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It smells like... flowers & fragrances

14 April – 1 July 2018

me Collectors Room Berlin / Olbricht Foundation
Auguststrasse 68, 10117 Berlin
Opening hours: Wed – Mon, 12 – 6 pm



The exhibition ‘It smells like... flowers & fragrances’, on view at me Collectors Room Berlin from 14 April to 1 July 2018, reveals the undiminished potential of the visually rich subject of depictions of flowers and the subversive olfactory power of fragrances in contemporary art.

Everything about this exhibition evokes the senses and sensuality: the selected works by 26 artists capture and convey the eternally beautiful, the abysmal and the profoundly calming – for floral motifs and fragrances are universal. Crossing epochs and cultures, they entice and seduce, unite, are a sign of either respect, optimism or opulence, seemingly free of provocation. But flowers have always been more than just a motif of longing, a dramatic symbol of the transience of life or an erotic alter ego of human sexual organs. They can also be read as political metaphors that just as much illustrate the phenomena of botanical migration into socio-politics as the encroaching heteronomy of a genetically altered reality. The classical symbolism of the rose includes declarations of love, innocence and transience. However, it once also served as a visual formula for secrecy – *sub rosa* – for instance among the alchemists, while the presentation of a thorn-studded rose stem even served as a declaration of war.

In all of this, fragrances and smells play just as strong a role as images. They provoke feelings, unlock memories, awaken collectively conditioned associations. Fragrances can be attractive and repulsive in equal measure, deceiving and seductive. They broaden the aesthetical realm to encompass sensation and atmosphere, as described by Gernot Böhme in his 1995 book *Atmosphäre*.

The artists featured in this show analyse olfactory patterns, for instance of cities, and explore our deeply ambivalent relationship to body odour through the essence of the artist’s own sweat, or decipher the molecular structures of scents.

The displays at me Collectors Room Berlin are always designed to appeal to the senses. With *It smells like... flowers & fragrances* that now includes the olfactory sense too. For example, the platinum ring designed by Sissel Tolaas and Georg Hornemann, equipped with a scent capsule containing special fragrances that emit highly modern olfactory signals represents the ideal contemporary continuation of the classical marriage of art and science. Indeed, the precious, historical artefacts in the Wunderkammer at me Collectors Room document the early-modern culture of knowledge that always blended moments of sight, understanding and sensual presence.

The exhibition will go on display in the lounge of me Collectors Room Berlin. Please note: the Wunderkammer Olbricht and the lounge will be unaffected by the closure of the main exhibition galleries from 14.04. – 23.04.2018. Reduced-price admission of just 4€ will apply during that week.

Featured artists:

Olivia Berckemeyer (DE), Bertozzi & Casoni (IT), Norbert Bisky (DE), Armin Boehm (DE), Annedore Dietze (DE), Ayşe Erkmen (TUR), EVA & ADELE, Tine Furler (DE), Lennart Grau (DE), Gregor Hildebrandt (DE), Annett Kuhlmann (DE), Nadia Lichtig (FR), Leena Luostarinen (FL), Robert Mapplethorpe (GB), Jonathan Meese (DE), Michael Müller (DE), Karin Pliem (AT), Ged Quinn (GB), Gerhard Richter (DE), Thomas Schütte (DE), Luzia Simons (BR), Sissel Tolaas & Georg Hornemann (NO/DE), Tomoyuki Ueno (JP), Tina Winkhaus (DE), Hansa Wisskirchen (DE), Thomas Zitzwitz (DE)

Curated by Dr Heike Fuhlbrügge.

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Armin Boehm, Winternahe, 2015-2016, 170 x 150 cm, oil and fabrics on canvas © the artist, photo Gunter Lepkowski

Ayşe Erkmen, Drei Lilien Bad, 2002, 53 x 52,5 x 8cm, 12 bottles with shower gel © Edition Block, Berlin, photo Uwe Walter, Berlin

Tine Furler, Segen, 2018, 70 x 80 cm, ceramic, branches, paper © the artist

Gregor Hildebrandt, Die blaue Vase, 2018, 77,5 x 61 cm with frame, digital pigment print mounted on aluminium © the artist, photo Roman März