

GROUP EXHIBITION

SEX AND THE BRITISH

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

15 Apr 2000 - 03 Jun 2000



SLAP AND TICKLE

A perspective on the sexual content of British Art since the 1960s

An exhibition under the curatorship of Norman Rosenthal and Max Wigram

Great art has often been inspired and driven by Eros. When we talk about eroticism and sex in art, we touch the most original source of artistic inspiration. Important internationally renowned British artists such as Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud or David Hockney have repeatedly used sex as a leitmotif for their works, indeed their work has even depended on it. Far from being uptight about sex, these artists have explored areas of sexual practice with a graphic openness that never shies away from controversy.

Besides significant works by Gilbert + George this exhibition brings together the most sensual exhibits of a younger generation of artists, showing fascinating representations of erotic and sexual motifs in art. The explosive development of British art since 1990 owes much to the Vanguard, which paved the way in the 1960s and 1970s. Sex has become even more of a major theme in the work of the so-called YBA's (Young British Artists). Sex is nothing to shy away from nor is its fantasy to be disputed because of its frank inclusion in much of contemporary British work.

Using the contemporary energy of shock and more traditional ideas of beauty this exhibition contains some extremely explicit and provocative works. It confronts issues of pornography, homosexuality and amorality with a directness that will subsequently make the British and sex appear in a new light.

The younger generation of artists are strongly represented with new media such as video or installations. For instance, in the pornographic film *Bring me the head of...* Jake and Dinos Chapman present a story of betrayal and revenge which reveals the most confusing elements of pornography.

Angus Fairhurst will show two videos and a projection as well as some drawings. In contrast to prevailing male sexual dominance Sarah Lucas emphasises female sexuality in her works: two sculptures and a video, in which a sexual world separated from love is presented.

Philippe Bradshaw is to show an installation that depicts Fragonard's *Swing* on a chain curtain. This work was created by piecing together different coloured bits of chain which then hang like a beaded curtain. A video of the artist and his friends dancing naked "behind" the curtain turns the observer into a voyeur and cleverly reinterprets the sexual energy from Fragonard's original image of voyeurism and bourgeois titillation.

Mat Collishaw will show a new piece of sculpture created for the exhibition. It is a large square wooden box on legs with two small peep-holes. The viewer can peep inside the box and see Adam and Eve cavorting in the Garden of Eden. Set in an idealised landscape the image of the lovers is a computer-manipulated 3D projection.

Tim Noble and Sue Webster have also created sculptures consisting of rubbish and fairground lights that proclaim their message of love and hate.

Tracey Emin's works are much more subtle. She will show simple, poignant and sexually charged drawings that offer an insight into the emotional content of Emin's work.