

Media release

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Kunstmuseum Basel
2022: A Year in Dialogues

The Kunstmuseum Basel is pleased to announce three singular special exhibitions to be held in 2022. The series begins in the spring with an encounter between two distinguished contemporary women artists: in a sprawling presentation at two of our venues, the American conceptualist Jenny Holzer interrogates works by Louise Bourgeois. Next up is *Picasso—El Greco*, an exploration of Pablo Picasso’s formidable engagement with the illustrious Greek-born Spanish old master. Finally, in the fall, the Kunstmuseum Basel grapples with a chapter in its own history: *Torn Modernism* gathers works of “degenerate art” from our collections with outstanding and rarely seen treasures on loan from international partners.

In *Louise Bourgeois X Jenny Holzer*, the Kunstmuseum Basel hosts an unparalleled encounter between two of the most remarkable characters on the American arts scene. Jenny Holzer (b. 1950), who ranks among the preeminent contemporary artists of her generation, wrestled with the art of Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010) by delving into her extensive writings: the materials in Bourgeois’ vast archive range from diaries and correspondence to psychoanalytical essays. The written word also often figured in her visual art. For the exhibition, which encompasses over two hundred works, Holzer has selected pieces from all periods in Bourgeois’ oeuvre—sculptures, installations, paintings, drawings, prints, and texts.

In the summer, *Picasso—El Greco* turns the spotlight on another meeting of creative minds: around forty pairings of masterworks by both artists reconstruct one of the most fascinating such dialogues in the history of art. Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) took inspiration early on from the art of the old master Doménikos Theotokópoulos, the son of Crete better known as El Greco (1541–1614). The exhibition demonstrates that this interest can be traced through Picasso’s entire oeuvre, from the Cubist paintings to the late works.

In *Torn Modernism*, an exhibition scheduled for the fall, the Kunstmuseum Basel probes its own history. In 1939, the museum purchased twenty-one masterworks of classic

modernism including Franz Marc's *Animal Destinies*, Paula Modersohn-Becker's *Self-Portrait*, Marc Chagall's *The Pinch of Snuff (Rabbi)*, and Oskar Kokoschka's *Bride of the Wind*, laying the foundation for today's world-renowned collection. Yet the opportunity to make these forward-looking acquisitions would not have arisen without the National Socialists' inhuman policies and contempt for art as well as the explosive political tensions of the time. Like thousands of other works, the paintings and sculptures had been removed from German museums by the regime and slated for sale abroad. The Nazis regarded them as "degenerate," but also recognized that they were "internationally marketable." The exhibition sheds light on this important and complex episode in the history of the Basel collections in all its facets.

In addition to these grand special exhibitions, 2022 brings a rich and diverse program of temporary presentations. Among them will be *Heute Nacht geträumt*, for which the artist Ruth Buchanan, a native of Aotearoa (New Zealand), undertakes a close study of the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, a building from the 1970s, and rethinks the rules that govern how a museum works. *Inner Space*, meanwhile, showcases around ninety works created between 1972 and 2019 from the collection of the American artist Brice Marden, including major graphic series and paintings—some of which have never been on public display.

Imagery and information on the exhibitions

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en/media

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