosz, Carmen Herrera, Jenny Holzer, Rebecca Horn, Joan Jonas, Fouad Kamel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Paul Klee, Yves Klein, Franz Kline, Yayoi Kusama, Fernand Léger, Roy Lichtenstein, Morris Louis, August Macke, René Magritte, Franz Marc, Maria Marc, John McCracken, Henri Matisse, Mayo (Antoine Malliarakis), Paula Modersohn-Becker, Amedeo Modigliani, Piet Mondrian, Robert Motherwell, Gabriele Münter, Alice Neel, Louise Nevelson, Kenneth Noland, Emil Nolde, Richard Oelze, Lygia Pape, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Charlotte Posenenske, Robert Rauschenberg, Man Ray, Anys Reimann, Gerhard Richter, Bridget Riley, Faith Ringgold, Mark Rothko, Georges Rouault, Park Seo-Bo, Wiebke Siem, Nicolas de Staël, Yves Tanguy, Hassan El-Telmisani, Rosemarie Trockel, Anne Truitt, Peter Uka, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Andy Warhol, Noemi Weber, and Marianne Werefkin.

Curators: Susanne Gaensheimer and Vivien Trommer

Consultant: Marny Garcia Mommertz, Contemporary And (C&)

Sensitivity editing: Elisabeth Wellershaus

Media Partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:  
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the  
State of North Rhine-Westphalia

### **Collection Online**

With the launch of the “Collection Online” website, interested users now have access to a new digital presentation of the collection: The masterpieces of the Kunstsammlung are available online for viewing at home or on mobile devices, regardless of the museum’s opening hours and the user’s location. From July 2024, users will be able to discover 200 works selected by the museum’s director, Prof. Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer—and the digital gallery will be continuously expanded.

Connected to the museum’s in-house database, the “Collection Online” facilitates scholarly research and exploration of the high-caliber collection: The advanced search invites users to explore the collection with an alphabetical list of artists and numerous filters (e.g., date of execution, material/technique, keywords). Each work is presented with metadata, such as provenance or exhibition history. High-resolution images allow users to experience art in a way that is not possible in front of the original for conservation reasons.

The state museum of North Rhein-Westphalia presents itself on a new digital stage with information on the history of the Kunstsammlung since its founding in 1961 and the strategy of the current expansion of the collection in the spirit of diversity and globality (“Rethinking the Collection”), as well as with an album of the latest acquisitions. The website was realized by the agencies Stan Hema, Berlin, and Systemantics, Willich, under the project management of Dr. Maike Teubner and Dr. Vivien Trommer.

### **Open Studio**

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The Open Studio is integrated into the new collection presentation. Visitors of all ages can reflect on, experience, and help shape the works of art in the collection in a creative and engaging way. The themes and content of the Open Studio will change periodically. To kick off the new collection presentation, the Open Studio invites visitors to explore different images of the body, their variations, and their creative possibilities. What shapes can one’s own body take on? Different fabric covers allow for the creation of diverse and abstract forms. Photographs of the actions are presented on a large screen in the Open Studio, allowing visitors to leave behind their own abstract body images and become part of the exhibition.

### **K+ Digital Guide**

For the first time, a digital offering on site, the K+ Digital Guide, invites visitors to delve deeper into the content of the new collection presentation. Audio talks, videos, and ideas for exchange, reflection, and participation accompany visitors through the exhibition. Background information on the collection, individual works of art, and especially new acquisitions is presented in a simple, realistic, and multimedia way. Visitors can put together their own tour of the collection, learn more about internationally renowned artists in audio talks, or stroll through the collection to the soundtrack “The Sound of the Collection” produced especially for K20 by the international star DJ Wolframs (DFA Records/Public Possession/Live from Earth). Visitors can access the digital guide via QR codes using their own mobile devices.

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**Supporting Program**

**Opening of the Exhibition**

**Friday, July 5, 2024, 7 pm**

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Speakers:

- Susanne Gaensheimer, Director Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf
- Ina Brandes, Minister for Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia
- Vivien Trommer, Curator

8 – 10 pm get-together with a DJ Set by Murat Önen and drinks

**Sneak Peek – Preview for Young Adults**

Friday, July 5, 2024, 4 – 5.30 pm

Free admission with student ID card

Registration required

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**For detailed information on our accompanying program, please visit:**

**<https://www.kunstsammlung.de/en/calendar/>**

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**Exhibition Preview**

**Lars Eidinger. O Man  
August 31, 2024 – January 26, 2025**

**Press preview: August 29, 2024, 12 noon at K21  
Press conference: 1 pm**

The artist Lars Eidinger (b. 1976 in Berlin) captures the majority of his photographs with his smartphone. His approach testifies to his strong connection to the time in which we live. Eidinger's photographs portray conditions and situations that are often inconspicuous and go unnoticed in everyday life. By placing them at the center of the image, Eidinger invites the viewer to explore themes such as urban life, nature tamed by man, and the vulnerable body, as well as poverty, despair, madness, and loneliness. The exhibition, conceived in close collaboration with Eidinger, presents a selection of new photographic and video works.

The exhibitions on the Bel Etage are sponsored by the Foundation for Art, Culture, and Social Projects of Sparda-Bank West.

**K21**

**YOKO ONO. MUSIC OF THE MIND  
September 28, 2024 – March 16, 2025**

**Press preview: September 26, 2024, 10 am at K20  
Press conference: 11 am**

In September 2024, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, in cooperation with Tate Modern, will present a comprehensive solo exhibition celebrating the ground-breaking and influential work of artist and activist Yoko Ono (b. 1933, Tokyo). Ono is a trailblazer of early conceptual and participatory art, film and performance, a celebrated musician, and a formidable campaigner for world peace. Spanning seven decades of the artist's powerful, multidisciplinary practice from the mid-1950s to now, YOKO ONO: MUSIC OF THE MIND will trace the development of her innovative work and its enduring impact on contemporary culture. Conceived in close collaboration with Ono's studio, the exhibition will bring together over 200 works including instruction pieces and scores, installations, films, music and photography, revealing a radical approach to language, art and participation that continues to speak to the present moment.

**Katharina Sieverding  
November 1, 2024 – March 9, 2025****Press Conference: October 31, 2024, 11:00 am at K21**

With this major survey exhibition, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen honors the artistic work and critical voice of Katharina Sieverding (b. 1941 in Prague), an internationally recognized pioneer of photography. Since the late 1960s, the award-winning artist has used her work to raise fundamental questions about identity, gender, and race, as well as the power of images and the social responsibility they entail.

Her monumental works, which can be categorized as performance, body art, and experimental film, have added a new dimension to the medium of photography. She understands photography as a sculpturally malleable and transformable material that must be expanded into an interdisciplinary way of thinking and working and that is ultimately always linked to a political statement.

In view of this, it is only logical that her exhibition at K21 will also extend into the public space. In addition to a new work and key works from her creative process spanning more than fifty years, her extensive archive will be included in the presentation for the first time as an open space for thought and discourse.

The exhibition is being made possible by NATIONAL-BANK AG, and is supported by the Kunststiftung NRW, Leap Society and Ströer.

**Media Partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:  
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung****Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the  
State of North Rhine-Westphalia**



## Annex

### Wall Texts

#### Reimagining the Collection

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is one of Europe's most esteemed museums. Founded in 1961, it presents an exceptional collection of 20th- and 21st-century art across its two venues, K20 and K21.

At K20, over 180 works of early modernism and postwar art are on display, featuring groundbreaking masterpieces by artists such as Etel Adnan, Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, Gabriele Münter, Alice Neel, Lygia Pape, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, and Andy Warhol. This collection exemplifies the history of abstraction and ranks among the finest collections of modern art worldwide. For the first time in the museum's history, the current presentation of the collection breaks down the boundaries of the Western canon, offering a more global perspective.

Around 1900, artists like Otto Dix, Paula Modersohn-Becker, and Henri Matisse sought simpler representations, moving away from realistic depictions. They omitted details and emphasized more general aspects, intensifying shapes, lines, colors, and textures to express their emotions and artistic visions. Later, artists like Etel Adnan, Rasheed Araeen, and Lygia Pape used geometric patterns or spontaneous gestural brushstrokes to make the invisible visible.

Whether in painting, sculpture, performance, or video art, various styles of modern abstraction emerged worldwide throughout the 20th-century. At K20, numerous groundbreaking works from Europe, the United States, Latin America and North Africa are now showcased together in a comprehensive presentation of the collection.

#### The Birth of the Collection

The history of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen unfolds with these paintings. In 1960, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia acquired 88 pivotal works by Paul Klee from a private collection in the United States.

This acquisition not only paid tribute to the artist but also aimed to address a historical injustice: Klee had served as a professor at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art from 1931 to 1933. However, with the rise of the Nazi regime, he was dismissed from his position. Many academics and artists faced a similar fate. Labelled as a "degenerate artist" and deemed "politically unreliable," Klee emigrated to Switzerland in late 1933.

In 1938, twelve of his confiscated works were displayed in the propaganda exhibition Degenerate Art in Düsseldorf. Shortly after, in 1940, Klee passed away. Today, 135 of his

groundbreaking works, representing all phases of his artistic career, serve as the cornerstone of the collection.

### **What Is an Abstract Painting?**

Paul Klee (1879–1940) is internationally acclaimed for his abstract paintings. But what did abstraction signify for Klee?

His artistic approach diverged from mere imitation of reality, drawing inspiration, for instance, from the way children depicted objects in their drawings. By arranging and combining points, circles, lines, and rectangles, he developed a complex system. This system gave rise to lively depictions of animals, intricate faces with multiple layers, and dynamic scenes, all stemming from simple geometric shapes.

For instance, when Klee wanted to depict a rose, he would paint a spiral and showed the flower in its stages from bud to wilted blossom. In other words, Klee painted not only the image of a rose, but also the fleeting passage of time.

Beyond painting, Klee played the violin for an hour every morning. He also delved into the latest natural sciences, such as the discovery of radioactivity in physics, and authored influential texts on abstraction in modern art. Thus, he developed his idea of painting in deliberate opposition to music and the sciences.

### **All of a Sudden, Color Broke Free**

Around 1900, a wave of innovations set the stage for the leap into the modern world. Inventions like the automobile, cinema, radio, and telephone emerged, alongside discoveries such as electric light, radioactivity, and X-rays. Furthermore, photography depicted the world as it truly was, while modern sculptures embodied vitality.

Amid these innovations, painting broke away from the traditional rules taught in art academies. It redefined itself, becoming a reflection of inner life and an expression of personal feelings. Artists began experimenting with vivid colors and simple forms, delving into the essence of painting itself. They discarded perspective, emphasizing the flat surface of the canvas. Pure brushstrokes and enigmatic signs became a new language and its modes of expression.

By 1905, this movement, known as Fauvism, emerged in Paris, led by artists such as Georges Braque, André Derain, and Henri Matisse. Fauvism left a lasting impact, inspiring artists to this day to explore the power and resonance of pure colors.

## Side by Side: Francis Bacon, Pablo Picasso, Anys Reimann

### A Woman

am you  
 am not the be-all and end-all  
 am much older and more  
 am XX from the beginning  
 am the cycle, cradle to coffin  
 am your tongue and your milk  
 am your poison and  
 your obscure desire,  
 am every language if you listen  
 am the gracious boot in the neck  
 and pain in the ass,  
 at the same time  
 the only ear and hand in the dark,  
 am the comet,  
 on its raging way to earth,  
 am the sea before there was land  
 am free, give birth and decide  
 if and how,  
 am light and deep and live on,  
 I'm XX,  
 am woman

K21

Anys Reimann

### Paris: The Center of Modernism

Around 1900, many artists were drawn to the French capital. But what made Paris so unique? The city embodied freedom, progress, and tolerance.

Paris provided many inspirations for artists in search of their creative identity. The 330-meter-high Eiffel Tower was a landmark of modern architecture. Museums such as the Louvre showcased centuries-old works of art. Cafés and nightclubs became lively meeting places, making Paris a hub for artists and writers from around the world to converge and exchange ideas.

Living together in studio buildings, often in modest conditions, artists embraced the spirit of modernism. Despite limited resources, they boldly explored new artistic styles and experimented with painting techniques. Independent salons and Avant-garde galleries were established alongside the traditional art academies. Groundbreaking art was exhibited, critiqued, and supported by collectors from Europe and the United States. A dynamic network emerged, making Paris the center of the modernist movement.

### **Between Violence and Solace**

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen holds more than 20 works from the period around the First World War. What distinguishes and unites the paintings created between 1914 and 1918?

These paintings unveil both individual anxieties and shared traumas. They grapple with the repercussions of hatred, violence, and devastation. Yet, they also seek solace in beauty, depicting moonlit landscapes or markets filled with fruit.

Initially, some artists embraced the war with enthusiasm, only to confront drastic upheavals as its outbreak reshaped their lives. Marianne Werefkin was compelled to flee Munich within hours, finding sanctuary in Switzerland. Sonia Delaunay departed Paris with her family, relocating to Portugal. August Macke and Franz Marc perished in the trenches.

Amidst the turmoil, art served as a refuge and a medium for contemplation. Today, these paintings bear witness to the collective and personal experiences of the artists before and during the First World War.

### **Belonging and Displacement**

The biographies of many 20th-century artists were profoundly shaped by political oppression.

During the Nazi era (1933–1945), thousands of works of modern art were confiscated from German museums and subsequently sold or destroyed. In response to this threat, Max Beckmann and Max Ernst fled to the United States, while Maria Helena Vieira da Silva emigrated to Brazil. When the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) broke out, Etel Adnan was forced to leave Beirut. In 1980, she and her partner Simone Fattal settled in Sausalito, California.

The intricate experiences of emigration and relocation are vividly captured in these works, with palpable expressions of identity, violence, displacement, longing, and loss.

In the Western centers of the world, the artists found refuge, made new encounters, and expanded their artistic practices. Unified by shared themes, their works reflect how the experience of displacement profoundly shaped their lives and how transcultural exchanges enriched the language of abstract art.

### **Inextricably linked: Colonialism & Expressionism**

In this gallery room, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen explores works of Expressionism from its own collection, examining their connections to European colonial history.

The members of the artist groups Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) and Die Brücke (The Bridge) lived during a time when the German Empire was one of the largest colonial powers in Europe. These German artists appropriated non-European styles as an alternative to their conservative environment, without considering the contexts in which these works were created, the power structures of colonial rule, or their own racially biased viewpoints.

Many of these artists had never traveled outside Europe. They encountered looted art from colonized countries in museums in Munich, Dresden, Berlin, and Hamburg. They also attended variety shows, circuses, and colonial exhibitions, where people were displayed as objects.

In its efforts to address derogatory imagery and titles, the Kunstsammlung aims to acknowledge and confront the colonial legacy embedded in these works

### **Open Studio**

This space invites you to join in, experience, and reflect. Everyone can experiment, express themselves, and exchange ideas. Everyone can be curious, react, and leave something behind. Everyone can contribute, create together, and connect.

The perspectives, opinions, and ideas of many people become visible.

### **1933: A Year of Rapid and Pivotal Events**

For the first time, the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is showcasing more than 20 drawings by Paul Klee, acquired in 2019. These works were created in Düsseldorf in 1933.

That year saw an unrelenting pace of historical developments: On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor. On April 21, 1933, Klee was suspended from his professorship at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art with immediate effect. On December 24, 1933, Klee emigrated from Düsseldorf to Bern in Switzerland. His wife Lily Klee had already left Düsseldorf four days earlier, while their son Felix Klee remained in Germany. On December 31, 1933, Klee was officially dismissed from the academy in Düsseldorf.

Throughout this year, Klee channeled his experiences in his drawings, addressing various themes related to the Nazi revolution. Some drawings explore themes of teaching and animal training. Others are more explicit, depicting executions. What unifies these works is their creation in pen and Klee's unusually restless strokes. It is perhaps the juxtaposition of everyday motifs with Klee's distinctive style that imbues these drawings with a profound political dimension?

### **With Warp and Weft: Woven Narratives**

Weaving is one of the oldest art forms. Yet, for a very long time, textile work was considered a craft rather than recognized as fine art. Consequently, textile art remained absent from the museum's collection for several decades.

Only in recent years has the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen begun to delve into the significance of this medium and its historical context. This exploration began with the acquisition of groundbreaking works by the artists Maria Marc and Noa Eshkol.

As evidenced by these works, the potential of textile art is boundless. The soft material is both a source of inspiration and a field for experimentation. Here, individual threads are literally intertwined to weave collective narratives. Recycled textiles are arranged into abstract pictorial compositions. Implicitly, the relationship of the material to housework and its gendered connotations are also challenged.

### **Side by Side: Fernand Léger, Pablo Picasso, Peter Uka**

Each of these three artists reshaped the genre of portraiture with their distinctive styles.

Pablo Picasso drew inspiration from women like Marie-Thérèse Walter, Dora Maar, and Jacqueline Roque. They became primary subjects in his paintings. Beginning in Paris in 1906, he transformed their faces and bodies into geometric forms. His deconstructed portraits made him – unlike his models – world famous. Fernand Léger pursued a different path: His acrobats and workers embody tranquility and equilibrium. Starting in Paris in 1920, he created a universal image of humanity that transcended social differences, symbolizing modern life, the big city, and a promising future. About 100 years later, Peter Uka dedicates himself to capturing the people of our time in his Cologne studio. Pulling from dreams, impressions, and memories of Nigeria in the 1970s, he creates lasting images in oil paint.

Despite their diverse styles, they shared a common approach: Their paintings are products of their imagination. Rather than painting from life models, they created from recollection and memory.

### **In the Wake of a Shattered World**

Cubism emerged in Paris in 1908, pioneered by the artists Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. But what lies at the core of Cubism? The term itself draws its roots from geometry, deriving from the word cube.

Cubism revolutionized how subjects were depicted. Braque and Picasso employed angular forms and fragmented shapes in their paintings of landscapes, still lifes, and portraits. Their technique involved deconstructing subjects from various perspectives, blending the

foreground and background into a unified composition. Furthermore, their colors no longer adhered to reality but instead achieved an independent effect. African sculpture notably influenced the Cubist movement. Furthermore, the emergence of film and cinema significantly contributed to its evolution.

In 1911, Analytical Cubism reached its peak, and the movement continued to evolve. Subsequently, artists began integrating materials such as wallpaper and newspaper cut-outs into their works, marking the phase known as Synthetic Cubism. The influence of Cubism—especially on the technique of collage— continues to this day.

### **Only the Marvelous Is Beautiful**

In 1924, André Breton, a prominent writer, penned his first Surrealist Manifesto in Paris. In this ground-breaking essay, he envisioned a future where the boundaries between the dream world and reality would dissolve, merging them into a unified state beyond conventional reality.

The ideas of Surrealism found artistic expression in mysterious figures, fluid forms, and endless landscapes. While the original Parisian group disbanded in 1928, the essence of Surrealism evolved into a global movement. In 1938, the Art & Liberté (Art & Freedom) group in Cairo aligned itself with the Surrealist movement.

In their manifesto, Long Live “Degenerate Art,” they condemned the Nazi and Fascist regimes for their suppression and destruction of modern art. Originating in France, Surrealism extended its influence to Egypt and beyond, intertwining artistic expression with political demands.

### **Search and Desire for Freedom**

Around 1950, painting evolved into an individual artistic experiment. Through ground-breaking abstractions, repetition of simple actions, and the use of their entire bodies, artists expanded the boundaries of representation. Their non-figurative paintings broke free from all constraints, exposed deep wounds, and embodied a vision of new artistic freedom.

Maria Helena Vieira da Silva sought to capture the speed of Parisian city life in a labyrinth of lines and strokes. Helen Frankenthaler developed her soak-stain technique in her New York studio. Park Seo-Bo, who experienced the Korean War (1950–1953), invented his Écriture series, creating visible inscriptions with pencil in still-wet paint.

In Europe and the United States, the paintings of this era played a crucial role in processing the personal and collective experiences of World War II. At the same time, they questioned the role of the individual in the rapidly changing world of 1950s.

**Side by Side: Piet Mondrian, Lygia Pape, Carmen Herrera**

The three artists lived in various parts of the world. Yet, they shared a passion for simple forms and reduced colors. With their sharp analysis and radical visions, they shaped the movements of Concrete and Neo-Concrete Art. What connects and what distinguishes their artistic approaches?

Piet Mondrian, born in the Netherlands, was an analyst of the image. Beginning in the 1920s, he composed his paintings using only straight-lined grids and the three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue—along with white and black.

Lygia Pape, born in Brazil, took Mondrian's concepts further by engaging and activating the public. Beginning in the late 1950s, she emphasized that seeing, feeling, touching, and tasting were essential components in the creation and experience of her works of art.

Carmen Herrera, born in Cuba, pursued bold simplicity in her works. In the 1960s, with her *Estructuras* (Structures), she introduced spatial considerations into Concrete Art, specifically exploring the interplay of empty space between two triangular forms.

**K21****What Is the Political Power of Art?**

Around 1960, the world experienced profound changes: Congo celebrated its independence in 1960, construction of the Berlin Wall began in 1961, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963, and in 1969, the Apollo 11 program landed men on the moon for the first time.

Art mirrored these social changes. It became a vehicle for revision and critique, addressing issues like war, capitalism, and the influence of mass media. Despite this, art maintained its enigmatic nature by refusing to convey clear messages or truths. Instead, it sought to provoke reflection and question the impact of these changes on society.

In this process, artists discovered both the possibilities and limitations of art. When the language of art was insufficient, they took to the streets. In New York, Faith Ringgold was a visible figure in a wave of protests around 1968, advocating for equal representation of Black women artists in museums and institutions.

**Side by Side: Joseph Beuys, Charlotte Posenenske**

During the 1968 movement, Joseph Beuys and Charlotte Posenenske explored the social function of art in distinct ways.



Beuys, an action artist based in Düsseldorf, developed the Expanded Concept of Art known as Social Sculpture. He believed that creative action could contribute to a better society and aimed to raise awareness of this potential through his work.

In Frankfurt am Main, Posenenske created simple, industrially reproducible, and rearrangeable works. Her democratic approach to art invited everyone to modify objects and alter spaces. Disillusioned, she abandoned her artistic practice in 1968, studied sociology, and dedicated herself to social work.

Through their distinct participatory approaches, Beuys and Posenenske forever changed the way we think about art.

### **Towards the Present: Liberation & Revolution**

Drips of black paint, series of triangles, and moving images: In the aftermath of the Second World War, art broke free from the notions and constraints of modernism. The boundaries between painting and sculpture dissolved, and the concept of the open work emerged.

This transformation inspired artists to work across various media and actively engage viewers in an art experience. The act of seeing and perceiving became central to how art was received. What responses can a work of art evoke? What does it mean to be in the presence of an artwork? How does this experience change over time? Artists challenged viewers to heighten their sensory and bodily perception.

Later, the human body itself became a medium of art, especially in the realms of performance and video art from the 1960s onward. This shift marked the beginning of a new era—a revolutionary liberation where art knew no boundaries