



Empowerment

September 10, 2022 – January 8, 2023

Curators: Andreas Beitin, Katharina Koch, Uta Ruhkamp

Curatorial Assistants: Regine Epp, Dino Steinhof

With *Empowerment*, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg offers on this scale the worldwide first comprehensive, transnational exhibition of feminist-oriented art of the twenty-first century. On more than 2,000 m², the exhibition brings together works by roughly 100 artists from 50 countries who reflect different feminist approaches and analyze the societies of the world with the means of art in order to point to possible and impossible ways out of the global crises.

“We should all be feminists!” (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie) – Feminism has long since become part of popular culture in Europe and the United States. However, despite worldwide movements, demonstrations, and petitions to establish equality, it is still not possible in the twenty-first century to speak of comprehensive gender equality with regard to women and LGBTQIA+ communities—neither in this country nor elsewhere. In many places, structural relationships of power and inequality prevent equal pay or the remuneration of domestic work and are responsible for oppression and exploitation up to physical violence or even murder. Activist, provocative, and direct, but also poetic, humorous, and subtle, countless artists worldwide react with their works to draw attention to these untenable conditions and to achieve equal and forward-looking life opportunities for themselves and other marginalized people. Last but not least, the overturning of the Roe vs Wade ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2022, among other things, has shown that it is exactly the right time to obtain an overview of how artists imbue their art with political meaning and create such fascinating and stirring works of art.

With the exhibition *Empowerment*, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg is offering a comprehensive global overview of art and feminisms of the twenty-first century—from roughly 50 countries from all continents. Within the framework of seven thematic areas that have emerged from the worldwide research of artworks (Protest & Empowerment, Gender & Identity, Herstories & Other Narratives, Desired & Violated Bodies, Labor of Care, Planetary Challenges, Feminist Futures), the works on view help to explore the following questions, among others: How do artists act out of their respective situations in the postcolonial, digital present? What emancipatory understanding underlies their art? How do they broaden the view of a feminist-oriented future? Can approaches to healing or reconciliation be discerned? Questions regarding social inequality, sexism, racism, migration, the relationship of bodies, technology, and ecological concerns are also negotiated. These are all issues that affect everyone.

In order to do justice to these globally significant perspectives, several international networks of scholars, curators, and artists were initiated for *Empowerment*. The museum’s own research was supplemented by artistic proposals from globally active regional experts.



The curatorial perspective was further expanded by the invited collectives Nacional Trovoa (Brazil), Njabala (Uganda), What the hELL she doin! (Great Britain/Kenya/South Africa/ Uganda), AXA projects (China/Germany), and Sandbox Collective (India), each of whom have curated their own Guest Spaces within the exhibition. *Empowerment* is presented in a scenography designed especially for the exhibition by the award-winning Berlin studio raumlabor.

Publication

In cooperation with the Federal Agency for Civic Education, the exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive publication that extends far beyond the exhibition itself: *Empowerment. Art and Feminisms*, with texts and interviews by roughly 50 international scholars, artists, and curators, edited by Andreas Beitin, Katharina Koch, and Uta Ruhkamp, 500 pages, approx. 380 illustrations, (German, separate English text edition) available for only 7 € in the museum store, at kunstmuseum.de/shop, or at bpb.de (plus postage).

Cooperation Partners

In order to bring the socially relevant and highly topical subject of empowerment even more widely into the public eye at the local level, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg has initiated a cooperation with the **Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg** and the **Kunstverein Wolfsburg**. The Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg will open the exhibition *WE ARE - Feminism Belongs to Us All* on September 2, 2022 (duration: September 3, 2022 – January 8, 2023) and the Kunstverein Wolfsburg will open the exhibition *Diverse Realities* by the American artist Tamiko Thiel on the same day (duration: September 3 – November 6, 2022).

Katharina Koch, guest curator of the *Empowerment* exhibition, will present the exhibition *Dorine van Meel: Phoenix's Last Song* together with Dorothea Nold in the exhibition space **alpha nova & galerie futura** in Berlin (opening: September 24, 2022, 7:00 pm; duration: September 25 – November 4, 2022). A round table and think lab, *Claims, Quests & Desires. Around the Table of Future Feminisms*, with input from and discussions and dialogues with Katy Deepwell, Sarah Held, Lorena Juan, and Övül Ö. Durmusoglu, will take place on October 29, 2022, from 3:00 to 6:00 pm.

Supporting Program

Complementing the exhibition *Empowerment*, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg is offering an extensive supporting program for various target groups, which is available in an overview.

On Saturday, October 8, 2022, the three Wolfsburg institutions—Kunstverein Wolfsburg, Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg—invite all those interested to a FEM ART DAY, a joint day of events. It begins at 11:00 am with individual offers in the Wolfsburg Castle, followed by a feminist city tour in the afternoon, and ends at 6:00 pm with a joint talk with the artists Candice Breitz, Anna Ehrenstein and Tamiko Thiel in the Kunstmuseum.



Artists in *Empowerment*

Ebtisam Abdulaziz, Stacey Gillian Abe, Heba Y. Amin, Maja Bajević, Natalie Ball, Yael Bartana, Mehtap Baydu, Alexandra Bircken, Benedikte Bjerre, Monica Bonvicini, Andrea Bowers, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Candice Breitz, Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová, Christa Joo Hyun D'Angelo, Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo, Birgit Dieker, Zehra Doğan, Anita Dube, Anna Ehrenstein, Ndidi Emezie, Nona Faustine, Keltie Ferris, Regina José Galindo, Ellen Gallagher, Goldendean, Gabrielle Goliath, Jenna Gribbon, Shilpa Gupta, Nilbar Güreş, h.arta group, Hyphen-Labs, Irena Jukić Pranjić, Patricia Kaersenhout, Gladys Kalichini, Šejla Kamerić, Mari Katayama, Yuki Kihara, Seo-Kyung Kim & Eun-Sung Kim, Laetitia Ky, Jakob Lena Knebl, LASTESIS, Kitso Lynn Lelliott, Pixy LIAO, Ann Lislegaard, XIAO Lu, Mary Maggic, Senzeni Marasela, Teresa Margolles, Aline Motta, Shana Moulton & Nick Hallett, Zanele Muholi, Kresiah Mukwazhi, Marina Naprushkina, Wura-Natasha Ogunji, Tanja Ostojčić, Pushpamala N, Rosana Paulino, Lisa Reihana, Elianna Renner, Tabita Rezaire, Pipilotti Rist, Boryana Rossa, Mariela Scafati, Berni Searle, Selma Selman, Lerato Shadi, Tejal Shah, Melati Suryodarmo, Elena Tejada-Herrera, Mathilde ter Heijne, Pacific Sisters, Bussaraporn Thongchai, LIN Tianmiao, Wu Tsang, Kawita Vatanajyankur, Leafā Wilson & Olga Hedwig Krause, Anna Witt, Larissa Sansour & Søren Lind, Raeda Saadeh, Shevaun Wright, Ming Wong, LEI Yan, CAO Yu, MIA Yu sowie die Kollektive AXA projects, Nacional TROVOA, Njabala Foundation, Sandbox Collective und What the hELL she doin!

Mit großzügiger Förderung durch / With generous support by



Medienpartner / Media partner



In Kooperation mit / In cooperation with