

Press Release

EMIL NOLDE – A CRITICAL APPROACH BY MISCHA KUBALL

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Draiflessen Collection

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The Draiflessen Collection invited the conceptual artist Mischa Kuball (born 1959) to create an exhibition examining the painter Emil Nolde (1867–1956). Nolde is one of the best known artists of classic Modernism. The fact that he was a committed National Socialist was overlooked for decades – even though this was perfectly well known both to his contemporaries and to those who critically addressed his work after 1945. For some time, however, Nolde's political orientation has come back into focus. Emil Nolde's art has not changed, but our view of it has. By what criteria do we judge art? How does our knowledge shape our perception? Who was (and is) involved in interpreting art?

For the exhibition EMIL NOLDE – A CRITICAL APPROACH BY MISCHA KUBALL Mischa Kuball developed works of art that encompass a multi-layered, open, critical, and simultaneously aesthetic illumination of one of the most ambivalent German artists of the last century. His artistic approach and a series of earlier works make Kuball particularly predestined for the task of grappling with Nolde's work and identity. Using the medium of light and photographic techniques such as film and photography, Kuball negotiates socio-political issues and questions of perception by making connections and structures visible and focusing our attention in new directions. The video installations and pictorial series created expressly for this exhibition project thus provide an unusual perspective on Emil Nolde's oeuvre because they do not display or reproduce any of his works directly, but instead open up spaces of association whose field of reference extends beyond the specific example of Nolde. Kuball thus encourages the viewer to abstractly illuminate the processes behind the works, and to consciously recognize and critically scrutinize them.

The Nolde Foundation Seebüll granted Mischa Kuball free access to its facilities, allowing him to develop new artistic works for this exhibition on site. Kuball focuses on three aspects of Nolde's life and work: his treatment of foreign cultures, his dedication to the National Socialists, and his carefully crafted stylisation as a resistance artist after 1945. Along with Nolde's former home and studio, Kuball was particularly interested in the areas of the foundation not open to the public: the art storage facility and the archives, in which Nolde's works, his correspondence, and the artefacts Nolde collected during his lifetime are preserved. The first three *documenta* exhibitions, at which Nolde's works were displayed, also played a central role in this exhibition. For his project Kuball exclusively selected works that were displayed in these three shows. The first *documenta* of 1955 in particular was perceived as a counter project to the propaganda exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) of 1937. The *documenta* was not the only project that contributed to the myth of Nolde as a defamed artist, but was certainly the one that has had the most far-reaching impact to this day.

Accompanying Events

An extensive programme of events will accompany the exhibition, including conversations with

the artist Mischa Kuball, tours led by the curators Barbara Segelken and Nicole Roth, themed tours, an excursion, and educational offerings for various age groups. The Students' Day conference will also take place in the context of this exhibition.

Publication

A richly illustrated, trilingual catalogue (German, English, and Dutch) will also accompany the exhibition.

Credits

Mischa Kuball, ... a critical approach!, 2019, © Archiv Mischa Kuball, Düsseldorf / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2020

Mischa Kuball, making_of_Nolde/Kritik/Kuball, 2020, © Archiv Mischa Kuball, Düsseldorf / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2020

Mischa Kuball, ethnographica_lumetri_Nolde/Kritik/Kuball, 2020, © Archiv Mischa Kuball, Düsseldorf / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2020

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