

Christiane Löhr

Symmetries of the Smooth

Oct 8, 2023–Jan 21, 2024



Image caption: Christiane Löhr, Little Triple Dome, 2018

Photo and courtesy: Archivio fotografico Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea

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Press Information

Rolandseck, October 6, 2023

Christiane Löhr

Symmetries of the Smooth

“To place four blades of grass in a room, that is a radical, a risky proposition.”

Christiane Löhr

In a large-scale survey exhibition, the internationally renowned artist Christiane Löhr (*1965) uses natural materials to create a singular sculptural and installation cosmos.

Löhr uses flying seeds, plant stems, burrs, tree blossoms, and animal hair to fashion organic-abstract artworks that are reminiscent of architecture, landscapes, and vessels. In an astonishing ways, she transforms these ephemeral materials into precisely constructed miniature or large-scale sculptures. The exhibition brings together 91 works from four decades.

On view alongside Löhr’s sculptures and drawings are three large-format installation works created especially for this overview exhibition, along with a series of rarely exhibited early works. Christiane Löhr’s vegetal-architectural spatial sculptures offer contemporary perspectives of a fragile image of existence, invoking organic principles of growth and structure.

Löhr detaches natural elements from their original contexts, assembling them as pure working materials to form new constellations. She is guided during the work process by their logic and intrinsic characteristics. The structure of the individual sculpture is conditioned by her choice of materials and their specific textures. This allows her to investigate principles of elasticity and stability, for example. But Löhr never directly imitates natural forms. On the contrary: she makes a clear distinction between natural and artistic beauty, regarding her subtle, delicate works as radical proposals.

While Löhr’s sculptural works engage in dialogue with the open spaces of Richard Meier’s light flooded museum building, they go beyond it as well to resonate with the surrounding

nature and landscape. For viewers, this results in especially enthralling perspectives. The act of pausing, bending down, circling the works, and examining them with care opens up a wide-ranging artistic cosmos. Fathomed in new ways are contrasts and oppositions, as we find ourselves confronted with heaviness and lightness, fragility and stability, space and volume, transparency and density, rest and movement.

The spaces and walls of the exhibition areas are rhythmicized and linked by two low, space-filling pedestals – referred to by Christiane Löhr as “second floors” – as well as by smaller bases. The three large-format site specific works – a carpet of dandelion, a cloud of thistle seeds, and a tubular hair form of horsehair – define the floors, the ceilings of the large open halves of the rooms, and the volumes of the cabinets.

Christiane Löhr’s drawings are devoted to sculptural themes in a different way. Graphite, oil crayon, and pen and ink are combined to form lines or organize surfaces against the pale pictorial ground. From delicate, hairline webs all the way to opaque, denser structures, these works make a lively impression of growth and movement.

Christiane Löhr is among the most important voices in current discussions of a new, time-related approach to sculpture. For this survey, she creates an installation space through the interplay of drawing, sculpture, and architecture, addressing essential questions regarding contemporary sculpture while at the same time reinterpreting the modernism of the milieu of the Arps as an artistic couple in a 21st century context. Alongside the nature-oriented creative principles of the Arps, alongside Minimalism and Arte Povera (with its deliberate exploitation of “poor” materials), she adds another fundamental level: the small formats of her sculptural works, a function of the materials she uses. In a world dominated by noise and bigness, this counts as an eloquent rebuke. Christiane Löhr invites us to open ourselves up to this impressive presentation through all of our senses.

Katharina Binz, Minister for Family, Women, Culture, and Integration for the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate, is excited about this very special exhibition: *“Christiane Löhr and her works are known worldwide, and she has received numerous international prizes and distinctions. But she is at home here with us, in **Rhineland-Palatinate**. She grew up in Koblenz, studied in Mainz, and received prizes from Johannes Gutenberg University, as well as from the Federal State of **Rhineland-Palatinate**, and she remains closely linked to her home region.”*

Dr. Julia Wallner, director of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, comments about the connection between art, architecture, and landscape in this exhibition: *“Christiane Löhr’s precise and astonishing works in natural materials open up entirely new perspectives. To present them in the Arp Museum, with its spacious, light flooded architecture and landscape views, means to continue an elementary dialogue, and one that could hardly be more relevant given the current state of the world, at the same time highlighting the timeless*

power of art. In her works, nature, architecture, and sculpture touch upon one another in her oeuvre in a very special way, with both gentleness and strength – like nature itself.”

Exhibition curator Jutta Mattern adds: *“I have long been fascinated by the works of this artist. When viewing the smaller works, we are immediately attracted by their colorfulness. Their fragility harbors a potent sense of presence that encourages intensive contemplation. Figuratively speaking, this means “dwindling down” for a brief interval to the size of the object, deciphering it, rediscovering ourselves for a fleeting moment in these enchanting realities.”*

The title of the exhibition was derived from Marion Poschmann’s poem “Ordering the Wilderness - on the Works of Christiane Löhr,” which appeared in 2020 in a collection of Poschmann’s poems entitled *Nimbus* (Suhrkamp Verlag).

On the artist

Christiane Löhr was born in Wiesbaden in 1965, and lives and works in Cologne and Prato, Italy. After studying art history and teaching art at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (1986–1993), she was a student of Jannis Kounellis at Düsseldorf Art Academy (1993–1996). Since then, her works have been seen in solo and group exhibitions worldwide. In 2001, for example, her ivy seed sculpture was featured at the Venice Biennale, curated by Harald Szeemann. Christiane Löhr has received numerous prizes and distinctions. Her works are found in national and international collections. In 2012, Christiane Löhr was represented by two horsehair works in the exhibition *Conquering the Wall. A Contemporary View on Nazarene Frescos* in the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, to which ten other artists contributed as well.

Catalog

Appropriately for a large-scale survey exhibition, the catalogue (German/English, Hatje Cantz Verlag) has been conceived as an anthology: in addition to a foreword by Julia Wallner and new texts by Jutta Mattern, Astrid von Asten, and Tiziano Scarpa, the publication brings together essays on the artist’s work from recent decades by a range of authors. These are supplemented by installation photographs showing the striking, delicate works of Christiane Löhr in interplay with the bright spaces of Richard Meier’s museum building.

Artworks in the exhibition

- 3 large format, site specific, installation sculptures
- 57 sculptures
- 31 drawings

Sponsors



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General information



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- Opening hours:** Tuesday to Sunday and holidays 11 AM – 6 PM
Tuesdays for preregistered groups beginning at 9 AM
closed on Dec 24 and Dec 31, 2023
- Admission:** adults, all exhibitions: €11, reduced: €9
- New! Museum Tuesday:** **reduced admission** €9 for all, free admission for students and trainees

The complete program: arpmuseum.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/arpmuseumbahnhofrolandseck

Instagram: @arpmuseum #arpmoment

PRESS MATERIAL is available on the homepage of the Arp Museum at:

<https://arpmuseum.org/en/museum/about-us/press.html>

Press pictures

Christiane Löhr: Symmetries of the Smooth

Oct 8, 2023–Dec 21, 2024

For all works by Christiane Löhr: © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023

Christiane Löhr, *Little Triple Dome*, 2018

Grass stalks, 14 x 13 x 13 cm

Photo and courtesy: Archivio fotografico Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea



Christiane Löhr, *Burr Tower*, 2001

Burrs, 25 x 25 x 25 cm

Photo: David Ertl



Christiane Löhr, installation view of *Large Seed Cloud*: “in folge,” Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea, Torre Pellice/Turin, 2019

Thistle seeds, hairnet, 175 x 300 x 300 cm

Photo and courtesy: Archivio fotografico Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea



Christiane Löhr, untitled, 2018
Oil crayon on paper, 32.5 x 28 cm
Photo: David Ertl



Christiane Löhr, Round Rag, 2009
Plant seeds, dog hair, 15 x 16 x 8 cm
Photo: David Ertl



Christiane Löhr, Little Step Form, 2005
Plant stems, 8 x 13 x 13 cm
Photo: Christiane Löhr



Christiane Löhr, Little Hair Chalice, 2006
Horsehair, needles, ca. 33 x 17 x 13 cm
Photo: Fernando Alvira



Exhibition program 2023/24

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| Beginning May 14, 2023 | Cosmos Arp (collection presentation) upper level, new building |
| Sept 3, 2023–April 1, 2024 | Holy Bodies Artchamber Rau |
| Oct 10, 2023–Jan 21, 2024 | Christiane Löhr: Symmetries of the Smooth new building, ground floor |
| Feb 25–June 16, 2024 | Women Masters: From Artemisia Gentileschi to Sophie Taeuber-Arp 1300–1900 (An exhibition of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck in cooperation with the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid) |
| April 21–Oct 20, 2024 | Kiki Smith: Interwoven Worlds Artchamber Rau |
| July 7, 2024–Jan 5, 2025 | der die DADA: Avant-Garde and Emancipation new building, ground floor |
| Nov 17, 2024–April 27, 2025 | Aquarius: A Story of Water Artchamber Rau |

Cosmos Arp

(collection presentation)



Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Hans Arp influenced the art of their time like virtually no other artistic couple.

Confronted with the urgent societal issues of the 20th century, they sought a radically new beginning. With its high-quality permanent collection, the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck is the only museum worldwide to be devoted to this pioneering artistic pair.

Accommodated in the museum's extraordinary architecture – consisting of a historic train station and Richard Meier's new light-flooded building – are more than 400 works of art.

The values of pacifism, equality, and ecology manifested themselves at a remarkably early moment in the lives and works of the Arps. In rebellion against existing social values and conventions, they consistently reinvented themselves and their work – ever faithful to the abstraction that remained foundational for their artistic and philosophical-conceptual approach.

Holy Bodies

Sept 3, 2023 – April 1, 2024



The exhibition brings together 50 religious paintings and sculptures from the Rau Collection for UNICEF, showcasing Christian belief from the Middle Ages to early modernism. Central to Christendom is a “God become man.” During the celebration of the Mass, his “sacred body” becomes alive; his voluntary sacrifice for the redemption of humanity becomes tangible in the bread and wine. The connection between spirituality and corporeality has been a motif in many religions since ancient times.

The works of art illustrate the life and Passion of Christ, depicting martyrs and saints who, like the Savior, demonstrate their inner strength, rising above themselves as passive, peaceful heroes. Up to the present, their sacred bodies are central to many pilgrimage churches, and the touch of their sculptural surrogates is regarded as capable of healing both physical and spiritual wounds. The celestial sphere, meanwhile, is reserved for spiritual bodies, the angels and heavenly heralds of the great world religions.