

english

# LUST AND VICE

15.10.2010 - 20.02.2011

the 7 deadly sins from dürer to nauman

1 EXHIBITION • 2 INSTITUTIONS

**KUNST  
MUSEUM  
BERN**



Zentrum Paul Klee  
Bern

## Introduction

The exhibition *Lust and Vice* presents a comprehensive historic documentation of artistic preoccupation with the seven deadly sins from the Middle Ages to the present. The layout of the exhibition is not, however, ordered chronologically but comprises separate sections that are each devoted to individual sins and distributed throughout both museum buildings. Following an introductory section presenting several series illustrating the seven deadly sins, the sections devoted to pride, envy, wrath, and greed/avarice are located in the Kunstmuseum Bern, while sloth, gluttony, and lust are accommodated in the Zentrum Paul Klee.

The idea of the seven deadly sins has its source in Egypt's monastic culture of late antiquity. At the close of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, the monk and hermit Evagrius Ponticos defined eight 'evil' thoughts that divert humankind from a god-fearing way of life. At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Gregory I – better known as Gregory the Great – adapted these teachings and compiled a list of seven capital sins that stem from superbia, the 'root of all evil'. During the High Middle Ages, by merging superbia with the first vice of the list of seven (thirst for fame), the following catalogue of sins was formed that we call the seven deadly sins since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Superbia: hubris / pride

Invidia: envy

Ira: wrath

Acedia: sloth

Avaritia: greed / avarice

Gula: gluttony

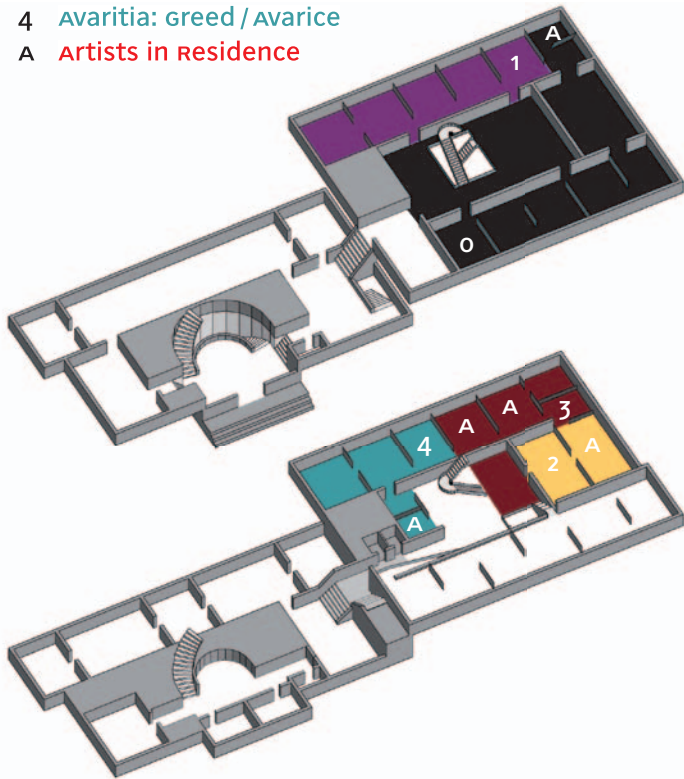
Luxuria: lust

After Christian moral teachings lost their formative influence on society during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the concept of the seven deadly sins seemed obsolete. But the astounding preoccupation with the subject matter in artistic, literary, and academic spheres proves that it still continues to bear an undeniable relevance for today's world. The reason for this – following the thesis of the exhibition – is that 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 provided a kind of guideline for ensuring a functioning society. The general view towards the cardinal sins has changed with the social and economic developments of the previous centuries. Usually lust no longer has negative repercussions for society because of modern methods of contraception; in a capitalist system envy and avarice count as the driving forces for economic growth and are valued as being particularly productive traits. Conversely, the same conduct is still stigmatized if it is detrimental to society or threatens to bring it out of balance, as present criticism of the 'rip-off mentality' attributed to many managers reveals.

The goal of the exhibition is not only to document representations of the deadly sins over the centuries but also to show how values pertaining to these vices shifted over time. Not least, we approach the question of what relevance the deadly sins still have for us today.

## Exhibition Plan Kunstmuseum Bern

- 0 series of the seven deadly sins
- 1 **superbia: pride**
- 2 **invidia: envy**
- 3 **ira: anger**
- 4 **Avaritia: greed / Avarice**
- A **Artists in Residence**



## 0 series of the seven deadly sins

The oldest representations of the sins in Western art depict these abstract notions as personifications. Thus **Prudentius's** *Psychomachia*, known through illustrated manuscripts from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, presents the conflicting moral qualities of virtue and vice as allegorical duels between female figures. As we already find in the first portrayals of the Gregorian list of sins in transcriptions of the early 12<sup>th</sup>-century treatise *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, the seven principle vices appear as female half-length figures in the branches of a tree growing out of superbia, the 'root of all sin'.

In the course of the Middle Ages the iconographic repertoire of the cardinal sins grew more differentiated: Besides being represented as personifications, they were also illustrated in the form of exemplary (mostly biblical) historical episodes or figures as well as by scenes depicting people as agents of sin. The illustrations in the *Somme le roi* dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century present all three modes of representation side-by-side. If the deadly sins appeared as personifications then they were mostly portrayed riding on symbolic animals.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a further pictorial tradition simultaneously developed in which the vices were illustrated in genre scenes of contemporary everyday life at the time. The panel by an **Antwerp Master** (ca. 1490–1500) is an eminent example, showing the seven works of mercy and the seven cardinal sins underneath the Last Judgment. The figure of Satan, appearing in each scene as seducer, underscores that the deadly sins lead the way to hell, which is depicted immediately above them. Since the late Middle Ages, the

tortures suffered by the damned in scenes of hell are often diversified according to the vices of the perpetrators. Therefore gluttons were often stuffed with food or forced to eat toads.

Allegories predominated in 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century illustrations of the capital vices – mostly in the form of series of prints. Pride is portrayed as a spruced-up lady with a mirror and accompanied by a peacock, envy (with a dog) as an emaciated old woman with a head full of snakes who eats her heart, wrath (with a bear or a lion) as an attacking soldier, avarice (with a wolf or a toad) as an ugly old woman with bags of money, sloth (with a donkey) mostly as an either seated or sleeping woman, gluttony (with a pig) as a fat woman with a bottle or edibles, lust (with a billy goat) as a naked young woman or a couple of lovers. The allegories in the foregrounds of **Crispijn de Passe**'s prints (1590–1600) and **Jacob de Backer**'s paintings (1570–75) have been augmented with paradigmatic episodes from the Bible.

Against such a model, the series by **Luca Penni** (1550–56) clearly stands out with his five-part images that include genre scenes, as do **Pieter Bruegel**'s (1558) teeming compositions descriptively called 'Wimmelbilder'. Bruegel's fantastic scenery, in which symbolic, genre, and grotesque motifs are intermixed, still excited the imaginations of artists such as **Joos van Craesbeeck** almost one hundred years later when the latter painted his *Temptation of St. Anthony* (ca. 1650), depicting the saint being tormented by the seven deadly sins.

**Adriaen Brouwer** (ca. 1625–28) abandoned symbolic motifs almost entirely in his painting series, which has only partly survived but is nevertheless known to us through numerous prints made after the panels. He portrayed the vices as genre figures preoccupied with the daily routines of the time, such as the wife of a burgher busy at her toilet or wrath as an angry nobleman.

The motif of triumph played its role in early modern times as well. Not only the victory of virtue over vice as we find illustrated in **Pieter Furnius**'s series (16<sup>th</sup> c.) was modeled after ancient reliefs of triumphal processions, but also the triumph of the cardinal sins, as we find in the tapestries designed after **Pieter Coecke van Aelst**'s cartoons (ca. 1555). The work *Sloth* represents this series in the exhibition.

During the Enlightenment the capital sins lost their importance. It was not until the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that artists renewed their interest in this theme, which they incorporated into genre scenes instead of resorting to allegorical presentation. Illustrators such as **Eduard Ille** (1861) or **Georges Barbier** (1925) transposed typical examples of immoral conduct found in depictions from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries into the bourgeois society of their age. In contrast, **James Ensor** (1888–1905), **Alfred Kubin** (1914), and **Marc Chagall** (1925) enriched the classical iconography with absurd to grotesque motifs, which did away with the seriousness of the subject matter.

The numerous series of works engaged with the capital sins in the last decades make use of a great variety of media and artistic forms,

evidencing an undying fascination for the canon of vices. **Eva Aeppli** (1993/94) and **Magnus von Plessen** (1997) adopt the traditional approach by applying personifications while doing without the symbolic attributes, expressing the vices alone in the physiognomy and mimicry of heads (Aeppli) or in the distortions of a male torso (von Plessen). **Vic Gentils** (1970), **Peter Bräuninger** (1900), and **Martin Mull** (2008) depict the sins by means of genre scenes. However, they view the subject matter with various degrees of detachment. Gentils achieves this with surreal imagery in which the actors resemble jointed dolls; Bräuninger by assuming a distant viewpoint from where he describes the panorama of a nocturnal street scene; Mull by often arbitrarily classifying the images as representing specific sins and thereby consciously disappointing the expectations of his viewers. Finally, **Bruce Nauman** (1983–88/2008) restricts his attention to writing. In his installation on the façade of the Kunstmuseum Bern, the names of the seven cardinal sins overlap with those of the seven virtues and light up in an apparently arbitrary rhythm. This dynamic element brings movement into the static scale of values and motivates the viewer into reflecting on the validity of moral notions.

Pride counts already in the Old Testament as the ‘origin of all sins’ (Eccl. 10.15). In the Middle Ages, pride or, in Latin, *superbia* played a pivotal role in moral theology as the counterpart to the Christian ideal of humility. The Church Fathers’ notion of *superbia* comprised not only pride, vanity, arrogance, conceitedness, and hunger for power, but also all forms of obstinacy, individualistic tendencies, and disobedience – especially towards God. Therefore, when Gregory the Great compiled his canon of sins, he classified *superbia* as the leading sin.

Satan was the archetype of pride in the eyes of theologians. To punish his rebellion against God, the Archangel Lucifer was banned to Hell together with his subordinates. According to biblical exegesis, the fallen Archangel, jealous of the privileged status granted to humankind, seduced Adam and Eve in the shape of a snake. By eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, they made themselves guilty of *superbia* by their disobedience towards God and in their desire to resemble him.

Among the biblical examples for the sin of *superbia* we find Saul, the persecutor of Christians who, following his downfall, was transformed into the humble Paul, not to forget the Babylonian Belshazzar, whose excessive pride was punished by death. When the King desecrated the holy vessels from the Temple of Jerusalem for a profane banquet, the famous words appeared on the wall: ‘Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting,’ announcing Belshazzar’s impending death for the very same night. As an example of hubris from antiquity, the two ‘disgracers’ Phaeton and

Icarus who fell to their deaths were integrated into superbia's iconographic repertoire during the Renaissance.

A further example of punishing hubris is the Tower of Babel, through which the people in the Old Testament sought to be on a par with God. One of the most monumental interpretations of this extremely popular subject in painting around 1600 is a work by the landscape painter **Joos II de Momper** (16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> c.) and a figure painter who cannot be identified with certainty. The Tower of Babel as a stupendous and equally extravagant project has continued to fascinate artists up to the present. **Paul Thek** depicts it in his sculpture *Uncle Tom's Cabin with Tower of Babel* (1976) paradoxically as a fragile construction towering over 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. Signaling humility, the cabin is not only the architectural counterpart to the Babylonian monument of hubris. Having the same title, it also alludes to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel and therefore to another facet attributable to pride, namely discrimination against Afro-Americans in 19th-century America.

**Yinka Shonibare** refers to this problem too in his series of photographs *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* (1998). The artist turns the customary circumstances upside-down by presenting himself as a black dandy who is cared for by white servants. This artwork not only underscores the luxury stamping the upper class's way of life and its arrogance, but also that racism was a matter of course for Victorian class society.

Since the late Middle Ages the notion of superbia focused on the aspect of vanity. Again a figure stemming from Greek mythology

embodied also this folly: the hunter Narcissus was so fascinated by his own beauty that he fell in love with his reflection. This motif is often taken up in contemporary art too. While **Mat Collishaw** (1966) depicts himself as Narcissus – ironically mirrored in a puddle of mud on an English street, **Oscar Muñoz** (2001/02) captures on film the gradual disintegration of his self-portrait, which he drew with charcoal dust on the surface of water filling a washbasin. In this way the artist refers to the fragile nature of self-images or even of our existence.

**Martin Parr** (2007–08) and **Daniela Rossell** (2000–02) engage with the importance attached to narcissism and image cultivation in contemporary society in series of photographs that display the beauty and/or wealth of the representatives of the 'upper crust'.

Additionally, three videos focus on the role of 'skin-deep' beauty in the present. **Frances Goodman** (2005) takes the example of male bodybuilders to hit out at the cult of the body, while **Marina Abramovic** (1975) as well as **Klara Kuchta** (1980) confront cliché conceptions of female beauty, both presenting combing hair as a central motif in their works.

## 2 Invidia

## Envy

Invidia is the deadly sin of envy. People that envy others begrudge them what they themselves covet. They feel inferior and continually feel the need to compare themselves with their fellows. Envy is an inner torment and can not be acted out publicly. Therefore it can be characterized as the most lonely and clandestine deadly sin. Illustrating this sin is correspondingly difficult, which possibly explains why this section comprises relatively few works.

**Christofano Robetta** (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> c.) and **Joseph Werner** (1668) illustrated envy in the personification of an ugly old woman. Also the Bible illustrates this theme in paradigmatic episodes such as the story of Cain and Abel or Saul and David. Because Cain could not endure the injustice of God scorning his sacrifice while accepting Abel's, his envy changed suddenly into rage and he murdered his brother on an open field. The fatal blow is impressively depicted in a copy after **Peter Paul Rubens** (17<sup>th</sup> c.) as well as in **Pierre Nicolas Legrand's** painting (ca. 1820). Both Lucas van Leyden (1508) and **Otto Dix** (1946) illustrated Saul's envy. David's triumph over the Philistines and the soothing music he played on the harp made Saul so envious that he attempted to kill him by throwing a spear at him twice. Riding the wave of 19<sup>th</sup>-century fascination for the Orient, **Fernand Cormon's** painting *Jalousie au sérail* (1874) shows an odalisque's malicious pleasure on perceiving that her harem rival has been stabbed to death.

## Anger

## 3 Ira

Ira is the vice of anger. It is expressed in a wide spectrum of forms ranging from surly moodiness via outrage through to anger, hate, and finally acting out one's wrath and aggression both verbally and physically. Christian teachings condemn anger because it makes people believe that they can make final judgments on their own, but in fact this can be done by God alone. In today's (Western) society, anger signalizes loss of self-control and is counted as asocial behavior.

Wrath is often depicted in old art as resulting from the deadly sin of gluttony. Both immoderate consumption of alcohol and gambling were regarded as triggers for anger and interested, above all, 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch artists such as **Adriaen Brouwer** (17<sup>th</sup> c.) and **Joos van Craesbeeck** (1648/49), who mostly interpreted such subject matter morally.

Contemporary art focuses less on what incites wrath and more on how we can let off steam. While **Yarisal & Kublitz** proffer assistance with their ironical artwork *Anger Release Machine* (2006-08), visitors can live out their aggressions in sport in **Kendell Geers'** work. In **Artur Zmijewski's** film *Itzik* (2003) the protagonist talks himself into a rage. His viewpoints – a mixture of historical facts, biblical stories, and ancient Jewish legends – culminate in the observation that the Holocaust gives the Jews the right to kill Arabs.

Greed is represented as obsessive thrift or covetousness. The miser can neither share nor give to others. His goal in life is to acquire as much wealth as he can and obtain as many commodities for the lowest price possible.

The deadly sin of pride is associated with greed because people who are proud are also power hungry.

In the bible, Lucas's parable of the rich glutton and poor Lazarus is one of the most famous examples for this vice. The arrogant spend-thrift, immersed in gluttony at his opulent banquet, refuses to give poor Lazarus any alms. The parable denounces pride and gluttony as a sin of the powerful, but in pictorial art it is mostly viewed from the perspective of greed, such as in the paintings of **Nicolaus Knüpfer** or **Cornelis Saftleven** (who both lived in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century).

The artist **Quentin Massys** (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> c.) from Antwerp transposed the Christian anti-ideal into the life of the burghers by illustrating covetousness and self-interest exemplarily in the motifs of money-changers or profiteers. The extremely ugly figures point out that Massys intended to morally condemn such professions based on greed.

According to literature already in the Middle Ages, largely old people were prone to covetousness. Senility and imminent death were seen as the cause for old men and old women desperately and absurdly holding on to their earthly belongings. Thus **Gerrit van Honthorst** (ca. 1623) painted an old woman examining a coin with a pince-nez on her nose as a personification of avarice. Often the

gesture of grabbing hands was used to illustrate avarice besides the attributes of a purse, coins, and glasses, as we can see in the works of **Thomas Couture**, **Alphonse Leroy**, or **Auguste Rodin** from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

We can consider the sin of avarice primarily in the amassment of individual benefits to the detriment of the general public. From this point of view it is reasonable to interpret avarice as a typical vice of modern times on the grounds of a growing orientation towards individualism that profits at present from very strong neo-liberal tendencies in the economy and politics. Today we strongly criticize the financial sector and accuse the banks of selfish greed for the purposes of increasing their own wealth. **Andreas Gursky** (2008) documents how capital is increased by means of complicated transactions in the hectic atmosphere of the Kuwait stock exchange.

Although contemporary art has taken up the subject of the power of money, ethics play a lesser role than in art of earlier epochs. **Anna Witt**'s video (2003–08) displays how fragile the bond between social discipline is and how easily normally suppressed primordial instincts such as covetousness can be unleashed. She fitted out a gallery situated in a much-frequented subway station as a living room and invited visitors to find banknotes hidden in the space. The search, which began in a careful and controlled way, soon turned into a passionate act of destruction.



## Artists in Residence

The Stiftung GegenwART has supported this exhibition in a number of ways, including three scholarships for artists in residence and funding towards four works by artists under 30 years of age.

**Lutz & Guggisberg** (\*1968, Wettingen / \*1966, Biel) **0 Deadly sins series**

*MASKEN*, 2010

Since 1996, the artistic duo Lutz & Guggisberg produce in every medium conceivable ironically alienated images of the world, which often develop into veritable counter-worlds. The artists produced an installation for the exhibition that depicts the deadly sins as a series of 'little boats': The cubes with painted surfaces represent container ships, which are used for transportation and facilitate the flow of commodities in our global consumer society. The vertical hanging and title likewise identify them as masks, whose magical and sacred character is underscored by the lighting. Commodities as fetishes or consumerism as the ultimate deadly sin? Even though the artists raise these questions, they playfully leave them unanswered.

**Frances Goodman** (\*1975, Johannesburg) **2 Envy**

*The Dream*, 2010

Frances Goodman engages with the subject matter of envy in conjunction with marriage and aging in her installation. The artist has created a kitschy and romantic atmosphere with decorated lengths of fabric hanging in cascades from the ceiling and forming a kind of baldachin. She focuses on the envy women can feel in face of social pressure and expectations that they marry as early as possible. Con-

stant comparison in regards to looks, age, and success feeds envy. Quotes of women who Frances Goodman interviewed for her artwork reveal that they desire and anticipate a perfect wedding, but are also plagued by uncertainties and fears about not being led to the altar and having to live alone.

**Simon Senn** (\*1986, La Chaux-de-Fonds) **3 Anger**

*Rue el Adala*, 2010

Simon Senn has taken up the theme of intercultural communication as a source for frustration and anger in his two-part video installation *Rue el Adala*. While fits of anger experienced by three Moroccan street traders confront the viewer without the work proffering an explanation of what triggered it off, a second film explains the context of the video. There one can see how the artist asks the three street traders if they would be willing to act out this scene. Although staged, the seeming authenticity of the men's anger makes the prejudices and misunderstandings that crop up when different cultures encounter one another seem very real.

**Seline Baumgartner** (\*1980, Zürich) **3 Anger**

*I am another*, 2010

Seline Baumgartner repeatedly investigates the question of reality within certain social groups. In her video installation *I am another* she explores the notions New York's residents have of terrorists – who can also be considered as the epitome for being anger-driven – after the Twin Towers were attacked on September 11, 2001. Following

the artist's instructions, New Yorkers phrase their idea of how a terrorist thinks, feels, and acts from the first person viewpoint. Thereby the truth of simple characterizations of and also prejudices about what motivated the terrorists is increasingly challenged and uncertainties become apparent that prevent an unequivocal opinion.

### **Augustin Rebetez** (\*1986, Jura) **3 Anger**

*Tout ce qui a le visage de la colère et n'élève pas la voix*, 2010

The photographer Augustin Rebetez focuses on the dreams, fears, and excesses of the younger generation to which he belongs. In his display *Tout ce qui a le visage de la colère et n'élève pas la voix*, which comprises documentary as well as staged photographs, drawings, and a sound track, the artist is absorbed by the anger of a thirty year old who feels powerless in face of the problems inflicting the world. How can we come to terms with physical and emotional anger in our lives? Should we suppress it or give it free rein? What are the consequences of suppressing this emotion? And if we give it free rein: is it possible to do this in a way that is not only infantile or dramatic?

### **Lena Maria Thüring** (\*1981, Basel)

*In Camera*, 2010

In her video installation, Lena Maria Thüring addresses the underlying distinctive features of how we deal with the seven deadly sins: everyone's daily confrontation with themselves in order not to fall prey to their sins and desires, as well as everyone's dependency on

images that others have of them and influence their actions.

Two wrestlers engage in a fight in which they continuously alternate between dominating and succumbing positions; this image is a manifestation of our struggle for an individual and personal identity, articulating that sometimes our sins are the victors and sometimes our virtues. The dialogue in Sartre's theatrical piece *Huis clos*, in which three dead people are imprisoned together and – consciously and unconsciously – mutually torment one another, deals with patterns in human relationships and their interdependencies.

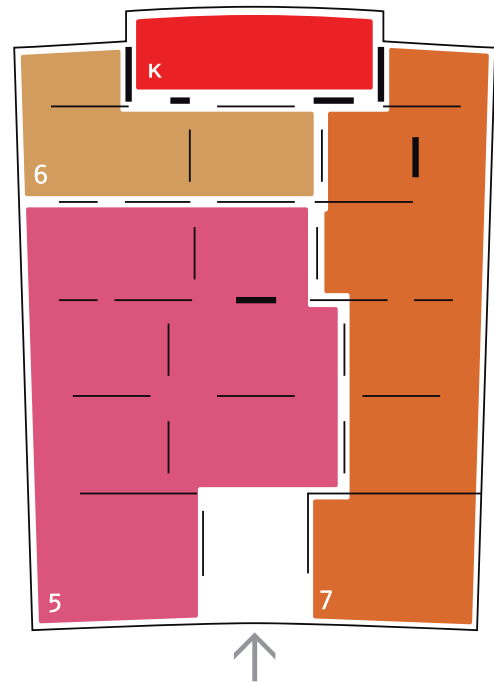
### **Vincent Olinet** (\*1981, Lyon) **7 Gluttony**

*Kaiserin de chocolat aux fraises gonflées et son sabayon public*, 2010

Vincent Olinet's gigantic layer cakes are both enticing and revolting. Proceeding from cakes he baked himself and decorated with icing and cake ornaments, he then develops new forms out of polystyrene on a much grander scale. To make the sculpture weather-proof he gives it a coat of synthetic resin. The result is in no way perfect. The manual production and alienation of the seductive aspect of the object is pivotal in Olinet's art. The artist plays with the notion that shiny surfaces are deceptive because they are transient and conceal a downside. His gigantic layered cakes too mirror this ambiguous play with our cravings: On the one hand they seduce us, wetting an appetite for sweet things, and on the other they disgust us because of their size and their color.

## Exhibition Plan Zentrum Paul Klee

- 5 Luxuria: Lust
- 6 Acedia: sloth
- 7 gula: gluttony
- K cultural history
- A Artist in residence: outside



Luxuria is the deadly sin of lust. Today we would rather use the term ‘uninhibited promiscuity’. Like gluttony, it is a sin of the flesh that is, to an extent, necessary for preserving humankind. On the part of the Church sexuality was only accepted insofar as it remained within the confines of marriage and restricted to reproduction. While extremely functional until early modern times, religion increasingly lost its former significance, a tendency that was facilitated by the invention of the contraceptive pill in the 1960s, which made sexuality independent of reproduction. This led to a change in dealing with sexuality, making it ubiquitous in our society today.

In the Middle Ages and early modern times the classical examples for lust stem from biblical history. In several images lust appears as a result of gluttony. Lot’s daughters could thus seduce their father after making him drunk and thereby secure the family’s lineage. In contrast to the painting from the **School of Jacob de Backer** (1580), where Lot’s daughters beguile him in still relatively harmless poses, **Jan Steen’s** painting (ca. 1668–70) presents a rather daring interpretation. Further examples are Potiphar’s wife who attempted to captivate Joseph (**Marco Liberì**, 17<sup>th</sup> c.) and, in a painting by **Peter Paul Rubens**, the counter-image of the lascivious woman, Susanna.

Among the biblical paradigms for lust we also find the parable of the prodigal son. He squandered his part of the inheritance on prostitutes and afterwards returned home, poor and penitent. Christian allegories included ethical and didactical content in Dutch art of

the 17<sup>th</sup> century such as in **Cornelis van Haarlem’s** painting (1615). Inn interiors such as **Hendrik Pot’s** *Merry Company* (1630) originated from the representational tradition related to the prodigal son. Additionally, Dutch genre painting of the 17<sup>th</sup> century often alludes to sexuality by means of symbols that were generally understood at the time. For example, the dead birds in **Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh’s** *Kitchen Interior with a Maid and Fishmongers* refer to the German and Dutch term ‘vögeln’ or ‘vogelen’, a vulgar expression meaning to ‘make love’ and a homonym for the word for ‘birds’. Thus plucking the duck as well as the birdcage point out that female virtue is endangered in this scene.

Today the ubiquity of sexuality is reflected in art too, where it has often been represented in a very forthright manner since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In **George Grosz’s** drawings from the 1940s, in which he links the act of painting with sexual intercourse with grotesque exaggeration, the artist is not only engaged with the issue of sexuality: His works are also satirical commentaries on the aesthetic topos of the ‘pregnant moment’ in painting.

By representing sexual content male fantasies as well as bourgeois double standards are addressed. **Sigmar Polke’s** series of drawings not only engage with the conflict over sexuality in representations and the status of women, triggered by stereotype pin-ups on the front pages of German glossy magazines such as *Stern* or *Quick*, but also focus on the chauvinism accompanying the sell-out of the so-called sexual revolution in the 1970s.

Up to the 1960s men reigned alone in the depiction of erotic scenes. One of the first women to break this unwritten law was **Carolee Schneemann**, who merged erotic photographs with images of nature in her film *Fuses* (1964–67). Virtually simultaneously in 1969, **Betty Tompkins** began the works she refers to as *Fuck Paintings*. In a similar way to Schneemann, Tompkins explores the problem of how women can form images of their desires.

Photographs from the porn industry seem to have been conclusively established as the paradigmatic general reservoir for erotic images by the 1990s. Up to and for the greater part of the 19th century, erotic poses and acts were illustrated only in books and sold under the counter (for example, the anonymously published novel *Thérèse philosophe*, 1783). However, in the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, sexual images grew more explicit and were increasingly produced in larger formats.

Both **Marlene Dumas** in her watercolor pieces *Porno Blues* (1993) and **Cecily Brown** in her painting *Summer Storm* (2000) break with the photographic precision of the images they use as models by means of the painting process and thereby undermine pornographic strategies of illuminating every single crevice and wrinkle. In contrast, **Jiri Georg Dokoupil's** pictures comply to the style of representation typical for the pornographic genre. Even though Dokoupil transfers the photographic images he uses as models onto canvas using a technique of his own invention – that is, he does not use brushes or paints but the soot from a candle – his extremely realistic paintings closely resemble photography

and play with our non-rational curiosity regarding pornographic images.

The rules of pornographic representation function very differently in **Cindy Sherman's** work (1992). She makes use of such imagery to represent eroticism without any passion while also not recapitulating the genre. Her photographs stand out on account of the fact that they leave out the act of sexual intercourse altogether and demonstrate – with monstrous, partly disfigured or fragmented bodies in erotic poses – that a canon of normality is at the base of every notion of eroticism.

Acedia or sloth is the deadly sin of idleness. The term can, however, also be translated with boredom, revulsion, despondency, weariness, aversion, satiation, or laziness. From the viewpoint of early Christianity – especially of the so-called desert fathers – sloth or idleness referred to the neglect of religious duties. The demon of noontide was the cause of this vice; by tormenting monks and weakening their souls he triggered doubts in their minds about God’s omnipotence, making them lapse into indolence. At a later date the term ‘melancholy’ became closely linked to that of acedia. Sloth refers to one of the worst vices in monastic life. In the ancient Hippocratic teachings of the four humors, melancholy characterizes a relentless malady. Conversely, the Aristotelian school of philosophers regarded this sickness also as a state of mind that brings forth the ingenious intellectual feats of humankind.

Thus the iconographic tradition reveals already in early representations not only the spiritual and ingenious aspect of acedia or melancholy, but also the qualities of lethargy and aversion. **Albrecht Dürer’s** copperplate engraving *Melencolia I* (1514), uniting both pictorial traditions, symbolizes, on the one hand, despair despite the sciences and, on the other, the potential for invention and attaining knowledge. In the engraving *The Doctor’s Dream* (ca. 1498), Dürer takes up the notion of a man sleeping while a demon, using bellows, instills his dreams with lewd fantasies. The naked woman embodies lust as a vice resulting from idleness.

The series of engravings entitled *The Idler’s Punishment* (ca. 1565) by **Philips Galle** illustrates how laziness leads to poverty, which

can, however, be avoided by working hard. The series of prints *Industry and Idleness* (1747) by **William Hogarth** fits into this context by showing scenes of the success of industry while idleness is ultimately punished with ruin.

In Dutch genre painting of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the deadly sin of sloth is often linked to smoking, which also is attributed to the capital sin of gluttony. **Pieter Codde**, **Adriaen van Ostade**, and not to forget **David Teniers the Younger** all combined these two vices. They very probably linked numbing the senses by smoking to acedia, whereas the time wasted in idleness was often interpreted as symbolizing vanity. *The Sleeping Farmer*, a copy painted after an original by **Adriaen Brouwer**, embodies the vice of laziness resulting from alcoholism. In Brouwer’s *Cardplayers in the tavern*, sloth not only goes hand-in-hand with the love of alcohol but is also linked to playing with game cards.

Modern idleness has many faces and can be described in terms of lack of initiative, indifference, indolence, a passive attitude, despondency, or a sense of hopelessness. Just as in the past, the motif of sleep still plays a predominant role. **Erik Steinbrecher’s** *Gras* photographs (1993–2002) show people sleeping and resting on lawns and in parks. They may be just taking a break from a busy working day or just as plausibly be unemployed and therefore idly wasting away their time. **Bill Viola** focuses on idleness resulting from television consumerism in his work (1984). We can view people sitting in their living rooms as they stare, motionless and absent-mindedly, into a static camera as if it was a television.

**Jürgen Klauke** (1980/81) too takes television as a symptomatic symbol for idleness in contemporary times in his work, in which he additionally adopts the traditional symbols of smoking and sleep. **Muntean/Rosenblum** have peopled their paintings (2001 and 2004) with bored and apparently lethargic youths who, in a congealed setting, are metaphors of melancholy and hopelessness. **Erwin Wurm** engages in his work (2001) with the theme of the artist and shows how he, seemingly mentally inactive, sits around the whole day and does nothing, messing around in his flat regardless of the passing hours. To an extent he provides the viewer with instructions on how to become a living sculpture of sloth and likewise implicitly puts the question of when and from where do artists find inspiration.

Like lust, gluttony counts as a deadly sin of the flesh. Both sins originate from physical appetites and are therefore 'dangerous' for every one. As gluttony means intemperance when eating and drinking, it is referred to as a deadly vice of community life and was thus formerly often typically represented in inn interiors. The key crime of persons with immoderate eating and drinking habits is that they make gods of their stomachs. Monks were warned against thinking about food and drink because this could adversely affect their relationship to God. Addiction is still topical today, as regardless whether it concerns eating or drinking too much or dependency on drugs, it proves ruinous to interpersonal relationships. Gluttony is seldom represented on its own in art; instead it is shown in proximity to the sins of wrath, sloth, and lust. Art often distinguished four stages of drunkenness: 1) drinking with relish; 2) aggression leading to arguments and fights; 3) loss of bodily control; 4) falling asleep.

Representing scenes of inn interiors became especially widespread through 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch genre painting. Typically these interiors paradigmatically illustrated the detrimental effects of drunkenness when groups of friends greedily drank together. Gesticulating frantically – wantonly or angry – they grow resentful; they vomit or sleep in a corner or at the table. Frayed clothing worn by the figures in the paintings points out the moral message of the scene. The consequences of alcoholism in contemporary art are still the same, as we can see in **Gillian Wearing's** video installation *Drunk* (1999). However, today the moralizing aspect is not included. The

artist has managed to present people in a way that they command our respect although they are under the influence of alcohol giving free reign to their moods and physical needs.

Some of the representations of gluttony are rather ambiguous: We cannot say for certain whether the 17<sup>th</sup>-century painting of a dinner party by **Jacob Jordaens** with the title *The King Drinks* or **Varlin's** *Gluttony* (1964) illustrates people relishing what they eat and drink or pending orgiastic gluttony. We can only guess the intensity of the binge preceding the photographs taken by **Cindy Sherman** (1986–90) or **Wolfgang Tillmans** (2002) as we only get to see the aftermath. In **Gilbert & George's** *Balls* (1972) the distorted photographs insinuate that the two artists are suffering from hangovers from their excessive nightly escapades.

Besides vomiting, quarrelling, smoking and lethargy the cardinal sin of lust also results from alcoholism. In genre painting symbols such as a pipe, flute, or glass must suffice when referring to sexual intercourse as **Jan Steen** illustrates in his painting (ca. 1660–65). In contemporary art too we find that gluttony and eroticism are thematically interlinked, like in **Will Cotton's** paintings (2009–10) or in **Nathalie Djurberg's** surreal films (2005–08).

## Living It Up?

The seven deadly or capital sins urge humankind to live in moderation without sinning and please God by doing so. Additionally they outline standards for community life. As Christian principles and instruction have lost authority since the Enlightenment, we must ask what role the seven deadly sins still play today. The numerous advertising campaigns referencing images related to the deadly sins to promote products reveal that they have not been forgotten completely. Presentation of the deadly sins in advertising influences audiences in a contradictory way: Vices that should warn us to live a temperate life do the opposite and entice us to lead a dissolute life of pleasure. Have pride, sloth, lust, wrath, gluttony, envy, and avarice lost their immoral reputations?

In everyday life we are confronted with the seven sins daily even if their names are not mentioned. Products are extolled in erotic terms; some advertisements target at provoking envy in audiences. In supermarkets our goal is to collect as many 'free miles' as possible so that shopping seems profitable. At home in front of the television we grow idle. Anger fills the news from all over the world, whereby it is often difficult to judge if it is justified or outrageous. Proud gestures of superiority and mocking the opponent articulate triumph in sport.

At the same time warnings against leading an immoral life continue. Instead of the Church, the state – and with it the majority of the people – has partially taken over the role of moralizing. Campaigns



attempt to prevent people from becoming overweight and from smoking, or forbid the latter in certain areas. The rule of temperance is again the height of fashion because those who use less natural resources produce less CO<sub>2</sub> and are environmentally friendly. The poor envy the rich, which the state attempts to alleviate by providing community relief services. We are also reprimanded in mass media. To a large extent only monogamy is tolerated despite the sexual revolution; famous philanderers like Tiger Woods are forced to publicly apologize for their moral offences. We often hear: 'That is sick', when people talk of divergences from normal conduct. What does not fit in with our notion of life is considered a malady. In the case of homosexuality medical books testify to this until the seventies. Idleness or sloth is looked down on because it is contrary to the principles of economic productivity. Despite living in a society that has been freed of from religious creeds, rules of behavior exist that have their roots in the moral code represented by the seven deadly sins. Deviations from these rules are often treated condescendingly, but may be ostracized and boycotted too. What has definitely changed is that we no longer have to justify ourselves before God but before the social majority.

## AGENDA KUNSTMUSEUM BERN

### Öffentliche Führungen:

Di, 19h und So, 11h

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Entrance fee, no inscription

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Ma, 21 déc., 25 jan., 19h30

Prix d'entrée, sans inscription

### Öffentliche Führung mit Dolmetscher in Gebärdensprache:

Di, 23. Nov., 19h

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### Einführung für Lehrpersonen:

Di, 19. Okt.: ZPK, 16h / KMB, 18h

Mi, 20. Okt.: ZPK, 14h / KMB, 16h

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### Gesprächsreihe zu den 7 Todsünden

#### Andreas Thiel – Hochmut:

Di, 14. Dez., 20h

#### Kurt Aeschbacher – Neid:

Di, 18. Jan., 20h

#### Ludwig Hasler – Zorn:

Di, 25. Jan., 20h

#### Peter Schneider – Geiz:

Di, 1. Feb., 20h

Ausstellungseintritt, ohne Anmeldung

### Literarische Führungen mit

**Michaela Wendt:** Di, 23. Nov., 7. Dez., 11. Jan., 18h und So, 7. Nov., 19. Dez., 30. Jan., 13h

Ausstellungseintritt + CHF 5.-

### Kurs mit der Volkshochschule Bern:

Mi, 10. Nov., 17. Nov., 1. Dez., 15h – 16h im KMB und

Mi, 24. Nov., 15h – 16h im ZPK

CHF 80.- für 4 Mal / Anmeldung: VHS Bern,

T 031 320 30 30, info@vhsbe.ch

### Filme im Kino Kunstmuseum:

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**Siebeneinhalb:** Sa, 30. Okt., 21h; So, 31. Okt., 15h30 und

Mo, 1. Nov., 21h.

Mehr Informationen auf

[www.kinokunstmuseum.ch](http://www.kinokunstmuseum.ch)

## AGENDA ZENTRUM PAUL KLEE

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Sa und So, 14h

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### Public Guided Tours in English:

Every 1st Sun of the month, 15h

Entrance fee, no inscription

### Visites commentées en français:

chaque 21<sup>ème</sup> dim du mois, 15h

Prix d'entrée, sans inscription

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Mi, 20. Okt.: ZPK, 14h / KMB, 16h

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### **Literarische Führungen mit**

**Michaela Wendt:** So, 31. Okt., 21. Nov., 9. Jan., 13. Feb., 13h30 und Mi, 10. Nov., 1. Dez., 22. Dez., 19. Jan., 2. Feb., 13h  
Ausstellungseintritt + CHF 5.-

### **Filmvorstellung in Zusammenarbeit mit der Uni Bern: Anatomie Titus. Fall of**

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### **Lesung von HP Riegel: Immodorf. Die Biografie**

Mi, 27. Okt., 19h30  
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CHF 80.- für 4 Mal / Anmeldung: VHS Bern, T 031 320 30 30, [info@vhs.be.ch](mailto:info@vhs.be.ch)

### **Gesprächsreihe zu den 7 Todsünden:**

**Charlotte Roche (tbc) – Wollust:**

So, 16. Jan., 11h  
**Beda Stadler – Völlerei:**

So, 23. Jan., 11h  
**Pascal Couchepin – Trägheit:**

So, 13. Feb., 11h  
Ausstellungseintritt, ohne Anmeldung

### **Konzert mit dem Orchester für Alte Musik Bern:**

**Les Passions de l'Âme:**

So, 20. Feb., 17h.  
Dauer ca. 100 Min. CHF 40.- / red. CHF 28.- / 18.- / Mit Ausstellungsbesuch CHF 50.- / 38.- / 28.-.  
Kulturlegi: CHF 20.- / 30.-.  
Vorverkauf: [www.kulturticket.ch](http://www.kulturticket.ch),  
Tel. 0900 585 887. [www.lespassions.ch](http://www.lespassions.ch)

### **Konzert: Die sieben Todsünden Laure Barras, Sopran;**

**Irene Puccia, Klavier**

Sa, 29. Jan., 17h.  
Ausstellungseintritt, ohne Anmeldung

### **CITY WALKS AND GUIDED TOURS**

»Lust und Laster in Bern« – **Die Stadtführung von Bern Tourismus als anregende Vorbereitung auf die Ausstellung:** So, 17. Okt., 14. Nov., 12. Dez., 9h.

Treffpunkt: Tourist Center Bahnhof Bern.

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Dauer 1 Stunde. CHF 20.-

### **Stadtrundgang »Orte der Wut« (konzipiert im Auftrag der Biennale Bern):**

Di, 19. Okt., 2. Nov., 16. Nov., 30. Nov., 14. Dez., 18h.  
Treffpunkt Münsterplatz (Seiteneingang Münster).  
Dauer ca. 90 Minuten. CHF 20.- / red. CHF 15.- / Berner Kulturlegi CHF 6.- / Kinder bis 12 Jahre gratis. Mehr Informationen auf [www.stattland.ch](http://www.stattland.ch)

Programmänderungen vorbehalten

### **CURATORS**

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

### **CATALOGUE (IN GERMAN)**

**Lust und Laster. Die 7 Todsünden von Dürer bis Nauman.** Hrsg. Kunstmuseum Bern und Zentrum Paul Klee. Mit Texten von Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Christine Göttler, Claudine Metzger, Monique Meyer, Barbara Müller, Anette Schaffer, Gerhard Schulze, Samuel Vitali. Ca. 380 Seiten, 480 Abb. Hatje Cantz Verlag. ISBN 978-3-7757-2647-4. CHF 57.-

## INFORMATION

### Duration

15.10.2010 - 20.02.2011

### Admission

CHF 24.- / 20.- for both sites

### Opening Hours KMB and ZPK

Tue-Sun 10h – 17h,

KMB Tue until 21h

Holidays:

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

25. Dec., closed

ZPK closed on Dec. 24.

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