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#artcologne

## ART COLOGNE 2021 with a presentation from the collection of the LBBW

**What - if    Could - Be - Works by Rosemarie Trockel, Thomas Grünfeld, Josephine Meckseper, Tobias Rehberger and others**

### Living collection history

With works by Vito Acconci, Isa Genzken, Asta Gröting, Thomas Grünfeld, Georg Herold, Hubert Kiecol, Karen Kilimnik, Allan McCollum, Josephine Meckseper, Raymond Pettibon, Rosemarie Trockel, Tobias Rehberger, Andreas Slominski, Wolfgang Tillmans and Gillian Wearing, the art collection of the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg (LBBW) presents its living collection history in the context of a special event at this year's ART COLOGNE. The show of the LBBW was curated by Dr Nadia Ismail under the title "What - if    Could - Be".

The title for the collection presentation at ART COLOGNE, What - if    Could - Be, is derived from the exhibit of the same name by the artist Rosemarie Trockel. What - if Could - Be. In these simple words, knitted from wool with a computer program, complex, human, open-ended questions arise, although Trockel dispenses with clear punctuation like question and exclamation marks. The work was created in 1990, and one thus reads the first two words as a question. The work seems more current than ever, given a world that appears to be increasingly coming apart at the seams. With Could - Be, Trockel at the same time opens up a canon of possibilities, which can be finalised individually with a thought or an action.

The beginnings of the art collection of the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg can be traced back to the year 1971, and its scope has grown constantly since then. The goal was, and remains, to promote contemporary art and make aspects of current art developments experienceable for employees of the bank in their immediate work environment. The LBBW collection is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. In this context, the major anniversary exhibition *Jetzt oder nie* (Now or never), which is starting in November in the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, is showing large parts of its high-quality collection, which makes art-historical, even historical strands of the development of both modern and postmodern art comprehensible. The presentation at ART COLOGNE decisively focuses on the early acquisition activity and is curated by Dr Nadia Ismail. Ismail, head of the Kunsthalle Gießen and specialist curator of the LBBW collection, reveals her selection in an interview (can be read in the October edition of *Monopol* magazine) in advance of Art Cologne: "It wasn't easy to reach a decision from such a wealth of high quality works. Besides positions of Rosemarie Trockel, I also have the opportunity to exhibit one of my favourite series of works, *Signs that say what you want them to say and not signs that say what...*, by Gillian Wearing. However, wonderful works by Isa Genzken, Georg Herold, Karen



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Kilimnik, Josephine Meckseper, Raymond Pettibon, Tobias Rehberger, Andreas Slominski and Wolfgang Tillmans are also part of the presentation at ART COLOGNE. The focus of the works shown is to a great extent on the acquisitions made in the 1990s. It was a highly interesting journey for me into the living past of the collection history."

Page  
2/3

The LBBW in this way opens its collection to a broad public and provides deep insight into the origins of the art collection since its beginnings. This is supplemented by the only just recently published three-volume collection catalogue that accompanies the anniversary. Some of the narratives become evident in the captions listed there by Lutz Casper, head of the LBBW collection. These include pioneering aspects like Identity and Subject, which are pursued further in the acquisition strategy. Ismail on this: "The questions revolving around 'Who am I?', 'Where do I belong?' and 'Who do I want to or may I be?' take on a more central perspective, not least through the possibilities of a digital, virtual identity. Key here is then to decide what is 'real'? 'Am I communicating with a real person or with an AI?' - an important theme for our future. Which leads us to another theme: the artwork in the age of its digitalisation. Another important field is Art in the Anthropocene, which is distinguished by the influence of human beings on nature and thus negotiates the future of humanity."

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