

press release

david lachapelle | earth laughs in flowers

february 25 to may 8, 2011

press preview wednesday, february 23, 2011, 11 am

In the first institutional solo exhibition in Germany of work by the American photographer David LaChapelle (*1964), the kestnergesellschaft presents a series of new, not yet shown photographs. The series **Earth Laughs in Flowers**, which was created this year, refers to art-historical visual traditions but never loses sight of LaChapelle's own artistic language.

The large-format still lifes in this series, with titles such as **The Lovers**, **Concerning the Soul**, **Risk** or **America**, seamlessly take up the principle of exaggeration that characterized the portraits of celebrities like Madonna, Pamela Anderson, Michael Jackson, Björk or David Bowie through which LaChapelle himself has become famous since the 1990s. The portraits always contained art-historical references, along with a fear of emptiness, a love of bad taste, an ugly beauty, but David LaChapelle's recent works now show an explicit compositional affinity to Baroque floral still lifes. Plants, fruits and objects, in place of human bodies, now bear witness to human pride, to the finiteness of life with its obsessions and compulsions, to pleasure and suffering. The title of the exhibition can also be read in the sense of the vanitas portrayals of impermanence and futility: the quotation 'Earth laughs in flowers' comes from the poem 'Hamatreya' by Ralph Waldo Emerson in which flowers are the earth's laughter at the arrogant attitude of human beings who believe they can own the earth, although they themselves are transient and must return to it. But the title also speaks of an affirmative and all-encompassing attitude, as LaChapelle himself puts it and seeks to translate into his pop visual language. His works are intended to be inclusive and easy to understand, and they address a wide audience. This is achieved through strategies of heightened media staging – as in the portraits – but also through universal motifs that are culturally rooted – as in **Jesus is My Homeboy** (2003), which is also shown in the exhibition. In this series LaChapelle worked with people from the street to stage scenes from the life of Jesus that are astonishing in their true-to-life, contemporary realization. This series is complemented by two paintings from the State Gallery of the Lower Saxony State Museum. These two works, **Christuskopf** [Head of Christ] (1904) by Erich Brunkal and **The Entombment of Christ**, a copy after Raffael by Casabene, enable the new works by David LaChapelle to be compared with and referred to traditional Christian iconography.

David LaChapelle studied visual art at the North Carolina School of the Arts before moving to New York. There he studied at the Art Students League and the School of Visual Arts, and while still a student was invited by Andy Warhol to work for the magazine Interview. David LaChapelle has had solo exhibitions at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Kunst Haus Wien, the Fotografiska Museet Stockholm and elsewhere. His work has appeared in numerous group shows, for example at the Brooklyn Museum and the Helmut Newton Foundation.

kestnergesellschaft

exhibition

David LaChapelle | Earth Laughs in Flowers

duration of the exhibition

February 25 to May 8, 2011

press preview

Wednesday, February 23, 11 am

opening

Thursday, February 24, 2010, 7 pm
the artist will be present

speeches

Dr. Veit Görner, director
Dr. Katja Lembke, designated director, Landesmuseum Hannover
Kristin Schrader, curator

catalogue

David LaChapelle | Earth Laughs in Flowers

a catalogue in German and English will be published in cooperation with DISTANZ-Verlag with an introduction by Dr. Veit Görner and texts by Dr. Thomas Andratschke and Kristin Schrader.

edition

an exclusive edition will be published

opening hours

Daily and on Holidays 11 am – 6 pm
Thursdays 11 am – 8 pm
Closed on Mondays

entrance fees

single ticket 7 Euro, reduced single ticket 5 Euro
Free admission for members of the kestnergesellschaft, members of art associations listed in the ADKV, and children under the age of 14. With your ticket you can visit the exhibition as often as you like. Your ticket may also be used by somebody else.

sponsors



cooperation partner



the catalogue will be
published in cooperation with

DISTANZ

press photographs

for press photographs, interview requests and more information please contact our press office (Silke Janßen, tel +49 511 7012016, presse@kestner.org) or use our download-service on our website **www.kestner.org** see link **press**

culture partner



The kestnergesellschaft is supported by the state of Lower Saxony.



kestnergesellschaft

educational program

David LaChapelle | Earth Laughs in Flowers

free guided tours

Saturdays at 3 pm
Sundays and on Holidays at 11 am and 3 pm
Wednesdays 1 pm half-hour »lunch-break« tour
Thursdays 7 pm

special guided tours|
tours for pupils

by arrangement in English, French, Dutch, Spanish or Italian

teachers' evening

Thursday, March 2011, 6 pm

tours guided by the director

Thursday, March 31, 2011, 7 pm | guided tour with Dr. Veit Görner (director) and Hanna Kreisel-Liebermann (pastor Marktkirche St. Georgii et Jacobi, Hanover)

Thursday, May 5, 2011, 7 pm
guided tour with Dr. Veit Görner (director) and
Dr. Thomas Andratschke (curator, Landesmuseum Hannover)

kestnerkids
goes international

Tuesday, April 5, 2011, 3:30 pm

kestnerfilm

Tuesday, February 22, 2011, 8 pm

Hochhaus-Lichtspiele Hannover | David LaChapelles »Rize«

Documentary movie by David LaChapelle, released in 2005, about two related dancing subcultures of Los Angeles.
David LaChapelle will be present.

Additional screenings Sunday, March 12, 2011, 11 am and
Sunday, May 8, 2011, 11 am.

kestnerconcert

Thursday, April 28, 2011, 7 pm | American Jesus Suite

String quartet »Quartett PLUS 1« meets Michael Jackson

kestneracademy

Thursday, March 3 2011, 6:30 pm

Discussion about the conception and production of art catalogues

Saturday, March 5 2011, 3 pm

Viewing of the print office Benatzky (Hanover)
in cooperation with ArtnetworX

March 3 to 5, 2011, 6 pm | March 6 2011, 4 pm

Kommunales Kino | »How to Make a Book with Steidl«

Who's the man behind Robert Frank, Karl Lagerfeld and Günter Grass?
Their publisher Gerhard Steidl. Spend an exclusive year with an impressive publisher and printer and be part of the fragile processes when creativity is captured in a book.
In cooperation with Kommunales Kino.

Sunday, March 6, 4 pm | The artist book in the digital age

Presentation of the artist book of Olaf Nicolai following a talk with the artist and Jan Wenzel (publisher spector books)

kestnergesellschaft