

PRESS INFORMATION

NEW CLOSE UP REVOLVING AROUND ART & POLITICS IN THE COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ART

New thematic focus of the mediation space // Digital application on site and from now on also for home use // Guided tours

Frankfurt am Main, 16 November 2021. The genre of history painting looks back on a long tradition. Like hardly any other, it is shaped by constantly changing social and political demands. But how do artists process political events from the immediate present? The new CLOSE UP focuses on three works by Bettina Semmer, Armin Boehm, and Dierk Schmidt from the Städel Museum's Collection of Contemporary Art. They are representative of the artistic treatment of current events in the field of painting – contemporary history painting, so to speak. The artists' chosen themes are still relevant: From the massacre during the 1972 Summer Olympics and a tragic shipwreck in which hundreds of refugees lost their lives in 2001 to a depiction of the Zhawar Kili region, where a Taliban or Al-Qaeda base is located, and which was bombed between 1998 and 2002. Despite their different themes and artistic approaches, Semmer, Boehm, and Schmidt have one thing in common in regard to their approach: They change and expand the historical model with the means of painting. They confront the viewer, make the invisible visible, and point out various perspectives. The boundaries between objective reproduction and subjective influence or statement are fluid. Their painting leaves the realm of documentation and develops its own narrative. With the means of art, they – directly or indirectly – actively call upon us to take a stand ourselves.

'The art and mediation space CLOSE UP is constantly changing and draws from the diverse themes of the Collection of Contemporary Art. In the new presentation, the focus is on political art. The selected works are dedicated to historical events from 1972 to 2002. This year has also shown how highly topical the themes dealt with in CLOSE UP are: from the Middle East and Afghanistan conflicts to the crisis of asylum policy. At the same time, social demands on art and artists have changed. CLOSE

**Städelsches Kunstinstitut
und Städtische Galerie**

Dürerstraße 2
60596 Frankfurt am Main
Phone +49(0)69-605098-170
Fax +49(0)69-605098-111
presse@staedelmuseum.de
www.staedelmuseum.de

PRESS DOWNLOADS
newsroom.staedelmuseum.de/en

PRESS AND
ONLINE COMMUNICATION
Pamela Rohde
Phone +49(0)69-605098-170
rohde@staedelmuseum.de

Jannikhe Möller
Phone +49(0)69-605098-195
moeller@staedelmuseum.de

Susanne Hafner
Phone +49(0)69-605098-212
hafner@staedelmuseum.de

UP offers the opportunity to explore overarching contexts through digital and analogue immersion', explain the two project leaders Anne Dribbisch (Art Education) and Svenja Grosser (Collection of Contemporary Art).

In the innovative art and mediation space CLOSE UP, visitors are invited to conduct their own research in front of the original works: How do we deal with images of terror? What is the role of the media, and what role can a painting play? How do artists relate to their works: Are they activists, mediators, or neutral entities? The focus is on topics related to the culture of memory and collective memory, as well as on the power and role of images as carriers of information or means of reproducing political and social events. To these ends, CLOSE UP relies on the interplay of original artworks, wall texts, and a digital application. The broad spectrum of digital mediation – from exhibition films and interviews with artists from the collection to the Digital Collection – complements the encounter with the originals in the museum space. The activating digital application is available on site and as a mobile version for the user's own device, now also for use at home. Furthermore, guided tours complement the offer in CLOSE UP. They include the various modules and encourage a joint discussion about the various artistic approaches.

CLOSE UP addresses the audience with its diverse expectations and prior knowledge. Although works of contemporary art are closest to the reality of life of today's visitors, the experiences in the active educational work of recent years have shown that the perception of and engagement with contemporary art is often associated with difficulties. The concept behind CLOSE UP takes this as its starting point and enables the audience both an individual, low-threshold, and partly playful access as well as a more intensive engagement – a kind of self-study of art with its various themes and discourses.

Information Regarding the Digital Application

From now on, the digital application of CLOSE UP can not only be used in the Städel Museum on the provided tablets and on one's own device but can also be accessed from home: Visitors can now immerse themselves in the topic of 'Art & Politics' independent of location and time.

One special feature is the individually selectable entry into the application via activating and varying questions. These lead to independent modules that draw attention to details in the artworks and provide important background information. In addition to gamification elements, the artists also have their say via videos. The aim of the digital application is the independent exploration of the topic of 'Art & Politics'. The playful elements of the application convey a challenging topic in its complexity.

Each user takes home an individual experience. With 'Take-Away Art', digital content on the topic can be received via e-mail after the museum visit. The application of the first CLOSE UP 'Painting & Photography' will soon also be available outside the museum.

About the Works

The three selected artists approach the painterly reappraisal of the respective historical event in very different ways. For her work *Olympia (German Disaster Series)* from 1985, Bettina Semmer (b. 1955) first selected a photographic model – a press photo that went around the world. In her painting, she then contrasted the cool sobriety of the photo with large abstract oil stains. Only in this way is the actual act of violence behind the photograph revealed and virtually inscribed into the pictorial surface. Armin Boehm (b. 1972) likewise based his painting *Untitled (Zhuar Kili)* from 2007 on foreign material. He translated satellite images of an Islamist terror camp into an almost abstract painting. The oppressive site, which, after repeated bombardments, no longer exists today, achieves an aesthetic effect through the painterly transposition. And yet the extent of the destruction resonates in the scratched layer of paint. In contrast, for his triptych *SIEV-X – On a case of intensified refugee politics* (2001–03), Dierk Schmidt (b. 1965) worked without a source image: At the time, only a brief press note reported on the tragic shipwreck. With his painting, he creates a comprehensive image of the catastrophe. For this, he used materials such as pond liner or PVC film and juxtaposed these fragile, non-artistic image carriers with the classical canvas. What all three artists have in common is the complex approach in the depiction of a historical moment. Painting serves as a projection surface for one's own perception and thus also shapes one's view of the events.

Guided Tours in CLOSE UP

Special guided tours in CLOSE UP incorporate the multimedia nature of the space. All formats and applications take place in compliance with current hygiene regulations.

Thursday, 18 November 2021

6:30 pm Evening tour with project leader Anne Dribbisch:
CLOSE UP. How political is art? Meeting point: Garden Halls
(in German language, Tickets: shop.staedelmuseum.de)

Sunday, 21 November 2021

4:00 pm Picture of the Month – Online: Dierk Schmidt, *SIEV-X – On a case of intensified refugee politics* (2001–03), for the mediation space
CLOSE UP in the Collection of Contemporary Art
(in German language, tickets: shop.staedelmuseum.de)

Guided Tours for School Classes

You can also experience CLOSE UP in your own group: We are happy to coordinate guided tours with your curriculum. Please note that your visit to the museum – with or without a guided tour – must be registered.

Please send your registration by e-mail to: info@staedelmuseum.de.

Constantly updated further information on the current guided tour programme is available at staedelmuseum.de/en/closeup.

The Collection of Contemporary Art in the Städel Museum

Starting from the central space of the approximately 3,000 m² Garden Halls and beginning with major works of contemporary art from the recent and immediate past, a history of art after 1945 unfolds. Roughly 230 works by 170 artists from various schools, styles, and groups open up surprising comparisons, perspectives, and visual axes between the present and its roots in past decades. Using a wide variety of narrative strands, the presentation provides access to art after 1945, making it possible to experience the collection thematically rather than chronologically. In CLOSE UP, references are repeatedly made to the works in the Garden Halls and placed in the larger context of the collection.

NEW CLOSE UP REVOLVING AROUND ART & POLITICS IN THE COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Project leadership and concept: Anne Dribbisch (Städel Museum, Art Education) and Svenja Grosser (Städel Museum, Deputy Head of Contemporary Art)

Digital accompaniment: Freya Schlingmann (Städel Museum, Digital Projects)

URL of the mobile version of the digital application:
closeup.staedelmuseum.de/kunstundpolitik/en/

Technical conception, design, and implementation: Zum Kuckuck GmbH & Co. KG

Interior design and realisation: buero.us and very, Frankfurt am Main

Visitor services: +49 (0)69 605098-200, info@staedelmuseum.de

Opening hours: Tue., Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. + public holidays 10:00 am – 6:00 pm, Thur. 10:00 am – 9:00 pm

Tickets and admission: Tickets can be booked online at shop.staedelmuseum.de. Tue.-Fri. 16 euros, concessions 14 euros; Sat., Sun. + public holidays 18 euros, concessions 16 euros; free admission for children under 12 years of age; groups of 10 or more regular paying persons: 14 euros per person, weekend 16 euros. Registration is required for all groups by phone under +49 (0)69 605098-200 or by e-mail to info@staedelmuseum.de.

Venue: Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt am Main

Information: www.staedelmuseum.de