



Press Release

Exhibition Program 2024 for the 30th Anniversary of the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg

Paolo Pellegrin. Fragile Wonders

November 25, 2023 – May 26, 2024

Curator: Dino Steinhof

Curatorial Assistant: Carla Wiggering

A gigantic iceberg, glowing lava, barren desert landscapes, lush vegetation, paradisiacal wildlife, and the last two living northern white rhinos—Paolo Pellegrin's (b. 1964) photographs take us on a visually powerful journey around the world: From Iceland to Costa Rica, from Greenland to Namibia, from Italy to Japan, and from Germany to Australia, he traces the effects of the human-caused climate catastrophe and the state of nature. The roots of this project lie in a research trip to Antarctica that Pellegrin undertook with a group from NASA in 2017 to document the dramatic consequences of global warming.

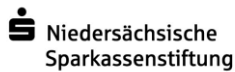
In a comprehensive exhibition, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg presents Pellegrin's impressively direct, poetic, and at times surreal photographs and projections for the first time in Germany. The works of the multiple award-winning Italian photographer, who has been a member of the renowned Magnum Photos agency since 2005, resemble a global survey of nature.

Best known for his moving war photographs, Paolo Pellegrin is one of the most celebrated documentary photographers of our time. His photographs are captivating not only for their authenticity, but also for their aesthetic quality, which touches the viewer on an emotional level. They are more than just reportage photography, for he has long since expanded his repertoire in favor of a specific use of light and shadow, as well as various photographic techniques and methods. In order to express truthfulness, Paolo Pellegrin deliberately avoids the possibilities of digital image manipulation. His most recent nature photographs, which are based on the four elements, are also motivated by a personal quest for transcendence: "Of course it's about landscapes and nature, but I have to transform it. [...] I'm looking for the sublime," Pellegrin explains.

The exhibition was developed for the Gallerie d'Italia, Museum Intesa Sanpaolo in Turin and adapted and expanded for the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in collaboration with Paolo Pellegrin and Magnum Photos.



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Worlds in Motion. 30 Years Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg

May 25 – August 4, 2024

Curator: Holger Broeker

Curatorial Assistant: Veronika Mehlhart

A Roman emperor meets an English pop star, Lucas Cranach's *Venus* meets Cindy Sherman's sex dolls, horse-drawn carriages meet a giant flying machine. The Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary with these and other surprising encounters. The major anniversary exhibition not only features highlights from the museum's top-class collection, but also presents numerous new donations to the public for the first time. Special "guests" have been invited in order to stage the exciting dialogs on timeless and yet contemporary themes in a particularly effective way: No fewer than fifteen historical works from the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum will be juxtaposed with contemporary paintings, sculptures, and expansive installations by internationally renowned artists, including Elizabeth Peyton, Jonathan Meese, Michel Majerus, Cindy Sherman, Andreas Gursky, Gauri Gill, Bruce Nauman, Phyllida Barlow, Panamarenko, and many more—a veritable "Who's Who" of contemporary art! Unusual perspectives on the body and sexuality, questions of identity and its representation, family sensitivities, and social values such as freedom and equality—with fifteen chapters, the exhibition spans a thematic arc from the individual to the global.

With its cooperation with Braunschweig's Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, the anniversary exhibition is a further sign of institutional solidarity, not least with the aim of strengthening art and culture in the region. The juxtaposition of works from both museums results in a lively examination of both the constants and the variations of our living environment.

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Happy 30! We're Celebrating Our Birthday

May 25 – May 26, 2024

Celebrate with us! A stage on Hollerplatz for artist talks, music, and presentations, unusual guided tours through the exhibitions and behind the scenes: Have you ever been to the director's office? Or to the restorers' workplace? On Saturday evening, there will be a party with a DJ; and on Sunday, we invite you to a discussion with directors of other museums around the question: What can museums do in and for the future? We look forward to seeing you there!

Firelei Báez. Trust Memory Over History

July 6 – October 13, 2024

Curator: Uta Ruhkamp

Curatorial Assistant: Carla Wiggering

Colorful, powerful tricksters populate the magical visual worlds of the Dominican American, New York-based artist Firelei Báez. Inspired by Caribbean culture, its stories, and its role at the forefront of global political and economic notions of modernity, Báez has found a unique, highly symbolic visual language for her monumental paintings and installations. In her work, beauty, joy, and freedom emerge from the often-violent archives of history. She disrupts historical maps and archival diagrams with the recurring figure of the ciguapa, a trickster figure and psychic guard from Hispaniolan folklore. Báez playfully flips the normative read of the ciguapa as a wayward, unruly part of nature to a more powerful, self-determined being able to subvert historical, racialized, and gendered dynamics of power. Her painterly intervention of colonial history thwarts a conventional Eurocentric reading and opens the mind to multi-linear perspectives. In doing so, Báez encourages viewers to consider global culture and identity in a new, forward-looking way.

Since the purchase of Báez's installation at the 10th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art in 2018, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg has been closely following her work and the development of her career. We are therefore even more delighted to be able to present the first comprehensive solo exhibition of this outstanding painter in Germany.

The exhibition is being organized in cooperation with the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, Denmark, and will be accompanied by a publication in English.

Leandro Erlich. Weightless

October 12, 2024 – July 13, 2025

Curators: Andreas Beitin, Dino Steinhof

The world is turned upside down at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg: The moon is on the Earth, a house hangs in the airy hall, and visitors seem to float in the weightlessness of a spaceship—the exhibition by the Argentinean artist Leandro Erlich offers several “wow effects”! His spectacular installations



are awe-inspiring and invite viewers on a stimulating journey to explore the fascinating relationships between science, technology, ecology, space travel, global warming, and migration.

For many years, Leandro Erlich has inspired visitors on various levels with his art. At first glance, many of his works appear spectacular, irritating, playful, and humorous. But a closer look reveals diverse references to today's cultural, social, and therefore political manifestations and challenges, such as the complex surrounding fake news, the (populist) distortion of truth and lies, global refugee movements, and, last but not least, the increasingly significant power of images and their potential for manipulation. The exhibition *Leandro Erlich. Weightless* aims to create a multifaceted experiential space in which to explore these themes visually, offering an unconventional and unusual perspective on the pressing issues that characterize our world today. The large-scale installations and artworks serve as an artistically transformed representation of the interdependencies between the aforementioned themes and stimulate a dialog about the challenges and opportunities they present.

Leandro Erlich has exhibited in numerous important museums, especially in Asia and Latin America. In 2023, he was honored in Europe with a major retrospective at the Palazzo Reale in Milan. *Leandro Erlich. Weightless* is the artist's first solo exhibition in Germany.

Gary Hill. A Question of Perception

November 30, 2024 – March 16, 2025

Curators: Holger Broeker, Elena Engelbrechter

Colors are swapped, gestures are transformed into speech, language is broken down, spoken forwards and backwards. Gary Hill has been exploring perceptual processes and states of consciousness since the 1970s, primarily in the medium of video. Findings from the fields of neurology and cognitive science, as well as conceptual and philosophical considerations on seeing and speaking, play just as important a role here as the exploration of the medium of video and the development of new technical possibilities. Moving image and language, sound and text, space and time form the parameters of everyday perception, especially of technically generated images such as those of television, which Hill questions in the sense of an iconic and media critique. Such an artistic approach is becoming more and more important, especially in times of easy manipulation of images and videos, in order to sharpen one's own judgment.

The Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg has the largest collection of works by the American video pioneer in Germany, spanning five decades. Over the past few years, several new installations have been added to the collection, which will be shown for the first time in this exhibition and comprehensively honor Gary Hill's work.



Preview 2025/2026

Utopia. The Right to Hope

Throughout human history, the emergence of utopias—fictional social orders set in the future or in another (non-)place—has usually been closely linked to a critique of the present, which is perceived as negative. Numerous great minds have developed concepts of how we as humans can live together in the hope that a coexistence based on justice, freedom, and equality is possible. In the face of current global challenges, the prospect of a utopia capable of inspiring hope and confidence is once again increasingly coming to the fore. This is because we are currently experiencing an unprecedented period of polycrisis worldwide: In addition to wars, pandemics, and a growing loss of faith in democracies, the human-induced climate catastrophe in particular is dominating the thoughts and actions of many.

Against this backdrop, the exhibition *Utopia. The Right to Hope* looks to the future and uses artistic works and installations, as well as architectural drafts and design objects, to set an example of hope and confidence in how a better life can be achieved for everyone on this planet. Art in particular can make an inspiring and pioneering contribution to utopian models for the future, as it accompanies social processes with its range of aesthetic and thematic means, constantly questioning our habits, views, and actions. Art's permanent critique of the status quo thus entitles it to utopia like no other cultural form.

Aino, Alvar, and Elissa Aalto

With his designs inspired by nature, Alvar Aalto is one of the most important architects of the twentieth century. The organic is not only the central starting point of his theoretical thinking but is also reflected in the lines of his buildings, as well as in the formal language and choice of materials of his furniture, lighting, and glass designs. In conjunction with his architectural projects, he created numerous works of applied art, including the *Paimio* armchair (1933) made of bent plywood and the famous *Savoy* vase (1936), both of which have become modern classics and the epitome of timeless Scandinavian design. The architectural office can also be seen as a dynamic organism, with more than 300 architects from over twenty countries working there over the five decades of its existence. One constant was not only Alvar Aalto himself, but also—apart from a brief interruption—the partnership-based management of the firm. As one of the first architect couples, Aino and Alvar Aalto jointly laid the foundations for the firm's international success. Together, they initiated the founding of Artek in 1935, a company dedicated to the production and distribution of their own designs and the promotion of a modern culture of living through the organization of art exhibitions. After Aino's death in 1949, Aalto's second partner Elissa took over the co-management of the architecture firm. The exhibition project provides an insight into this collegial collaboration and focuses on the importance of the two women architects both within and outside of their joint ventures.