



FONDATION OPALE

≡ ART FOUNDATION
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PRESS RELEASE

ARTIST ACTIVIST ARCHIVIST

From June 16th to November 10th, 2024, Fondation Opale (Lens/Crans-Montana) presents its new exhibition ARTIST ACTIVIST ARCHIVIST: BERNHARD LÜTHI INVITES, dedicated to the career of Bernhard Lüthi, Swiss artist and curator who has been a staunch advocate for the recognition of Australian Aboriginal art in Europe. This exhibition features a selection of Lüthi's own works, alongside works by artists who have played a key role in his career, denouncing the still painful consequences of colonialism and racism in Australian history.

Since his first trip to Australia in 1974, Bernhard Lüthi documents rock art and forms strong bonds with Aboriginal artists and activists, shaping a commitment that continues to resonate today. Gradually shifting away from his own artistic practice to focus on curatorial work for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Lüthi has made a major contribution to raising the profile of Aboriginal art in Europe through pioneering exhibitions that challenged contemporary Western art's codes:

- **MAGICIENS DE LA TERRE** in 1989 at Centre Pompidou and Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, for which he was named co-curator for the Aboriginal participation.
- **ARATJARA, ART OF THE FIRST AUSTRALIANS** in 1993-94 in Düsseldorf, London and at Musée Louisiana near Copenhagen, which he initiated and curated together with Uli Krempel and Djon Mundine in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of Australia.
- At Musée Tinguely in Basel and Hanover, where he showcased Kuninjku artist John Mawurndjul with a retrospective exhibition RARRK in 2005-06.

At the heart of the exhibition ARTIST ACTIVIST ARCHIVIST lies Bernhard Lüthi's meticulously documented archive, a record of five decades of dedication, to which a site-specific art installation by Wiradjuri artist Brook Andrew (Artistic Director of the 22nd Biennale of Sydney in 2020) responds. The exhibition also features a selection of Lüthi's own works, alongside works by artists who have played a key role in his career. These works critically engage with themes of colonialism, Eurocentrism, and racism that persist in both the visual arts and society at large, in Australia as well as in Europe.

Following this exhibition, the Lüthi archive – composed of over ten thousand images and documents – will be permanently available to researchers and the public in the library of the Lens art gallery, inaugurated last December.

Starting out as a tribute to one of the most dynamic advocates for Australian First Nations art and culture in Europe, this exhibition offers an insight into the significant milestones in the history of Aboriginal art in Europe. It also serves as an artistic exploration of the intimate mechanisms that drive individuals to stand against injustice.

THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition ARTIST ACTIVIST ARCHIVIST: BERNHARD LÜTHI INVITES from June 16th to November 10th, 2024.

Curators: Bernhard Lüthi and for Fondation Opale: Georges Petitjean

Showcased artists:

Amouzou Amouzou-Glikpa, Archie Moore, Bernd Minnich, Bernhard Lüthi, Bessie Sims Nakamarra, Brook Andrew, Christof Hartmann, Dieter Roth, Edoh El Loko, Emily Kam Ngwarray, Erika Koch, Gordon Bennett, Gunter Christmann, Jimmie Durham, John Mawurndjul, Joseph Beuys, Larry Jungurrayi Spencer, Leonardo Bezzola, Lin Onus, Meret Oppenheim, Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, Paddy Jupurrurla Nelson, Paul Winkler, Richard Bell, Richard Long, Robert Strübin, Trevor Nickolls, Vernon Ah Kee, Wally Pwerle, Yongchang Chung.

Art gallery open from Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm.

Restaurant L'Opale open from Wednesday to Saturday, 9.30 am to 11 pm, Sunday from 9.30 am to 6 pm.

FONDATION OPALE

Established in December 2018, Fondation Opale is the sole contemporary art centre dedicated to promoting Aboriginal art in Europe. It fosters dialogue between cultures and peoples through art. The foundation is based on the Collection Bérengère Primat which counts more than 1,500 works by nearly 350 artists, constituting one of the most important collections of contemporary Aboriginal artists in private ownership.

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