

# ***A Republic of Art***

## **More than a hundred of the best works from the French contemporary art collection in the Van Abbemuseum**

**27.06 – 04.10.2015**

What can artists and their work tell about the time and place they lived in? How does a country collect art? Is it possible to distil a French identity from a contemporary art collection consisting of art from all over the world? The exhibition *A Republic of Art*, which is being held in the Van Abbemuseum from 27 June to 4 October, raises some interesting questions. *A Republic of Art* tells the story of contemporary art since the 1980s from a French perspective. The ten galleries in the old building of the museum are filled with more than a hundred much discussed works from the collections of the FRACs (Fonds Régionaux d'Art Contemporain), many of which are being shown outside France for the first time.



Agnès Accorsi, *L'âme hospitalière*, 2002. Collection FRAC Corsica ©

### **Three decades of contemporary art**

The exhibition starts in the early 1980s with works by celebrated artists such as Daniel Buren, Gerhard Richter, Cindy Sherman and Paul McCarthy. *A Republic of Art* reveals the emergence of new media with works by, for example, Dara Birnbaum and Harun Farocki. Luc Tuymans questions the reliability of mass media in his work.

Developments in film and literature are the source of inspiration for artists like Sophie Calle and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster. Other trends become visible in the 1990s and 2000, such as the increasing interest in the environment and in alternative ways of living together in society. For example, this is reflected in the works of N55 and Simon Starling.

### **The FRAC system**

The Fonds Régionaux d'Art Contemporain (FRAC) was founded in France in 1982, consisting of 23 institutions in every part of France, even including Corsica and La Réunion. The FRACs, gathered in the umbrella organisation PLATFORM, have put together a collection of more than 26,000 works by (inter)nationally celebrated artists over the course of more than thirty years. Fifty per cent of the collection consists of works by French artists. According to the FRAC philosophy the only point of purchasing works of art is that they become accessible on a large scale.

For this reason they organised big educational programmes and produce more than five hundred exhibitions a year, particularly in places that were not originally intended for art.



Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #67*, 1980. Collection FRAC Aquitaine. © Cindy Sherman & Metro Pictures. Photo: Frédéric Delpech

The Van Abbemuseum was invited by PLATFORM to reflect on this collection that is embedded in French cultural and political history. The Van Abbemuseum was chosen because of the many experiments it has conducted with new ways of exhibiting and interpreting its own collection during recent years.

*A Republic of Art* is a stimulating tour of the contemporary art which has been collected by the French government since 1982. In their works of art the artists reflect on the world around them, so that visitors are taken along through history, undoubtedly evoking personal memories.

### **E-publication *A Republic of Art***

The exhibition will be accompanied by an e-publication with texts by Ami Barak, Le Peuple qui Manque, Stephen Wright and Diana Franssen and interviews with Catherine Elkar (director of FRAC Bretagne), Xavier Franceschi

**Press release**  
**May 2015**

(director of FRAC Île-de-France) and Laurence Gateau (director of FRAC des Pays de la Loire). Introduction by Charles Esche.

Language: English and French. Publication date: June 2015.

**Curators**

Curators: Annie Fletcher and Diana Franssen. Assistant curator: Lena Reisner.

*A Republic of Art* is organised in collaboration with PLATFORM, the umbrella organisation of the 23 FRACs in France.

FRAC Advisory board: Catherine Elkar, Xavier Franceschi, Laurence Gateau, Anne-Claire Duprat.

**Subsidisers**

Subsidisers are the ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Institut Français, le ministère des Outre-Mer, Ambassade de France aux Pays-Bas, VSBfonds, Fondation Hippocrène, Les Inrockuptibles.



**For the editors:**

For more information and photographs, please visit:  
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**Van Abbemuseum**

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the first public museums for contemporary art to be established in Europe. The museum's collection of around 2700 works of art includes key works and archives by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. The museum has an experimental approach towards art's role in society. Openness, hospitality and knowledge exchange are important. We challenge ourselves and our visitors to think about art and its place in the world, covering a range of subjects, including the role of the collection as a cultural 'memory' and the museum as a public site. International collaboration and exchange have made the Van Abbemuseum a place for creative cross-fertilisation and a source of surprise, inspiration and imagination for its visitors and participants.

Van Abbemuseum  
Bilderdijklaan 10  
Eindhoven, The Netherlands  
[www.vanabbemuseum.nl](http://www.vanabbemuseum.nl)

**Opening hours**

Tuesday to Sunday 11:00 – 17:00  
Every first Thursday of the month the museum is open until 21:00.

**Admission**

Adults: € 12,- / Groups of 10 or more: € 9,- / Young people from 13-18 years, students / Eindhoven city pass (stadspas) holders: € 6,- / Museumkaart, children under 13 years of age: free of charge. / Family pass (2 adults and max. 3 children until 18 years): €18,- First Thursday evening of the month from 17.00-21.00: free of charge



Claire Fontaine, *Untitled (Identité, Souveraineté et tradition)*, 2007  
Collection FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais. © Claire Fontaine