



**PRESS INFORMATION**

**KÖNIGSKLASSE IV  
CONTEMPORARY ART IN HERRENCHEMSEE PALACE**

**DURATION OF EXHIBITION | 11 MAY UNTIL 03 OCTOBER 2019**

**CONTEMPORARY ART IN AN EXTRAORDINARY PLACE**

The northerly shell of building of Herrenchiemsee Palace, built between 1878 and 1886 on behalf of King Ludwig II, is once again housing a presentation titled "Königsklasse" comprising major works chosen from the Pinakothek der Moderne. Since 2013, selected positions in contemporary art have been showcased in rotating exhibitions at this exceptional and secluded location – the famous "Bavarian Versailles" on a tree-covered island in Lake Chiemsee. Due to the Bavarian king's early death, only the main building of the palace was completed. The incomplete north wing's eleven generously proportioned rooms – seldom used in the last 135 years – have been transformed into an exhibition space which spans two floors, showcasing major works made since the 1960s, chosen from the Sammlung Moderne Kunst at the Pinakothek der Moderne, from Museum Brandhorst, as well as select private collections. A walk through the exhibition makes the acquisitions work of recent decades come alive, presenting vital new accessions and featuring outstanding one-off pieces which establish desirable new directions for the collection's future expansion.

Königsklasse is a collaboration between the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen and the Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung.

**ART ON THE ISLAND: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CITY MUSEUM EXPERIENCE**

Königsklasse on Herreninsel island expands on and provides an alternative to art experiences offered by museums in cities. The works stand in compelling dialogue with the incomplete historical architecture and the island's protected natural world. In the space where Ludwig II was unable to complete his homage to Baroque palaces, there is room for contemporary art; making Herreninsel a place where tradition now meets modernity.

**HERRENINSEL: A PLACE FOR INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE**

Königsklasse, which encompasses the innovative art-education programme **Königskunde**, invites the numerous regional and international visitors to the island and the palace to take individual pleasure in art and share in a debate about art and art collecting. Young participants in the Königskunde programme engage in conversation with interested visitors about the art on the island in general and in particular about the outstanding exhibits. Individual exchange about this unique interaction of art and nature on the Herreninsel consistently fosters – as experience over the previous years has shown – fruitful debate. Königsklasse benefits from the Herreninsel's potential for stimulating the kind of international community spirit and engaging dialogue typically found solely in major cities.



#### KÖNIGSKLASSE IV: ARTISTIC SPACES

"Königsklasse IV" exhibits major works by **Wolfgang Laib, Arnulf Rainer, Etel Adnan, Günther Förg, Dan Flavin, On Kawara, Kazuo Shiraga, Hans-Jörg Georgi** and **John Chamberlain**. An entire room is devoted to each artist. The result is a series of set, concentrated presentations in which a key theme from each artist's work comes to light. They examine questions central to the creative process – concerning time and space, finitude and continuity, expression and stagnation, the individual and society, the present moment and timelessness – thereby establishing spaces which reflect the challenges facing the present age.

#### BLUE CHIP AND "ERRING JUNGLE": MAJOR POSITIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ART AND OUTSIDER ART

The list of major artists' names goes hand in hand with a strange kind of fragility. Both canonical works, highly valued by the establishment, and outsider art can now be found in the internationally renowned and much-visited palace of the "Märchenkönig" (or fairy-tale king), who was dethroned on account of his alleged mental illness. However, the individual works cannot be unequivocally attributed to one category or the other. "Almost everything that we are made of comes out of the erring jungle. Your relics from antiquity were all once felt out from darkness," wrote **Arnulf Rainer** (b. 1929) in his essay "Schön und Wahn" (1967). An entire hall is dedicated to Rainer's crosses, which he has made since the sixties. But wasn't the cross already a desacralized symbol in art when he realized these works? What compels the artist to continue expanding this series up to the present day? Thanks to outstanding loans by Anna and Wolfgang Titze and the Written Art Foundation, paintings from the early and late periods of **Kazuo Shiraga's** work (1924–2008) can be seen here in an intense juxtaposition. Born in Japan, Shiraga was equally influenced by his experiences of war and his time spent in Zen monasteries. Beginning in the early 1950s, Shiraga would suspend himself from a ceiling beam above his work, in order to use his entire body as a brush. The dynamic marks made by his feet on the paper or canvas record the human condition of being inextricably bound by gravity, material, and time: "I want to paint as though rushing around a battlefield, exerting myself to collapse from exhaustion," said the artist, who at the same time strove to juxtapose an experience of power and violence with beauty.

His compatriot **On Kawara** (1932–2014) spent more than five decades developing his "Today series" (1966–2013). A total of eight of the works, spanning six decades, are on loan in the exhibition. Also known as "Date Paintings", they record on canvas only the factual date of their creation, selected from the endless, disorderly stream of material which washes over us in life. In the "Today series", the objective stands in conflict with the subjective.

Similarly, the works by the Lebanese-born artist **Etel Adnan**, whose scenically poetic paintings were first on view in "Königsklasse" in May 2019, can, strictly speaking, also be described as "Day Paintings". She creates her powerful landscape-like compositions consisting of seamlessly adjoining colour fields in a single session and without any form of revision or alteration. The background to her



approach is her view of painting as “*joie de vivre*”. In clear contrast to her activities as a writer and journalist confronting political disturbances and intercultural conflicts, when she is painting she immerses herself in a meditative flow and, inspired by the natural rhythm of the world, gives full rein to her creativity. The artist’s room holding nine works by the Lebanese artist is the first museum presentation in Germany to spotlight Etel Adnan’s work. Once again, we wish to thank the Written Art Collection whose loan first prompted the idea of establishing an entire artist’s space within the exhibition.

**Hans-Jörg Georgi** (b. 1949) pursues his work day by day as well, making airplane sculptures. Until 2001 the artist, who has a disability caused by polio, transformed paper scraps into elaborate model vehicles, which his caretaker would throw out in the evenings. Since 2001, the eccentric sculptor has worked alongside other extraordinarily talented disabled artists in the special studio maintained by the support group Lebenshilfe Frankfurt, founded by Christiane Cuticchio and called “Atelier Goldstein”, where this eccentric artist together with other exceptionally talented outsider artists, produce his works. While he entitled the last major installation of his flying objects “Das Blöde Böse”, or “The Stupid Evil” (in this installation, as well, myriad parts recall a swarm of bees, buzzing around in one’s head), he named the installation developed for Königsklasse “Das Gute” (The Good) and recommends absconding into outer space with his amply equipped machines. The power of major artists lies in their ability to further develop and transform their work while preserving a sense of continuity in it. **John Chamberlain** (1927–2011) was always developing innovative new techniques for folding the metal sheets which his monumental sculptures are made of. He gave his towering chrome objects psyches of their own, manipulating them so that they appear to – like individuals – turn towards and support each other, or collapse in front of one another.

In 2016 the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen was gifted the spectacular full installation “untitled (to you, Heiner, with admiration and affection)”, a 1973 ‘barrier’ by **Dan Flavin** (1933–1996). The installation, 16 metres long in its current display, is now going on show again on Herreninsel. Flavin could not have found a more prosaic material for his art than mounted fluorescent tubes, ubiquitous in the industrialized world since the middle of the twentieth century. The work’s strict geometric structure, which resists all narrative readings, can be understood in our secular age as a radically impersonal response to much older artworks, such as choir screens demarcating sacred spaces; however, it also develops its own kind of disturbing transcendence, which exists independent of such comparisons.

**Günther Förg** does not want his work to elicit such experiences. Paintings by Förg from the collection of Michael & Eleonore Stoffel are exhibited here in another room. Although his work contains overt references to American Minimalists, beginning with Barnett Newman, Förg opposes the movement’s more solemn aspects, claiming a less ceremonious attitude. In Förg’s words, “it’s about what you see and nothing more”.

A tour of Königsklasse begins with a two-part work, mentioned here in conclusion: “Without Beginning and Without End” by **Wolfgang Laib**, which is being acquired for Königsklasse by PIN. Freunde der Pinakothek and by International Patrons of the



Pinakothek. The work consists of two tiered beeswax-sculptures measuring more than four metres high and wide, set directly on the floor. They evoke the human desire to build upwards into the heavens – not least because Laib refers to them as ziggurats – like the fragmented Tower of Babel. But these sculptures are complete, serenely proportioned from top to bottom, and thus invite the viewer to experience the beauty of possibility.

**FROM “KÖNIGSKLASSE” TO THE “KÖNIGSWEG” (THE ROYAL ROAD):  
A FILM ABOUT THE AXIS BETWEEN THE PINAKOTHEK MUSEUMS AND  
HERRENCHEMSEE**

In this second summer of Königsklasse IV a film is being screened in the final room of the tour. Produced by the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, the film examines the close connection between the unconventional Königsklasse and the tightly meshed network of art and culture in Bavaria. Varyingly mapped by the tours undertaken by each individual visitor, the network spreads from the castles and palaces of the Wittelsbach dynasty to the Kunstareal Munich. The film glimpses behind the scenes and eavesdrops on personal conversations between the pioneers and the artists of Königsklasse. In the course of the film it becomes clear that culture does not somehow “simply” happen of its own accord but that it is actively shaped and guided – by everyone who sets off on the road towards art.

Curator of Königsklasse: Corinna Thierolf

Press material on the exhibition is available at [www.pinakothek.de/presse](http://www.pinakothek.de/presse).



**SAMMLUNG MODERNE KUNST  
IN DER PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE**



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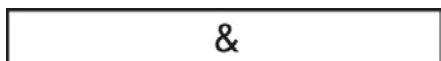
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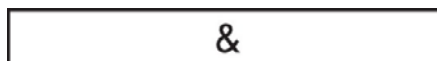
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