PRESS RELEASE

SchlagLicht

13 September – 10 December 2023

**Stiftung Kunstforum Berliner Volksbank
Kaiserdamm 105, 14057 Berlin-Charlottenburg**

SchlagLicht (spotlight), the second exhibition at the Stiftung Kunstforum Berliner Volksbank in 2023, opens as part of Berlin Art Week. It was developed in collaboration with the Kunststiftung DZ BANK. Painting, sculpture and graphics from the Kunstsammlung der Berliner Volksbank come together in dialogue with photographic works of art from the collection of the DZ BANK.

The juxtapositions illustrate how artists working in diverse genres combine and find new artistic forms of expression through an open, experimental means of dealing with the medium. In the thematic fields of portraits, figuration and body images, cityscapes and abstraction, the exhibition takes a look at various facets of being human, inviting us to break free of established thought patterns and opening up new ways of seeing.

A crucial role is played by the respective emphases of each art collection: From the beginning, the Kunstsammlung der Berliner Volksbank, founded in 1985, was shaped by the motto "Images of People", and it now concentrates primarily on figurative art of the 1980s and 1990s from Berlin and East Germany. Numbering around 1500 works by some 160 artists – paintings, sculptures, works on paper, and prints – the collection sheds light on a decisive phase of upheaval and change in East and West German history. Rooted in American conceptual art, the collection of the DZ BANK comprises more than 10,000 works by nearly 1100 international artists. It focuses primarily on photographic forms of expression and understands itself as a mirror of photographic art production after 1945. The collection of the DZ BANK is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Combining these two distinctive profiles, the exhibition results in an inspiring interplay of diverse energies, in which questions especially relevant to our present-day come under the spotlight (*SchlagLicht*).

For example, the two works on the cover by Loredana Nemes and Clemens Gröszer and the works by Andrzej Steinbach encourage us to go beyond a mere critical questioning of the genre portrait. They invite us to become aware of automatic, sometimes unconscious mechanisms, which shape our social interactions.

The works of Horst Antes, René Graetz, Sven Johne, Via Lewandowsky and Lilly Lulay deal with the conditions of being human. They examine how people find their self within multi-layered social structures, how they can define themselves as individuals despite existing political, social and personal restrictions and preconditions.

Works like those by Wolfgang Tillmans, Rainer Fetting, Nan Goldin, Angela Hampel, and VALIE EXPORT/Peter Weibel take on established role models, articulate (queer) self-perceptions and demand visibility, where none was previously given.

The second part of the exhibition, which can be seen on the first floor, focuses on the human-made urban environment. Frank Darius' painterly photographs resonate with a painting by Silke Miche, which at first glance also appears as if it could be a digitally enhanced photograph – both artists draw our attention to everyday aspects of our living environment and subject the urban surroundings to an aesthetic examination.

The human being and its movement within an environment it has created is also the main focus of Beate Gütschow's digitally-produced "three-dimensional photographs", as she calls her works, and Wolfgang Leber's painting in which a lone figure is set amidst architecturally arranged forms. And even though the grey façades of Konrad Knebel's buildings or Michael Schmidt's documentary *Berlin Stadtbilder* depict deserted cityscapes, a subtle confrontation in the relationship between people and the city can also be found there.

Stefanie Seufert's *Towers*, objects made from folded photograms that effortlessly seem to transform photographic materials into three dimensions, refer to concepts of abstract and non-objective painting reiterated in a canvas by Reinhardt Grimm.

The accompanying catalogue includes numerous illustrations of the artworks and essays dedicated to various topics about the exhibition.

The exhibition shows 90 works by 39 artists: Horst Antes (* 1936), Alexandra Baumgartner (* 1973), Manfred Butzmann (* 1942), Frank Darius (* 1963), Christa Dichgans (1940–2018), Rainer Fetting (* 1949), Arno Fischer (1927–2011), Günther Förg (1952–2013), Nan Goldin (* 1953), René Graetz (1908–1974), Reinhardt Grimm (* 1958), Clemens Gröszer (1951–2014), Beate Gütschow (* 1970), Richard Hamilton (1922–2011), Angela Hampel (* 1956), Richard Heß (1937–2017), Sven Johne (* 1976), Veronika Kellndorfer (* 1962), Konrad Knebel (* 1932), Hans Laabs (1915–2004), Wolfgang Leber (* 1936), Via Lewandowsky (* 1963), Rolf Lindemann (1933-2017), Lilly Lulay (* 1985), Silke Miche (* 1970), Herta Müller (* 1955), Loredana Nemes (* 1972), Christina Renker (* 1941), Adrian Sauer (* 1976), Michael Schmidt (1945–2014), Stefanie Seufert (* 1969), Hans Martin Sewcz (* 1955), Maria Sewcz (* 1960), Andrzej Steinbach (* 1983), Christian Thoelke (* 1973), Wolfgang Tillmans (* 1968), Ulay (1943–2020), VALIE EXPORT (* 1940), and Peter Weibel (1944–2023).

Please view our website for information on tour dates & times, and other events.

Press information and photos of the exhibition are available for download.

Your Press Team

Ferial Nadja Karrasch
Press & Public Relations
Tel +49 30 30 63 19 73
Mobile +49 151 12 91 91 04
presse@kunstforum-berliner-volksbank.de

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