



Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst — Teerhof 20, 28199 Bremen

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PR & Marketing

PRESS RELEASE

Kay Rosen. NOW AND THEN
18.11.2023 – 31.3.2024

Press Conference: Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 11 am, in the presence of the artist

Opening: Friday, November 17, 2023, 7 pm

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The Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst is presenting **the first institutional solo exhibition of Kay Rosen in Europe**. Ever since the 1970s, the American artist (*1943 in Corpus Christi, Texas; lives in New York City and Gary, Indiana) has been using language as artistic material. She is internationally known above all for wall works which render individual words, sentences or series of letters, often in massive dimensions. Coming together here in an impressive manner are minimalist form, aesthetic impact and intelligent contents.

Kay Rosen imparts perplexing twists to everyday concepts and words through their arrangement as well as their design in terms of typography and color. She often engages in subtle adaptations that lead to astounding results. Whether it is a matter of neologisms, redefinitions or onomatopoeic explorations, Rosen repeatedly reveals surprising levels of verbal significance. Often coming into focus are issues involving a critique of society. Her oeuvre, meanwhile encompassing five decades, brings to light the manner in which language has a fundamental influence on our thoughts and actions.



Whether climate crisis, AIDS, gender issues or the relationship between power, self-empowerment and powerlessness—her works are permeated by political themes and reflect with pointed expressivity on current debates. Kay Rosen, however, emphasizes that she is not motivated by politics but by language itself. She seeks constantly new interconnections between image, word and script. For this purpose, she uses multifaceted visual and typographical strategies that extend a bridge between the disciplines of the visual arts, literature and poetry. In this endeavor, she takes delight in breaking rules. Thus she creates plays on words and linguistic images that not infrequently employ levity and wittiness for seductive effect and only gradually reveal their ambiguity.

For example, the word “Kiss” changes with only a few interventions into a “Kiss of Death.” Or a wall-filling list of historical potentates and popes ends perturbingly with the name of the American civil rights activist Malcolm X. From this perspective, Kay Rosen plays an exemplary role, because her works and “words don’t scream for change, rather they quietly enact change, leading by example” (Kenneth Goldsmith).



Kay Rosen is positioned in a line with other important language-artists of her generations: for example, Lawrence Weiner, Barbara Kruger or Jenny Holzer. And in this way, she fits ideally with regard to contents into the program of the Weserburg with its major focuses in the areas of Conceptual Art, Minimal Art, language-based art and, not least of all, the section of the Centre for Artist’s Publications.

The exhibition in Bremen brings together around 40 works, including several large-format wall works, paintings, drawings, prints and videos. To be seen in addition to exemplary major works is also a new, six-part language picture that was especially developed for the spaces of the museum.

“The Weserburg is making possible, in recognition of the artist’s eightieth birthday, a fresh encounter with and rediscovery of a complex artistic oeuvre which, in its incomparable combination of humorous lightness and analytical sharpness, is now receiving its first comprehensive presentation in Europe.”

Ingo Clauß, curator of the exhibition

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Catalog

A catalog will be published in December 2023.

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Authors: Ingo Clauß, Kenneth Goldsmith, Kay Rosen

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Short Vita

Kay Rosen has spent her career exploring the visual possibilities of language. She was born and grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas (*1943). The bilingual culture of south Texas and other languages spoken by some family members inspired her attraction to languages which she studied academically until 1968, when she shifted her attention to language-based art.



Rosen's work has been the subject of numerous articles, reviews, and both group and solo exhibitions and projects worldwide, including a highly acclaimed survey show of her work in 1998 at MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles and Otis College of Art Design, curated by Connie Butler and Terry R. Myers. Her work is part of major institutional collections, including New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Rosen held a teaching position at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for twenty-four years. She lives and works in New York City and Gary, Indiana.

For more information on curriculum vitae, bibliography, exhibition participation, and more, please visit: <http://www.kayrosen.com>



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Courtesy of Krakow Witkin Gallery and the artist