

## Press Release

### Is lust a sin, is sin lust?

Together the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Zentrum Paul Klee are presenting a collaboratively organized exhibition on the seven deadly sins. The show comprises artworks from 11 centuries – from the 11<sup>th</sup> century until today. Through the captivating juxtaposition of old with contemporary art, the exhibition traces how the meaning of the seven cardinal sins shifted over centuries, bringing its audience to ponder on the relevance notions of sin still have for us today. Due to the fact that both museums closely cooperated to realize this show, we are not only able to present works from our own holdings but, additionally, highly eminent loans.

The exhibition is divided into eight sections distributed over both museum buildings. Following an introductory section showing series of the deadly vices, the sections devoted to *superbia* (pride/vanity), *invidia* (envy), *ira* (wrath), and *avaritia* (avarice/covetousness) can be found in the Kunstmuseum Bern, while *acedia* (sloth), *gula* (gluttony), and *luxuria* (lust) are located in the Zentrum Paul Klee. Based on artifacts selected for their historic and cultural relevance, in the Zentrum Paul Klee we are additionally investigating questions related to society's acceptance of behavioral patterns and vices today. And not only this, we also seek to illustrate how certain former sins are now viewed as affirmative qualities.

#### Lust and vice yesterday and today

After Christian moral teachings lost their formative influence on society in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it seems logical to conclude that the concept of the seven deadly sins would now be an anachronism. But the astounding preoccupation with related subject matter in artistic, literary, and academic spheres proves that it still holds undeniable relevance for us today. Following the line of reasoning taken by the exhibition, this is because the deadly sins, from the very beginning, not only served as a means for disciplining Christians in the name of a higher morality, but also as a kind of safeguard ensuring a functioning society.

General attitudes towards the cardinal vices have changed with social and economic developments of the previous centuries. At present society's approach to the vices is ambiguous. On one hand, we view greed, envy, or gluttony (in the form of consumerism) as driving forces within the capitalist economic system. And yesterday's promiscuity, sexual freedom, is socially accepted to a large degree. On the other hand, we still point a moral finger at such patterns of behavior if they are detrimental to society or threaten to have a destabilizing influence. We thus decry the greed of managers as rip-off mentality and criticize the life of consumerist, throwaway society as superficial and bereft of meaning.

Both old and recent art mirror the ambivalence inherent in notions of vice. For example, although Dutch artists working in the field of genre paintings often and preferably represented the vices of humankind, their art is not confined to addressing issues of morality. Instead they likewise palpably portray sinners' apparent relish while drinking, eating, and smoking. Conversely, contemporary art often demonstrates not only delight in breaking taboos, but also the need for moral guidelines and rules of conduct in a world where (nearly) everything is allowed.

#### Highly eminent artworks

The show presents artworks from 11 centuries – from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to now. Manuscripts, prints, paintings, photographs, installations, and videos impressively reveal the multi-faceted aspects of the canon of vices.

Due to the collaboration between the Zentrum Paul Klee and the Kunstmuseum Bern, we have successfully obtained as loans highly eminent exhibits such as the late 15<sup>th</sup>-century Antwerp panel depicting a representation of the Last Judgment as well as a significant number of Dutch genre paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> century by artists such as Adriaen Brouwer, Jan Steen, Jacob Jordaens, and Adriaen von Ostade. In the show we are also proud to present works by Peter Paul Rubens, Thomas Couture, Franz von Stuck, Gustav Klimt, Otto Dix, and, of course, Paul Klee. Besides Bruce Nauman's installation on the façade of the Kunstmuseum Bern we are exhibiting a large number of distinguished contemporary artists (among others Marlene Dumas, Gilbert & George, Andreas Gursky, Annette Messager, Cindy Sherman, and Erwin Wurm).

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1 EXHIBITION • 2 SITES



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# LUST AND VICE. The 7 deadly sins from Dürer to Nauman

15.10.2010-20.02.2011

## The Exhibition

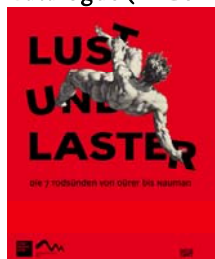
### Opening

Thursday, October 14 2010, 18h30 in the Berner Münster

### Duration

15.10.2010 – 20.02.2011

### Catalogue (in German)



Lust und Laster. Die 7 Todsünden von Dürer bis Naumann. Hrsg. Kunstmuseum Bern und Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern. Mit Texten von Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Christine Göttler / Anette Schaffer, Claudine Metzger, Monique Meyer, Barbara Müller, Gerhard Schulze, Samuel Vitali. Ca. 380 Seiten, 240 Abb. Hatje Cantz Verlag. ISBN 978-3-7757-2647-4. CHF 57.-

### Curators

Fabienne Eggelhöfer (ZPK), Claudine Metzger (KMB), Samuel Vitali (KMB), Lukas Gerber (ZPK, Assistenz), Monique Meyer (KMB, Assistenz)

### Entrance fee

CHF 24.- / 20.- for both sites

### Opening hours Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee

Tuesday – Sunday 10h – 17h,

Kunstmuseum Bern Tuesday – 21h

Holidays: 30. / 31. Dec., 1. / 2. Jan., 10h – 17h

25. Dec., closed, Zentrum Paul Klee closed on 24. Dec.

### SBB RailAway offer



Benefit from 20% savings on train tickets, transfer and entrance fee. The RailAway-Offer is available at all train stations and at the Rail Service on 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min).

### Partners



Partner of the Kunstmuseum Bern



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### Support

*The exhibition is supported by:*

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