

PRESS RELEASE

*New exhibition***Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969***June 24, 2023 – January 07, 2024*

The ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe presents a comprehensive overview exhibition of the work of Ulrike Rosenbach with more than 120 works from June 24, 2023. »Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969« takes place to mark the artist's 80th birthday. Objects, videos, media installations and sculptures, photographs and drawings from over five decades will be presented. Ulrike Rosenbach is considered one of the most renowned German performance and video artists. In her works she engages with issues of female identity, role attributions, and the holistic relationship between humans and nature. She has been very closely associated with the ZKM | Karlsruhe for many years. Thus, since 2018, Ulrike Rosenbach's video archive has been digitized and processed at the house.

»Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969« (June 24, 2023 – January 07, 2024) at the ZKM | Karlsruhe.

The retrospective »Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969« was initiated by Peter Weibel (1944-2023) and was created in close consultation with the artist. Presented is her processual and across media oeuvre that spans from over five decades. The exhibition will be presented as part of »Female Perspectives«. It is part of a series of exhibitions at the ZKM | Karlsruhe that honor the important work of a pioneering generation of media artists.

As early as the first years of the 1970s, the artist, who studied sculpture at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf under Norbert Kricke and Joseph Beuys, began to turn to the then new medium of video and to utilize its specific possibilities of expression for her own work. Rosenbach's early performances, in which she attaches cameras to her body, among other things, won her international acclaim, and after participating in landmark exhibitions such as documenta 6 (1977) and documenta 8 (1987), she became one of the most international renowned media artists. From 1973 to 1976, Rosenbach spent several extended periods working in the USA, where she was in close contact with the avant-garde art scenes in New York and Los Angeles. She taught Feminist Art, Performance, and Video at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia/Los Angeles, California, one of the most important art schools at that time, in 1975 and 1976 through the

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*Exhibition**Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969**Duration**June 24, 2023 – January 07, 2024**Location**Atrium 8+9, 1st floor**Press contact**Felix Brenner**Phone: +49 (0) 721 8100 1821**E-mail: presse@zkm.de**www.zkm.de/en/about-the-zkm/press**ZKM | Center for Art and**Media Karlsruhe**Lorenzstraße 19**76135 Karlsruhe**Founders of the ZKM:*

Baden-Württemberg

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG UND KUNST

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mediation of John Baldessari. In 1976, she founded the School for Creative Feminism in Cologne, Germany, which existed until 1982. From 1989 to 2007, Rosenbach was professor of new artistic media at the Saar College of Fine Arts in Saarbrücken, where she was also the director from 1991 to 1993.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an approximately 200-page publication in English edited by Hendrik Folkerts, curator of international contemporary art at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, together with Peter Weibel (1944-2023). Expected publication date is January 2024.

Alistair Hudson, new Scientific-Artistic Chairman of the ZKM | Karlsruhe says: "It was very important to Peter Weibel to honor Ulrike Rosenbach with this retrospective marking her 80th birthday. The ZKM team prepared the exhibition together with the artist for over a year. Among other things, numerous videos newly digitized and restored at the ZKM will be on view. Surely this is one of the most important exhibitions on media art in Germany this year."

On Sunday, July 23, 2023 at 3 p.m., artist Ulrike Rosenbach's performance »Die einsame Spaziergängerin« (The Lonely Walker) will be reenacted at the ZKM | Karlsruhe under the guidance of the artist.

The exhibition is supported by Stiftung Kunstfonds, Bonn. Our special thanks go to the Galerie Gisela Clement, Bonn.

Curated by: Philipp Ziegler (Curator), Hanna Jurisch (Co-Curator)

Exhibition team: Miriam Schmedeke (project assistant), Dorcas Müller (preparation and digitization of AV media), Anne Däuper (technical project management), Marlies Peller (technical project management), Matthias Gommel (scenography) Leonie Rök (conservation), Cornelia Eisendle (curatorial assistance)

Graphic design:

Linda van Deursen

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ABOUT ULRIKE ROSENBACH

Ulrike Rosenbach, born in Hildesheim in 1943, studied sculpture at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1964 to 1970 under Karl Bobeck, Norbert Kricke, and Joseph Beuys. Her studies with Joseph Beuys led to her first contacts with the happening and Fluxus scene of the 1970s. In 1971, Ulrike Rosenbach first became aware of video as an artistic means of expression through the exhibition prospect 71 at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. In 1972 she began to work with video herself and produced, among other things, her first live video actions. Her early performances, in which she used closed circuit videos, found international acclaim and made her the most renowned German video artist. From 1973 to 1976, Rosenbach visited the United States several times where she had various teaching assignments, including on Feminist Art and Video Art at the California Institute of Arts (CalArts), Valencia, California. In 1976 she founded the School for Creative Feminism in Cologne, which existed until 1982. As a political artist, she actively advocates for equal rights for women artists in the international art world. In 1977 and 1987 she participated in documenta 6 and 8, and teaching assignments and guest professorships took her to various European institutions, including the Berlin University of the Arts, the University of Applied Arts Vienna, and the University of Utrecht. From 1989 to 2007, Rosenbach was professor of media art at the Saar College of Fine Arts in Saarbrücken, where she served as director from 1991 to 1993. Her work has received numerous international awards and grants and has been shown at major exhibitions all over the world. She is a member of the Association of German Artists and since 2016 a member of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Visual Arts Section. Ulrike Rosenbach lives and works near Cologne.

Website

<https://www.ulrike-rosenbach.de/>

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LONG VERSION

Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969

Born in 1943, media artist Ulrike Rosenbach's videos, performances, and media installations engage with issues of female identity, role attributions, and the holistic relationship between humans and nature. As early as the first years of the 1970s, the artist, who studied sculpture at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf under Norbert Kricke and Joseph Beuys, began to turn to the then new medium of video and to utilize its specific possibilities of expression for her own work. Rosenbach's early performances, in which she experimented with the new medium's technical capabilities of direct camera recording, storage, and playback of videos as closed circuit loops, won her international acclaim, and after participating in landmark exhibitions such as documenta 6 (1977) and documenta 8 (1987), she became the most renowned German performance and video artist. From 1973 to 1976, Rosenbach spent several extended periods working in the USA, where she was in close contact with the avant-garde art scenes in New York and Los Angeles. In addition to various other teaching assignments, through the recommendation of John Baldessari, in 1975 and 1976 she taught Feminist Art, Performance, and Video at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia/Los Angeles, California, one of the most important art schools at that time. In 1976, she founded the School for Creative Feminism in Cologne, Germany, which existed until 1982. From 1989 to 2007, Rosenbach was professor of new artistic media at the Saar College of Fine Arts in Saarbrücken, where she was also the director from 1991 to 1993.

To mark her 80th birthday, the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe is showing the exhibition »Ulrike Rosenbach. today is tomorrow. Works since 1969« from June 24, 2023 to January 7, 2024. This comprehensive overview of Ulrike Rosenbach's oeuvre, processual and across media, will present over 120 works: objects, videos, media installations and sculptures, photographs and drawings from over five decades. Her video archive, which comprises over 600 tapes, is being digitized and processed at the ZKM since 2018.

While still a student, the artist created hood and collar objects related to the female body, in which gauze and other materials were stretched over steel wire frames. In various photographic series associated with this work complex and theme, such as »Hauben für eine verheiratete Frau« (Hats for a Married Woman) (1970) or »Wachshörnerhauben« (Wax-Horn Bonnets) (1972), the artist is seen wearing these clothing-

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like objects, which recall traditional folk costumes or courtly fashions, the historical models of which signaled the wearer's social affiliation and status and thus were symbols of women's lack of freedom and dependence in patriarchal societies. The theme of how society restricts and limits women can also be found in Rosenbach's early video works, for example, »Bindenmaske« (Binding Mask) (1972), »Einwicklung mit Julia« (Tying to Julia) (1972), or »Mon petit Chou« (1973), which were recorded by the artist as actions without an audience in front of a fixed camera in her studio. In the uncut black-and-white videos, in which Ulrike Rosenbach acts in close-ups in front of the camera and performs simple actions, she questions her own role as artist, wife, and mother. Under the influence of her intense involvement with the U.S. Women's Liberation Movement, Rosenbach expanded her initially autobiographically oriented work in the direction of generally critiquing and thematizing female role models and clichés and how these are culturally transmitted. In the process, she frequently utilizes quotes from art history, and in video performances, for example, *Glauben Sie nicht, dass ich eine Amazone bin* (Don't Believe I'm an Amazon) (1975), and media installations like *Reflektionen über die Geburt der Venus* (Reflections on the Birth of Venus) (1978), she works with superimpositions of live recordings of herself and images of female figures from mythology, religion, art, and popular culture. In her treatment of female archetypes that have such culturally contradictory connotations – the Madonna, Venus-Aphrodite, or the Amazon – which have developed into clichéd notions of female roles, she draws on her many years of cultural and historical research on the media transmission of certain image motifs and their entry into the trivial world of entertainment and advertising motifs, which is characterized by simplifications and male-dominated sexualized patterns of perception. Until the early 1980s she explores in numerous video works and actions, such as »Requiem für Mütter« (Requiem for Mothers) (1980) or »Narzissen scheiden weg« (Narcissus Pass Away) (1980), parts of which she also appears with her daughter Julia, the subject of mothers and daughters as an archetypal constellation of womanhood. By pointing out in these works the mechanisms of how traditional gender roles are culturally determined, Rosenbach makes the case for elaborating a new female self-understanding and designing identities that embrace multilayers of mythological, spiritual, and alchemistic ideas.

After Rosenbach first came into contact with works of U.S. video art and body art in 1971 in an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, in 1972 she had begun to explore the medium of video herself, a

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technology that, in contrast to works on film, is characterized by its immediacy: lengthy procedures to develop the carrier medium are no longer necessary and images can be shot by the user; no other technical and human resources are required. Unlike most other artists of her time, Rosenbach did not use video for documentary purposes; she used it as a structural means to create pictorial realities, perception, and self-reflection. In live video actions such as »Frauenkultur–Kontaktversuch« (Women’s Culture – Try to Contact!) (1977), »Salto Mortale« (1978), or »Die einsame Spaziergängerin« (The Lonely Walker) (1979), the artist attaches cameras to her body which take images that directly reflect her movements and actions; these are simultaneously transmitted to a monitor just as they are recorded during the performance. In the action »Tanz um einen Baum« (Dance Around a Tree) (1979), which Ulrike Rosenbach performed in a park during the 1979 Sydney Biennale, she makes reference to an Aboriginal Australian initiation rite. The artist, lying on the ground in the grass with a camera attached to her arm, turns in a spiral movement around a tree which has the cable of the video camera looped around it. With each rotation, she tries to smash shards of a mirror with a sword, which mark the outer circumference of the circle. The camera records the artist’s rotating movement and thus films exactly what is within her visual radius.

With the advancing capabilities of digital image processing, in the 1980s Ulrike Rosenbach’s videos changed into image compositions in which she uses visual effects like computer-generated image montages and cross-fades. She now uses prefabricated videos in her performances and has detached the camera from her body, which gives her more freedom for complex improvisations of movements in staged spaces. Influenced by her long-standing studies of natural spirituality and philosophy, as well as her preoccupation with shamanism, witchcraft culture, and ancient myths, in these years the subject matter of Ulrike Rosenbach’s performances shifts in works like »Tanz um einen Baum« (Dance Around a Tree) (1979), »Judofrauen haben als Hilfe Boten« (Judo Women Have Messengers for Support) (1980/1981), »Aufwärts zum Mount Everest« (Upwards to Mount Everest) (1986), or »Schlacht der Bäume« (Battle of the Trees) (1989) from the engagement with questions about female identity related to role attributions to fundamental aspects of the coexistence of humans and nature, the structures of space and time, and the eternal cycle of birth and death, of coming into being and passing away. In her search for primordial feminine principles and archaic

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matriarchal traditions, transformation and energy are core concepts of her actions in this period that often appear like rituals.

In the 1980s, Ulrike Rosenbach transformed her performances on the one hand into complex spatial installations in which specific, symbolically charged materials such as salt, wool, tissue paper, and red cables were used. On the other, as in »Die Eulenspiegelin« (The Female Fool) (1985), video productions were created from the recordings of the performance that Ulrike Rosenbach put on in 1984 about the female version of the well-known, legendary figure of Till Eulenspiegel, a jester and prankster. These video productions do not reproduce the original performance like a documentary, but with their careful editing of sound and images are in fact independent new works on the given subjects. At the end of the 1980s, Ulrike Rosenbach expanded the spectrum of her works to include media sculptures; the ones shown in the exhibition include the video sculpture »Or-Phelia« (1988) from the ZKM collection, »Ein Moment im Leben des chinesischen Malers Hu Em Eye« (A Moment in the Life of the Chinese Painter Hu Em Eye) (1989), »Zenkoher« (Zen Cooker) (1991), »Isabel im Wald« (Isabel in the Woods) (1993), »Das Eiserne Zeitalter« (The Iron Age) (1995), and »Spiegeleisurm« (Ice-Mirror Tower)(1997). In these sculptures, some of which utilize videos of previous performances, the far-reaching emancipatory and sociopolitical content of her work is condensed into sculptural settings with which she refers to the beginning of her career as a sculptor. Since the 1990s, the medium of drawing and the works about the figure and about the function of the angel have occupied an increasingly larger space in her work. Her most recent video works, which are presented on flat screens in the exhibition at the ZKM, are summaries and syntheses of earlier work cycles in which, in addition to image quotations from her own works, she draws on edited sequences from film history and other templates and combines these into atmospherically dense, new collages of images.

To accompany the exhibition, a book entitled Ulrike Rosenbach. Witnesses, an approximately 200-page publication in English edited by Hendrik Folkerts, curator of international contemporary art at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, together with Peter Weibel (1944–2023), will be published by Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, Cologne. Taking the notion of "witness" as its point of departure, the monograph explores how the different media in which Ulrike Rosenbach works, such as photography, video, sculpture, and (multimedia) installations, relate to, channel, and function as material

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witnesses to her performance practice's live actions. In addition to Hendrik Folkerts, contributors to the publication include Jennifer Doyle, Solveig Nelson, Peggy Phelan, Pavel Pys, Rebecca Schneider, Caroline Lillian Schopp, and Jonah Westerman. The graphic design of the exhibition as well as the publication is by the Dutch graphic designer Linda van Deursen.

On Sunday, July 23, 2023, at 3 p.m., as part of the exhibition, Ulrike Rosenbach's performance »Die einsame Spaziergängerin« (The Lonely Walker), (1979) will be reenacted at ZKM under the guidance of the artist, by the performer Smila Vita Hoppe.

The exhibition at ZKM is curated by Philipp Ziegler with Hanna Jurisch. The exhibition is supported by Stiftung Kunstfonds, Bonn. Our special thanks go to the Galerie Gisela Clement, Bonn.

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