

“SELFIES” FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY FOCUS ON THE PORTRAITS OF THE GREAT MASTERS

The need to present and preserve a self-image is not an invention of our time. Even in the portraits of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was taken for granted that images would be idealized. *Die Augen die Bilder* (The eyes of the pictures) inspires a dialogue that transcends epochs as it compares French Impressionist portraits with paintings that date to the present day.

Berlin, September 7, 2017 – *Die Augen der Bilder* is the catalogue accompanying the eponymous exhibition at the Museum Langmatt, which compares and contrasts Impressionist works from various collection with contemporary works. Included in the observation are a few individual works from the Rococo and realism, as well as twentieth-century portraits. To make a comparison between centuries possible, the focus is on the medium of painting. Even though much has changed in terms of style and technique since French Impressionism, themes such as movement, light, or ephemerality have yet to lose any of their currency.

In the dialogue between the epochs, however, there manifests a fundamental difference between the idealization of old and the portraits of today: In the historical works the desire for representation and idealization plays a major role. Even though the historical contexts of the portraits on display are different, it is mostly about casting the “right light” on the person portrayed. From today’s point of view, social reality is only very subtly articulated. In contrast, the works of contemporary artists, long liberated from their patrons’ narrow corsets, feel the pulse of the society, so social faults such as isolation, existential disintegration, or violence are inscribed in faces. In a globalized world, questions arise concerning identity and belonging, ancestry and homeland. For people making art today, the twentieth century proves a debt as well as a challenge. Innocence and unselfconsciousness fall by the wayside. All the more interesting, therefore, is the question of how contemporary artists deal with these circumstances and allow us a new, expanded view of the old genre of portraiture.

The catalogue *Die Augen der Bilder* takes an unusual intermediary approach: the people portrayed and their environments express themselves in fictional dialogues, monologues, and poems. They envelope us in conversation and lead us to think. Additionally, an essay by Isabel Zürcher sheds light on the digital reality of the portrait in social media. Sent around the globe every minute of the day by the millions, the (photographic) portrait has assumed a new, sometimes shocking dimension of presence and significance, without which it seems hardly possible to observe portrait painting any more.

Featuring works by: Michaël Borremans (* 1963), Maya Bringolf (* 1969), Marlene Dumas (* 1953), Klodin Erb (* 1963), Alexandra Meyer (* 1984), Uwe Wittwer (* 1954) and Luc Tuymans (* 1958), as well as Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), Camille Corot (1796-1875), Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), and a group of ten portrait paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919).

Die Augen der Bilder runs from September 17–December 10, 2017 at the Museum Langmatt in Baden.



**DIE AUGEN DER BILDER
PORTRÄTS VON FRAGONARD BIS DUMAS**

Texts by Markus Stegmann, Isabel Zürcher
German, English
2017. 140 pp., 65 ill.
clothbound
20.00 x 26.50 cm
ISBN 978-3-7757-4334-1

35,00 EUR

ABOUT HATJE CANTZ

Hatje Cantz is a groundbreaking international publishing company specializing in art, architecture, and photography. Since 1945 Hatje Cantz has been using its profound expertise and enthusiasm for craftsmanship to produce and publish books of the highest quality. We currently release around two hundred new titles annually.

Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

www.hatjecantz.de
www.editiongerdhatje.com

PRESS CONTACT

Sara Buschmann
Head of Press Department
s.buschmann@hatjecantz.de
Tel. +49 30 3464678-08

Jennifer Berndt
PR Manager
presse@hatjecantz.de
Tel. +49 30 3464678-23

**HATJE
CANTZ**