

Media release, 10 July 2019

“Lost in Time Like Tears in Rain” – new collection display on view now at the Fondation Beyeler



The new presentation of works from the collection at the Fondation Beyeler goes in search of lost time. Conceived as an invitation to wander through the gardens of modern art history, it ends with contemporary art, where it ties in with the museum's summer show devoted to Rudolf Stingel, in whose work memories and the traces of time also play a key role.

Visitors will find celebrated masterpieces, seldom exhibited rare pieces, newly conceived artist's rooms, unexpected encounters between art works, valuable loans from the Daros Collection and other private collections as well as new acquisitions presented here for the first time. Unexpected displays will question and challenge our viewing habits. Curated by Director Sam Keller, the collection display extends over half the museum space and comprises around a hundred paintings, sculptures, photographs and drawings created between 1883/84 and 2018. On view as of now until 2 September in Renzo Piano's museum building and in the Fondation Beyeler's surrounding park.

Questions of time

What is the relationship between time and art? What traces does time leave in works of art? Do these traces generate a different sense of time in the viewer? What is the relation between time and space? Can time be experienced through movement, intensity or memories? Can art be timeless? Is it able to hold and preserve time? Are artworks witnesses of time, time travellers or even time machines? What makes us experience works of art as contemporary? Do artworks also have a lifespan? Is there a half-life to their impact? How can art bring back memories? How do artworks evoke and resist the transience of human life? What does the art of our time say of our relation to time? These and other time-related questions have guided the selection and the arrangement of works in the new collection display.

A new time

With groundbreaking scientific discoveries such as Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and atomic physics, our understanding of and our relation to time shifted at the beginning of the 20th century. French philosopher Henri Bergson already considered these questions in his work **Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness** (1889). Modern artists also devoted themselves extensively to the topic, e.g. Wassily Kandinsky in his influential book **Concerning the Spiritual in Art** (1911). Futurism, Cubism, Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism and many other avant-garde movements explored new artistic forms and means of expression that redefined the relation of man and art to time. In modern art, time became an essential factor.

At all times

The relation of man and art to time was already a topic for the great thinkers of Antiquity, as attested by the Latin phrase "Vita brevis, ars longa" (Life is short, art is long). The Roman philosopher Seneca attributed this aphorism to the Greek physician Hippocrates. Goethe later took it up in his **Faust**. In the modern age, the relation between art and time has become a pervasive theme of world literature.

Dark secrets in the nursery

With Dorian Gray, Irish writer Oscar Wilde created a legendary character whose wish to preserve the beauty of his youth is fulfilled while his painted portrait, hidden away in his childhood bedroom, ages in his stead. As we know, the story does not end well. What has become of **Gerhard Richter's** youthful lovers? What does the averted face of **Georges Seurat's** riverside figure look like today? What about **Balthus'** figure of an old man sitting on a Parisian pavement watching children play? What remains of the real Andy in **Warhol's** self-portrait? And how do we recognise ourselves in **Richter's** mirrors?

The scent of madeleines

French writer Marcel Proust writes in his celebrated novel **In Search of Lost Time** that the work of art is the only way to recover lost time. The unexpected resurfacing of his childhood memories is triggered by the scent of a madeleine cake dipped in tea. Could this also happen with the apples in **Paul Cézanne's** still life, **Claude Monet's** cathedral in morning light, **Henri Matisse's** paper cuts, **Louise Bourgeois'** giant spider, **Wolfgang Tillmans'** forgotten cup of coffee or **Tacita Dean's** chalk drawings of clouds?

Lost memories

In Ridley Scott's classic film **Blade Runner**, the dying replicant Roy, played by Rutger Hauer, delivers the following memorable lines: "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain."

This last sentence has given its title to the Fondation Beyeler's new collection display. It echoes and reverberates in **Alberto Giacometti's** man walking in the rain, in **Roy Lichtenstein's** petrified girl with a tear, in **Max Ernst's** exploding snow flowers, in **Felix González-Torres'** glittering bead curtain, in **Philippe Parreno's** sleet-covered Christmas tree, and in other fascinating works from the museum's collection.

What remains of our own experiences and memories? Will they be lost in time, like tears in rain? Or will traces of them remain inscribed in artworks that outlast us?

INFO:

The collection display “Lost in Time Like Tears in Rain” was curated by Sam Keller, Director of the Fondation Beyeler, and is on view until 2 September 2019. Admission CHF 25.00, free up to the age of 25.

Works by the following artists are currently on display:

Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne, Georges Seurat, Henri Rousseau, Henri Matisse (artist's room), Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Constantin Brancusi, Piet Mondrian, Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, Max Ernst, Balthus, Alberto Giacometti, Francis Bacon, Louise Bourgeois, Mark Rothko (artist's room), Barnett Newman, Ellsworth Kelly, Gerhard Richter (artist's room), Thomas Schütte, Marlene Dumas, Jenny Holzer, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Rudolf Stingel, Philippe Parreno, Tacita Dean, Pawel Althamer, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Wolfgang Tillmans (artist's room).

The recent acquisitions *MAMA IV* (2016) and *People of the Earth (Mike)* (2018) by Pawel Althamer, *Fraught Times, FZRA January 1998* (2018) by Philippe Parreno and *Untitled 2017 (no water no fire) (la timidité)* by Rirkrit Tiravanija will be presented for the first time at the Fondation Beyeler.

#BeyelerCollection

Image: Roy Lichtenstein, *Girl with Tear III*, 1977; oil and Magna on canvas, 117.0 x 101.5 cm; Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Beyeler Collection; © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein / 2019, ProLitteris, Zurich / Photo: Robert Bayer

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Fondation Beyeler opening hours: 10am to 6pm daily, Wednesday 10am to 8pm