

Press release

29.07 2011

Exhibition Finissage Sowing and weeding – Folk culture in contemporary art

Saturday 03.09 2011, 12.45-17.00 hrs

Entrance: museum ticket

The Cobra Museum of Modern Art organizes a closing event with the exhibition *Sowing and Weeding – folk culture in contemporary art*. On Saturday 3 September experts in the field of folk culture and heritage, contemporary art, and participants in the exhibition will join for a special programme with a variety of presentations, a video screening and an exhibition visit.

Hilde de Bruijn, curator at the Cobra Museum, speaks about Cobra and folk culture, **Hester Dibbits**, co-author of *Intangible heritage and folk culture. Almanac to a current debate* (2011) introduces a critical overview of terminology in the field of folk culture. Independent curator **Nina Folkersma** discusses the creative and discursive potential of ornament and decoration in contemporary art, followed by a screening of **Lisl Ponger's** video *Phantom Foreign Vienna* (2004) which focuses on the (invisible) culture of migrants in Vienna. **Rob van der Laarse**, Professor in Culture and Heritage Studies, makes a statement about the problematic relationship between Populism, intangible heritage and popular culture. Last but not least guest curator **Nicole Fritz** discusses her research and exhibition concept, especially within the context of German post war culture, and engages in a dialogue with exhibition participants **Pinar&Viola** (graphic designers), **Nadine Hottenrott** (visual artist), **Hans Venhuizen** (initiator of a bureau for 'cultural planning'), and **Mariella Mosler** (visual artist).

Sowing and weeding is international group exhibition in the framework of the Cobra Contemporary Programme that links today's renewed interest in folk culture to contemporary art and cultural heritage. The exhibition takes a close look at the relationship between folk culture and art, referencing Cobra and folk art as well.

Sowing and Weeding is an adaptation of the exhibition, *Säen und Jäten. Volkskultur in der zeitgenössischen Kunst*, following a concept by guest curator, Nicole Fritz. This exhibition was part of an investigation into the relationship between folk culture and contemporary art in the European context.

Exhibition Participants:

Bureau Venhuizen (NL), CoBrA, Hadassah Emmerich (NL), Steingrímur Eyfjörð (IS), Kristof Georgen (DE), Sebastian Hammwöhner (DE), Uwe Henneken (DE), Nadine Hottenrott (DE), Britta Jonas (DE), Aurelia Mihai (RO), Mariella Mosler (DE), Monika Nuber (DE), Gabriela Oberkofler (IT), Rory Pilgrim (GB), Pinar & Viola (NL), Lisl Ponger (A), Anselm Reyle (DE), Gitte Schäfer (DE), Wiebke Siem (DE), Martin Städeli (CH), Helmut Stallaerts (BE), Derk Thijs (NL), Olga Titus (CH), Gert & Uwe Tobias (RO).

Programme Saturday 3 September

12.45-13.00	Entrance
13.00-13.10	<i>Introduction</i> by Hilde de Bruijn, curator Cobra Museum
13.10-13.30	<i>Introduction to terminology and folk culture</i> by Dr. Hester Dibbits, Q&A
13.40-14.00	<i>Ornament and Critical Thinking</i> by Nina Folkersma, Q&A
14.10-14.40	Film screening: <i>Phantom Foreign Vienna</i> by Lisl Ponger
14.40-15.00	Break / tour through exhibition
15.00-15.20	<i>The Return of 'Ownness'. Intangible Heritage, Popular Culture, and Populism</i> by Professor dr. Rob van der Laarse, Q&A
15.30-15.50	<i>Sowing and weeding and the German context</i> by guest curator Nicole Fritz, Q&A
16.00-17.00	Nicole Fritz in dialogue with exhibition participants Nadine Hottenrott, Mariella Mosler, Pinar&Viola and Hans Venhuizen

Note for press:

For additional information and digital images, please contact Lieke Fijen, Public Relations & Education, at l.fijen@cobra-museum.nl, or tel. +31-(0)20 5475038.

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About the participants

Dr. Hester Dibbits is one of the authors of *Immaterieel erfgoed en volkscultuur. Almanak bij een actueel debat*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011. Following her position as researcher at the Meertens Institute, she will from August 2011 commence as lector Cultural Heritage at the Reinwardt Akademie. Dr. Dibbits is also Chief Curator at the Nederlandse Openluchtmuseum.

Nina Folkersma is an independent curator, and art critic. She is currently guest curator at Castrum Peregrini and tutor at the Sandberg Institute - Design Department. She has curated projects in collaboration with institutions such as De Appel in Amsterdam, Museum Het Domein in Sittard, or the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale in South Africa. She also was the initiator of Quarantine Series, a project space for international contemporary art and graphic design in Amsterdam (until 2005) and from 2006 until 2009 worked as the first international guest curator at the S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Belgium.

Dr. Nicole Fritz is an art historian and curator. From September 2011 she is appointed director of Kunstmuseum Ravensburg She recently worked as as curator at the Kunsthalle Krems, Austria. She also worked at the Staatlichen Kunsthalle Baden-Baden where she was involved in various exhibition projects, at the Akademie Schloss Solitude as a coordinator. From 2008 - 2011 she worked as a freelance curator for the Städtische Galerie Ravensburg, where she developed besides other projects for example *Pictures on the Wall of your Heart. Tom Wesselmann und die Pop Art* (2008) and *Sowing and weeding – folk culture in contemporary art* (2009).

Nadine Hottenrott is an artist based in Amsterdam. In her work she explores – often from the perspective of her German background – the significance of national and cultural identity, using textile handicraft and photography. The objects, decorations and accessories in her installations and photographs are all handmade. The manual work sometimes takes a week, sometimes several months or even years, thus reducing the process to minimum speed, resulting in a

strange antithesis with industrially manufactured objects and the speed of current production processes.

Professor dr. Rob van der Laarse is Professor of War Heritage and Memory at VU University Amsterdam, and Associate Professor in Culture and Heritage Studies at the department of Art, Religion & Cultural Sciences at the UvA. His research focuses on (early) modern European elite cultures, cultural landscape, heritage and identity politics, as well as the intellectual roots and postwar memory of the Holocaust.

Mariella Mosler is an artist based in Hamburg. Mariella Mosler has been exploring both the form and content of ornaments and masks for some time now. Her masks are reminiscent of objects that could be from different parts of the world and times. Some look like African cult masks, others like Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, phantoms, Asian masks or masks in cheap vampire films. By mixing garbage and waste materials with primitivism as the 'conceptual language of the avant-garde' she dissolves the boundaries between art and folk culture.

Pinar&Viola are a graphic designer duo who refer to themselves as 'ecstatic surface designers'. They 'scan' and appropriate elements from contemporary visual culture and turn these into ecstatic surfaces. Decoration, inextricably linked as it is with folk and pop culture, is a functional, autonomous facet of Pinar & Viola's work – both a stylistic element and a subject in itself. Pinar & Viola use all their extravagance as a weapon against the Dutch popular spirit and mentality ('Whatever you do, don't stick your head over the parapet'), creating in their works a *mélange* of different elements from a variety of subcultures and folk cultures.

Lisl Ponger is an artist based in Vienna. *Phantom Foreign Vienna* is a string of images of festivities, harvest festivals, weddings, New Year celebrations and other types of cultural meetings from various cultures. Ponger kept a diary of her encounters and edited the film using various categories, including visual and technical and 'anthropological' motifs. The focus is not on characteristic gestures, typical costumes or distinctive music but on the various editing forms and transitions. A vital point is that the work was recorded entirely in Vienna, and thus says something about the presence of folk culture in the various cultures of today's Europe. 'Foreign' Vienna, despite its proximity, remains a phantom.

Hans Venhuizen is the founder of Bureau Venhuizen (1999, Rotterdam), a project management and research bureau in the field of culture-based planning. Culture is understood in the broad sense of cultural history, heritage and art, but also as the ensemble of contemporary culture among a region's residents. The bureau's methodology is based on the re-use of existing landscape-related and cultural qualities and translating these into the contemporary context to achieve a marriage of past, present and future. In this way new cultural landscapes and urban areas in our constantly changing environment can develop an identity that is not contrived but drawn from a more natural continuum.