

## **Gotthard Graubner. Breathing with the Pictures**

(18 February 2018 – 10 February 2019)



Gotthard Graubner, untitled, 1983–84, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf – Stiftung Sammlung Kemp, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018, photo: Museum Kunstpalast – Stefan Arendt – ARTOTHEK

**Press conference: Friday, 16 February 2018, 11 am**

**Exhibition opening: Sunday, 18 February 2018, 11 am**

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**Rolandseck, 16 February 2018**

“The action of the colour is the decisive element.  
Only one range of colours is addressed at a time.  
The communication of cold and warm values  
generates tension and exchange.  
The colour spreads across the surface seemingly of its own volition.  
The quality of the colour determines its motion,  
the path it follows in its unconscious course.  
Its progress is then hindered;  
the colour space moves in the undertow of pigment masses.  
The surface breathes.”  
(Gotthard Graubner)

## **Media information**

### **“Gotthard Graubner. Breathing with the Pictures”**

(Exhibition 18 February 2018 – 10 February 2019)

Press conference: Friday, 16 February 2018, 11 am

Exhibition opening: Sunday, 18 February 2018, 11 am

**The power of colour, the effect of light, the language spoken by the material – defying the limits of surface and space. There is no doubt that Gotthard Graubner (1930–2013) is one of the great pioneers of abstract painting in Germany of the last few decades. At the documenta in Kassel in 1968 and 1977 he garnered much recognition. He finally achieved international success in the German Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 1982. The very special natural environment of the island of Hombroich provided the ideal setting for his late work. From the 1970s onwards Graubner was also closely allied with the Bahnhof Rolandseck and the work of Hans and Sophie Taeuber-Arp, which is why five years after the artist’s death the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck is honouring his work with a first major solo exhibition.**

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*“After a very successful year in which we celebrated the museum’s 10th anniversary, the Arp Museum team and I are very much looking forward to this year’s theme “Farbenrausch – Ecstasy of Colour”! To get things started the museum will be presenting the work of Gotthard Graubner, one of the great abstract painters in Germany, for whom colour was the most important means of expression. Of course early in the season the museum’s patron will also be featured in a friendship exhibition. I am proud of the museum staff who have conceived and realized this truly breathtaking show,”* comments **Manfred Geis, acting director of the Board of Trustees of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck Foundation.**

## **Gotthard Graubner, magician of colour**

As cushions the images free themselves gently from the walls and enter the room, moving into the third dimension. Colours flow into one another without ever losing the harmony of their own spectrum. Small, colourful, flat or slippery embedded particles issue forth from the nebulous depths of the image layers, lending the object its very own life and soul.

Breathing is a central concept in the work of Gotthard Graubner and a word he often used himself. Pulsating and vibrating pneumatically, his pictures emanate a diffuse aura. They live and breathe, uniting the interior and exterior in a cosmos of colour. Innumerable material experiments, diverse stratifications, the coincidental reactions of such materials as paper, canvas and nylon coverings, and the use of large brushes, brooms, rags and sponges reveal his nature as an alchemist among painters.

*“In his painting Gotthard Graubner vividly demonstrates the substantial importance of colour. Colour literally becomes an independent force, an antonymous protagonist that follows its own laws. It acts, communicates, proliferates, reveals, carves out its own path. It is colour that breathes life into the canvas.”* This is how **Dr. Oliver Kornhoff, Director of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck**, describes the exhibition. And he goes on: *“We are much looking forward to the new life that the selected canvases, objects and photographs by Graubner will breathe into Richard Meier’s lucid architecture. Presented in the framework of our thematic focus ‘Ecstasy of Colour’, this first major exhibition five years after Graubner’s death will allow for a fascinating rediscovery of a great master of abstraction from the*

*Rhineland region. The extended running time of the exhibition will make it possible for the light of the varying seasons to pass over the works.”*

*“There were small tender kisses of colour, messages from the artist on a torn off piece of cardboard the size of a hand. But there were also colourful imprints juxtaposed alongside each other in unusually large formats, stretching across the entire wall. There were delicate white prints, the auras of which the artist rendered with fine pencil circles, or the ones made with oil paints, accentuated by the radiant, absorbing background. (...) The foundation of the work was always the encompassing space.”* Is how the works are insightfully described in the catalogue by **Graubner expert Dietrich Helms**.

## **Breathtaking “pictorial organisms”: On the works in the exhibition**

The exhibition “Breathing with the Pictures” conceived by Jutta Mattern, curator for contemporary art at the Arp Museum, invites visitors to physically experience the auratic works of the magician of colour Gotthard Graubner in the luminous, ample rooms of the structure designed by Richard Meier. As a central element of meditation, the motif of breathing connects with Graubner’s interest in Far Eastern religions.

The point of departure for the show are ten black and white photographs in the collection of the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck that Gotthard Graubner took while travelling through Bhutan in 1976. Seeking spiritual experiences, the images capture the dance of Buddhist monks of the Wangdue Phodrang monastery by means of intense light-dark contrasts. In juxtaposing dynamic and stasis the pictures portray in the subtlest, most poetic manner the meditative nature of these ritual dances and the blending of body and space. A personal encounter with the Dalai Lama in 1982 at the Bahnhof Rolandseck made a profound impression on the artist.

The meditative element is felt by visitors as they make their way through the exhibition and helps shape their encounter of Graubner’s highly colourful pictorial explorations. The show includes **51 works by Graubner**, from flat graphic works to the object-like colour-space bodies that define his oeuvre. **Six objects related to Buddhism** that inspired Graubner in the creation of some of the works in the exhibition are also on display.

# arp museum Bahnhof Rolandseck

Graubner's pallet ranges from brown, grey, green and black tones in his earlier works to powerfully luminescent colours. The delicate application of diverse colour nuances in countless layers yields an astonishing effect that changes depending on the particular atmosphere, lighting and the viewer's vantage point. With the conscious employment of different media Graubner always emphasizes the material quality of the works, the surfaces of which he sets into motion by means of his unmistakable use of colour.

In the interaction between the plastic depths of the corporeal base layer of paint and the optical depths of the seemingly de-materialized colour surfaces, the "object-images" and colour-space bodies exercise a unique fascination. Experimenting with technique, surface and material, the artist transforms the formal pictorial elements into the image's content: colour does not signify anything but in its effect becomes the subject itself.

The key to Graubner's art is the impression it makes on the senses in the act of perception. The viewer's experience varies depending on the location, lighting and his or her own mental state. All are invited to visit the exhibition and encounter these remarkable works. The new structure of the Arp Museum designed by Richard Meier features a synergy of art, nature and architecture, offering a unique stage for the works of Gotthard Graubner.

The **exhibition catalogue** is published by Walther König (Cologne) and costs 29.80 €.

A **media guide** to the exhibition can be downloaded for a fee through the app "arp museum" (3.49 € as a download, 4.50 € with rental of media device).

We would like to thank all the **individuals and institutions** that have lent works for the exhibition:

## **Institutions**

GDKE – Direktion Landesmuseum Mainz

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V., Stuttgart

Kunstmuseum Bonn

Märkisches Museum Witten

Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf

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# **arp museum** Bahnhof Rolandseck

Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf – Stiftung Sammlung Kemp

Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main

Neues Museum Nuremberg

Neues Museum Nuremberg – Böckmann Collection

Gift of Marianne and Hansfried Defet to the Neues Museum Nuremberg Foundation

Viktor and Marianne Langen Collection / Langen Foundation, Neuss

Siegfried and Jutta Weishaupt Collection / Kunsthalle Weishaupt, Ulm

SCHAUWERK Sindelfingen

Weltmuseum Wien, Augusta Glatter Collection

Kamalashila Institute, Langenfeld/Eifel

## **Private Collections**

Walter Bruno Brix

Collection of Elke and Anna Dröscher

Private collection, Meerbusch

H. R. Pohl, Cologne

Prof. Schmitter, Düsseldorf

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## General Information

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Opening times: Tuesday to Sunday and on holidays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Admission: 9 Euros; reduced rates, 7 Euros (applies to the entire museum); 4 Euros, reduced rates 2 Euros (railway station building only)

You will find our complete program at: [www.arpmuseum.org](http://www.arpmuseum.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/arpmuseumbahnhofrolandseck](http://www.facebook.com/arpmuseumbahnhofrolandseck)

Twitter ([#arpmuseum](https://twitter.com/arpmuseum))

Instagram ([#arpmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/arpmuseum))

### PRESS MATERIAL

Press releases and press photos for the exhibition may be found on the Homepage of the Arp Museums at:

<http://arpmuseum.org/museum/ueber-uns/presse.html>



**Exhibition preview 2018/ 2019**

**Theme year 2018: »Realm of Colour«**

until 17 June 2018

**Arp Collection 2018 *Rendez-vous des amis*: Kurt Schwitters and Hans Arp**  
Richard Meier building upstairs

until 10 February 2019

**Gotthard Graubner.**  
**Breathing with Pictures**  
Richard Meier building ground floor

until 29 July 2018

**Kunstkammer Rau**  
**In the Realm of Colour.**  
**From Tiepolo to K. O. Götz**  
Pavillon

29 April until 15 July 2018

**I takes time. It's risky. It might last forever.**  
Fellowship holders from the Künstlerhaus  
Schloss Balmoral and the State of  
Rhineland-Palatinate 2017/18  
Station

## Arp Collection 2018 *Rendez-vous des amis: Kurt Schwitters and Hans Arp*

until 17 July 2018



Kurt Schwitters, untitled (Merz drawing with Arp and string), 1924, Kunstmuseum Basel, Collection of Copper Engravings, donation Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, © VG Bild-Kunst 2018, photo: Martin P. Bühler

In 1918 Hans Arp and Kurt Schwitters met at the Café des Westens in Berlin. This would prove to be the beginning of an intense friendship between the artists, the 100th anniversary of which we will be commemorating with a new exciting *Rendez-vous des amis*. Shaken by the effects of the Great War and in search of an artistic reaction, Arp and Schwitters defied tradition and classical techniques from very early on. Both also declared collage to be one of their most important artistic vehicles.

As predecessors of DADA and MERZ, they were bound by a close philosophical affinity that was characterized in no small part by humour and irony. Fantastic texts and avantgardistic publications allow us to vividly experience this intimate connection. “We poetize, merzize and arpize the whole day long”, reported Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp euphorically on their collective projects.

Placing emphasis on their collages and collective publications, in the Graphic Cabinet we explore the often amusing and always ingenious cooperation between two great artists that still harbours many secrets.

## Gotthard Graubner. Breathing with the pictures

until 10 February 2019



Gotthard Graubner, untitled, 1983/84, © Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf – Foundation Collection Kemp, photo: Horst Kolberg

The Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck is dedicating a major exhibition to Gotthard Graubner (1930–2013), one of the most important abstract painters of our age.

Gotthard Graubner maintained close ties to the Bahnhof Rolandseck from the 1970s onwards. Like numerous other artists, he valued, breathed life into and left his mark on this special location. The show's point of departure is ten extraordinary black-and-white photographs of dancing monks from the Whangdue

Phodrang monastery that he took while in Bhutan in 1976 and that are now part of the museum's collection. Following Graubner's interest in Buddhism, the atmosphere of the exhibition is permeated by this theme. Such formal elements as transparency, lightness and penetration as well as color surface as a living organism all play a role. This is evident not only in the impressive *Farbraumkörper* [Color Space Bodies] but also in the artist's print works. Biographical notes, such as the body prints in the portfolio *Simulacrum* from 1978, bring Graubner's authorship vividly to light.

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The approximately 50 works allow visitors to trace his development from a muted palette to a veritable ecstasy of colors, to silently immerse themselves in the color spaces, and to – as intended by the artist himself – “breathe together with the pictures”.

## Kunstkammer Rau

### In the Realm of Colour. From Tiepolo to K. O. Götz

until 29 July 2018



Maurice de Vlaminck, fauvist landscape near Chatou, at 1907, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck/ Collection Rau for UNICEF, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018, photo: Mick Vincenz

In 2018, the Arp Museum will be under the spell of “the Realm of Colour”. The year opens with the exhibition “Gotthard Graubner – Breathing Images”, which will be devoted to the work of the famous German painter Gotthard Graubner (1930–2013), from 18 February 2018 to 10 February 2019. Since the 1970s, Graubner

was closely connected with the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck. Better than anyone else he delves into the theme of colour and its multiple nuances, layer after layer. He frequently employs a canvas lined with synthetic wool. So-called ‘colour space bodies’, dense cushion-like coloured fabrics, emerge from this. They reflect nature’s vast palette of colour and narrate about sun and sky. Through their intensity they attract our view; you can lose yourself visually in them in order to discover your own colour landscapes. The exhibition is framed by the spacious, light-flooded architecture of the prominent architect Richard Meier and the impressive surrounding nature.

We will trace the arc of colour back into history. Since 2009, the Artchamber Rau has become home for one of the most precious German private collections of ancient art: the Collection Rau for UNICEF, which is on permanent loan in our museum. In parallel and in close cooperation with the Graubner Retrospective, we would like to present the theme of colour under the motto “In the Realm of Colour” (18 March until 30 July 2018) over the course of the centuries and in dialogue with Modernity. We will examine and reveal the use and meaning, as well as the language of colours, beginning with their symbolic value in medieval art, through their subjectively emotional use in Baroque painting, to the momentary, glimmering impressionistic landscapes and the Fauves’ abstract colour storms. K. O. Götz, Antonius Höckelmann, Ulrich Erben and Mark Tobey will be among the featured exponents of contemporary painting.

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## I takes time. It's risky. It might last forever. Fellowship holders from the Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate 2017/18

29 April until 15 July 2018



Daniel Wetzelberger, Gustostückerl 3, 2017, photo: Olga Vostretsova

In *Vita activa*, Hannah Arendt states that works of art have the ability to stabilize human lives. Yet during the creation of this work she herself was anything but stable. Making art is a labour that seldom yields a stable result. It takes time until a coherent aesthetic message takes shape. Sometimes risks are inherent in the material. The ceramic objects, for example, at the center of the Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral residencies in 2017-2018 can survive for thousands of years, but they can also explode in the kiln or develop irreparable cracks ...

Producing, exhibiting and perceiving art always involves risk. Experiencing art exposes one to the danger of having one's thoughts and actions modified. The artists-in-residence of the Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral and grant recipients of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate examine such controversial current themes as globalization, communication, gender, religion and visions of the future and explore such questions as the history of forms, mythology and the search for the self. The exhibition will be curated by Olga Vostretsova (curator-in-residence).

## In Japan Fever. From Monet to Manga

26 August 2018 – 20. January 2019



Paul Signac, Hairdressing scene. Opus 227 (Project for a washroom), 1892, private collection, © All Right reserved

The wide-ranging double exhibition at the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck shows the remarkable influence of Japanese culture on western art from the Impressionists through the present. The exhibition is being presented on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912). After 200 years of isolation Japan opened itself to the West, which was subsequently flooded by previously unknown artistic objects from the island nation. This led in turn to an aesthetic revolution in the western world and painting, paving the way for modernism.

The exhibition's point of departure is the collection of Japanese colour woodcuts of the Impressionist painter Claude Monet. A comprehensive selection of these will be shown for the first time outside of France. Masterworks by Monet, Signac, Seurat, van Gogh and others demonstrate the major influence that Japan had on the late 19th-century art scene.

Representations of the interiors of artist studios from Vallotton to Ensor provide evidence of the "Japanese fever" with objects from the Far East and sensual "Geisha" models in kimonos. Yet the most enduring and revolutionary influence that Japan had on Europe is in the observation of nature. Our perception was broadened and enhanced and our attention

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was drawn to our surroundings and the beauty of detail. Daring natural views, high horizons, surprising close-ups and the directness of the moment shaped many landscapes and still lifes, from Monet and Caillebotte to Signac and van Gogh.

That Japanese fever is not just a phenomenon of the 19th century becomes evident in the section of the exhibition in the Bahnhof Rolandseck's historical rooms. This is linked to the Kunstammer Rau, as motif traditions and lines of development have continued through the present. It becomes quite clear that Japan's inspiration continues to be an essential element of everyday western visual culture and of global popular culture as well: manga, which to some extent emerged from the tradition of Japanese woodcuts, are as wide-ranging and diverse as *anime*, which since the 1970s and such productions as *Biene Maja* and *Heidi* have captured German children's hearts and now are closely related to the fantasy genre. In a cosplay (costume play), beloved manga and anime characters will be brought to life, turning the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck into a colourful fantasy world.

The comic made especially for the exhibition by the artist Christina S. Zhu (*Pummelpanda*) makes for an exceptional highlight. The story takes visitors through the tunnel connecting the old and new structures, thus establishing a pictorial link between the different parts of the exhibition. The architecture of Richard Meier provides a breathtaking backdrop for a wild, fantastic chase.

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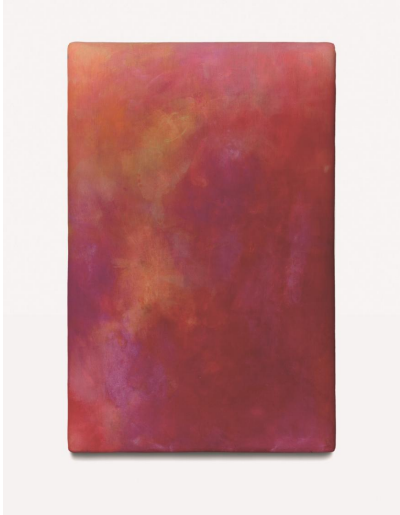
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## Press picture for the exhibition

### Gotthard Graubner. Breathing with the Pictures

For the works of Gotthard Graubner © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018



Gotthard Graubner, untitled, 1983/1984,  
Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf –  
Foundation Collection Kemp, photo:  
Museum Kunstpalast – Stefan Arendt -  
ARTOTHEK



Gotthard Graubner, monks in the monastery  
Wangdue Phodrang in Bhutan, 1976, Arp  
Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck



Gotthard Graubner, Ibiza (bagged pillow),  
1970, Private Collection Meerbusch, photo:  
Dejan Saric



Gotthard Graubner, Lapilli, 1995, H.R.  
Pohl, Köln, Foto: Jochen Littkemann,  
Courtesy of Galerie Karsten Greve



Gotthard Graubner, untitled, 1957,  
Sammlung Elke und Anna Dröscher,  
photo: Dirk Masbaum



Gotthard Graubner, Venezia (Triptychon),  
1982, Museum für Moderne Kunst  
Frankfurt am Main, photo: Axel Schneider



Gotthard Graubner, Kissenbild, 1970,  
Märkisches Museum Witten, photo: Eric  
Jobs