

# KANN ES LIEBE SEIN?

MARIA ANWANDER, JULIUS DEUTSCHBAUER,  
KATHARINA LACKNER, CHRISTOPH MEIER, MAX MERTENS  
SUZAN NOESEN, CHRISTODOULOS PANAYIOTOU  
ARMAND QUETSCH, LETIZIA ROMANINI  
KAY WALKOWIAK, MING WONG

curated by Nora Mayr, Gilles Neiens

09.09.—30.09. 2012

opening: 08.09.2012 at 7pm



GRIMMUSEUM

Wed.-Sun. 14-19 h.  
Fichtestrasse 2, 10967 Berlin  
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„Love“ is at least as old as humanity itself, bearing both connotations of complexity and triviality, it conjures up notions of heart-breaking romance as well as clichés. It was in the '80s when the, then young singer Falco, along with the actress Desirée Nosbusch asked the question “Kann es Liebe sein?” (Can it be love?) in their schmaltzy duet of the same title. Thirty years on, this wonderfully tender song provides us with the backbone of this exhibition examining love. Love between people, places and countries, and love towards objects.

The ideals, fantasies, and definitions of love are reflections of our social values and norms that arise as religious, social, and cultural inflections and influences. The dictionary alone provides four definitions and fifteen synonyms; undoubtedly there are countless more examples. Where Christianity offers the idea of sacrificial love that can bear all hopes, wishes and desires- modern philosophical or sociological perspectives view love as an abstract structural phenomenon. Perhaps it is clearer to understand just how complex endeavors in love are when we consider how late historically this emotion was embraced in the field of psychology, simply because it was deemed too impenetrable as a subject for analysis. In this exhibition, love is explored in its most elementary definition, as one of the strongest manifestations and sentiments of affection and devotion, whether exchanged by humans, or felt towards an object, or towards an idea.

To us as curators the reasons as to why love is interesting within the context of an exhi-

bition became evident in two ways. Firstly, love is increasingly perceived as a surface on which humans project their understanding of happiness. Sven Hillenkamp writes: “There is a historically unprecedented amount of hopes and expectations involving love [...] The era of romantic love does not lie in the past, rather, measured by its conditions, has reached its zenith.” If then, our successes in love are *the* premises for our well-being, the questions concerning who and how we love seem of utmost importance. Secondly, this exhibition is guided by the notion of how art touches us and what importance affection has on our perception of art. Both Lewis Biggs' theories that art could not have any intellectual strengths without emotional ones, and that within the art-world true feelings often become tabooed, have strengthened our choice to work with this topic.

*Kann es Liebe sein?* uses its selected works to help navigate through love's rich landscapes and meanings, unraveling which yearnings and desires are met by disappointments and heart-break. In keeping with Falco and Desirée Nosbusch's question, this exhibition will travel from Berlin to Luxembourg city and finally to Vienna, and emphasis has been deliberately placed on artists' positions who either live or work in Austria and Luxembourg. This way, the works form a narrative arc ranging from kitsch-inspired installations, to abstract interpretative works and personal explorations in love. Related areas such as sexuality, intimacy and passion are also part of *Kann es Liebe sein?*'s scrutiny. Additionally, affection and love are explored as underestimated facets of the process of viewing art itself.

## IN COOPERATION WITH:

Grimmuseum, Berlin; Cercle Cité, Luxembourg; Künstlerhaus k/haus and Sammlung Lenikus, Vienna.

## WITH THE KIND SUPPORT OF:

Bundesministerium für Unterricht Kunst und Kultur der Republik Österreich; Ministère de la Culture du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg; Fondation Indépendance; Ville de Luxembourg; Österreichisches Kulturforum Berlin; Botschaft des Großherzogtums Luxemburg in Deutschland; Ministère des affaires étrangères du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg; Österreichische Botschaft Luxemburg.

## CURATOR'S TOUR:

16.09. 2012 and 30.09.2012, 4pm, admission free

The exhibition aims to shift our awareness from the intellectual aspects to the emotional ones enabling and encouraging a dialogue about an elementary realm that moves us as individuals. Despite the term 'love' being readily associated with naive, embarrassing, and at times, even banal personal moments, we want to re-establish a realm in the vein of Roland Barthes' "small space for love's affirmation."

(Nora Mayr and Gilles Neiens)

◆ In her work *My Most Favourite Art* (2004 - ongoing) Maria Anwander steals the labels denoting works' titles from her most dear museums, project spaces, galleries and biennales, presenting her label collection as her own work. Anwander exposes her personal heroes of the art-world and invites the public to examine their own preferences and loves of various works. In her performance piece *The Kiss* (2007/2010) Anwander questions the power structures that rule the art-world, by performing a passionate kiss on a wall at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) and placing a label alongside her kiss. *The Kiss* was therefore given to the MoMA as a donation without a request for permission. Maria Anwander, born 1980 in Bregenz/Austria, lives and works in Berlin. [www.maria-anwander.net](http://www.maria-anwander.net)

◆ Katharina Lackner's installation *Very bright inside* (2010) employs bed-side lamps and other domestic lighting fixtures to illuminate images of affection. This series of work illustrates love by bringing the objects themselves to life through the simple trick

of imbuing them with human characteristics or actions. Lackner offers a slightly more distanced approach towards love in her video work *I am able to express myself in unique ways* (2009) by analysing the phenomenon of online-dating sites. In a close-up, the artist offers viewers her answers to a questionnaire provided by an online-dating agency, without providing the viewers with the questions needed in order to decode the personal information given by the artist.

Katharina Lackner, born 1981 in Austria, lives and works in Linz/Austria.

[www.kathilackner.net](http://www.kathilackner.net)

◆ **Christoph Meier's** work converges arbitrary objects, material waste and forms with Minimalist sculptures, slick assemblages and installations. In using materials that are strongly marked by their own history, whether as presents, lucky finds, or by their previous functions, Meier's objects echo inter-personal connections. In his untitled work *ohne Titel (Love)* (2012) Meier unites two formally opposing objects into a new functioning 'couple'. As a metaphor for love, these abstract objects seem to explore impressions of relationships and their dynamics, choice of partners, and notions such as stability within these relations.

Christoph Meier, born 1980 in Austria, lives and works in Vienna/ Austria.

[www.christophmeier.net](http://www.christophmeier.net)

◆ In the installation *Affection* (2012) **Max Mertens** entwines two chandeliers that begin to rotate as soon as a sensor detects any movement in its vicinity. The lit candles serve as symbols of lovers that approach each other unassertively, become increasingly entwined, and finally, devotedly, fully find their way towards each other. It is a homage to a playful, baroque, and celebratory spirit of love whose open-endedness brings us back to a kind of love-dance choreography, that results in a frivolously kitsch-inspired image of what it means to be in love.

Max Mertens, born 1982 in Luxembourg, lives and works in Luxembourg.

[www.mmertens.com](http://www.mmertens.com)

◆ In the work *Slow Dance Marathon* (2005) **Christodoulos Panayiotou** reveals his editing process behind a video recording of a performance held in Thessaloniki (Greece) of the same title. The performers danced alternately to a romantic slow dance on one day and then one night accompanied by well-known love songs. According to Panayiotou, love is a constructed ideal, defined and exemplified by the sentimental music and exaggerated

images of the pop industry, which shows little interest in authentic interpersonal emotions. However, despite this, the mixture of image and sounds create an aesthetic undertow that seduces the viewer.

Christodoulos Panayiotou, born 1978 in Limassol/ Cyprus, lives and works in Limassol and Paris.

[www.christodoulospanayiotou.com](http://www.christodoulospanayiotou.com)

◆ For *Kann es Liebe sein?* the artist **Armand Quetsch** arranges a selection of personal photographs, creating the most personal statement on love within the exhibition. His works allow an emotive insight into his private collection of various forms in which love can be felt and expressed. Quetsch's definition of love describes the feeling of devotion as a primary force of motivation involved in our decision-making processes and life.

Armand Quetsch, born 1980 in Luxembourg, lives and works in Luxembourg.

◆ In her meticulously folded paper works created for the installation *Mat der Nues beilaafen / Auf die Nase fallen* (2009), **Letizia Romanini** made 1500 paper airplanes and throws each of these against the wall, after dipping their tips respectively in ink. Her actions seem to highlight the countless and seemingly endless motions of failure we struggle through in our love-related endeavours. Despite their nimble, airy flights, each plane is subject to the laws of gravity, and the limits that the wall sets.

Letizia Romanini, born 1980 in Esch Alzette/ Luxembourg, lives and works in Luxembourg.

[www.letiziaromanini.com](http://www.letiziaromanini.com)

◆ **Kay Walkowiak's** works resonate sexual imagery, such as his pale blue seductive piece *Ich, Ich (me, me)* (2008) which sits as a provocative juxtaposition of a sexually charged, yet inanimate object. The sculpture rejects notions of physicality and appears completely dysfunctional. This inconclusive sexuality also becomes visible in his photograph titled *Room # 602* (2009) which embraces the bizarre and de-eroticised, ultimately leading to a void that excludes the physical and emotional aspects of lust, passion and attraction.

Kay Walkowiak, born 1980 in Salzburg/ Austria, lives and works in Vienna/ Austria.

[www.walkowiak.artfolder.net](http://www.walkowiak.artfolder.net)

◆ In his video work *Lerne Deutsch mit Petra von Kant / Learn German with Petra von Kant* (2007) artist **Ming Wong** re-enacts key moments from the film *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) by Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

By concentrating on the love-sick fashion designer's gestures, especially using her monologue, Wong provides a new context for her utterances of despair and grief. With this work the artist rehearses going through the motions and emotions and articulating the words for situations that he believes he may encounter when he moves to Berlin as a post-35-year-old, single, gay, ethnic-minority mid-career artist - i.e. feeling bitter, desperate, or washed up. Wong reminds us of the powers behind the destructive interplay between love and hate, a sacrificial and injurious love.

Ming Wong, born 1971 in Singapore, lives and works in Berlin and Singapore.

[www.mingwong.org](http://www.mingwong.org)

## PROGRAM

*The Opening Talk*

**Performance by Suzan Noesen**

Saturday, 08.09.2012, 8 PM, Free entry

**Suzan Noesen's** performance *The Opening Talk* will take place as a set of interactions between the museum space, the audience, and the various exhibited works. In this way, Noesen makes her audience her subjects and asks them to change their position within the space in order to enhance the public's experience of the selected works, not merely through a passive gaze but through active participation. This will be followed by the opportunity to discuss and exchange our own meanings and expectations of love.

Suzan Noesen, born 1985 in Luxembourg, lives and works Berlin and Luxembourg.

*Zwischen allen Stühlen der Liebseligkeit*

**Performance by Julius Deutschbauer**

Wednesday, 12.09.2012, 8 PM, Free entry

For the exhibition *Kann es Liebe sein?* Julius Deutschbauer will perform the piece *'Zwischen allen Stühlen der Liebseligkeit'* (Between all chairs of lovingness). The work takes the form of an exercise for the viewers to partake in- initiating reflections on what love might be. Regarding the content of the work, Deutschbauer does not protect anyone from anything: he openly involves and discusses topics, without shielding his audience or himself. Deutschbauer examines existing definitions of love in literature, politics and religion by creating a dialogue about one's own beliefs in and around love. The readings will be in German only.

Julius Deutschbauer, born 1961 in Klagenfurt/Austria, lives and works in Vienna/ Austria.

[www.bibliothek-ungelesener-buecher.com](http://www.bibliothek-ungelesener-buecher.com)

# KANN ES LIEBE SEIN?

09—30 September 2012

**1, 13**  
**MARIA ANWANDER**

**The Kiss**  
Video, 3.13min loop, label  
2010  
**My Most Favourite Art**  
stolen labels,  
diverse formates  
2004 – ongoing

**2**  
**MAX MERTENS**

**Affection**  
80 x 80 x 150  
two chandeliers, motor, sensor  
2012

**3**  
**MING WONG**

**Lerne Deutsch mit Petra Von Kant/ Learn German with Petra Von Kant**  
Video, 10min. loop  
2007

**4**  
**LETIZIA ROMANINI**

**Mat der Neus beilaafen / Auf die Nase fallen**  
1500 paper airplanes, ink,  
dimensions variable,  
2009

**5, 8**  
**KATHARINA LACKNER**

**I'm able to express myself in unique ways**  
Video, 19min. loop  
2008  
**Very bright inside**  
Two desk lamps, dimensions variable  
2010

**6, 7**  
**KAY WALKOWIAK**

**Ich, Ich**  
150x180x65 cm  
steel, varnish, plastic, mirror  
2008  
**Room #602**  
C-print  
100x75cm  
2009

**9**  
**CHRISTODOULOS PANAYIOTOU**

**Slow Dance Marathon**  
Video, 4.19min loop  
Courtesy the artist and RODEO,  
Istanbul  
2005

**10**  
**SUZAN NOESEN**

**Fragen zur Verbindung? /The Opening Talk**  
ball-pen on paper  
29,7 x 21cm  
2012

**11**  
**ARMAND QUETSCH**

**S / W (Diptychon)**  
Polaroids  
Each 8,6x10,8 cm  
2012  
**Nudist2**  
inkjet print on fine art paper  
68,6 x 100 cm  
2012

**Rol**  
inkjet print on fine art paper  
100 x 150 cm  
2012

**„sans titre / extrait de la série ephemera“**

inkjet print on fine art paper  
70 x 100 cm  
2008/ 2012

**„sans titre / extrait de la série ephemera“**

inkjet print on fine art paper  
30 x 45 cm  
2007/ 2012

**„sans titre / extrait de la série ephemera“**

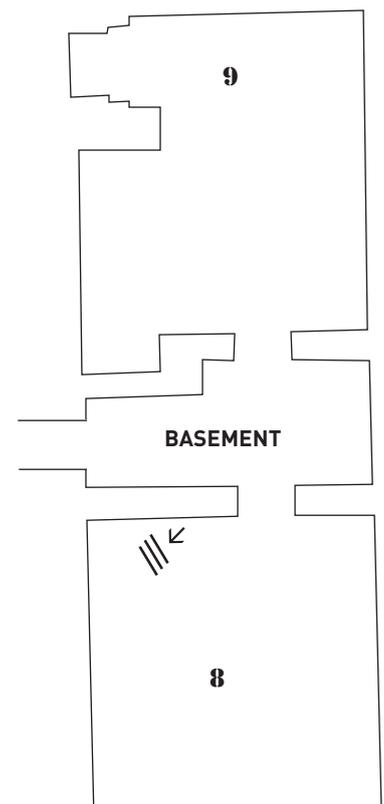
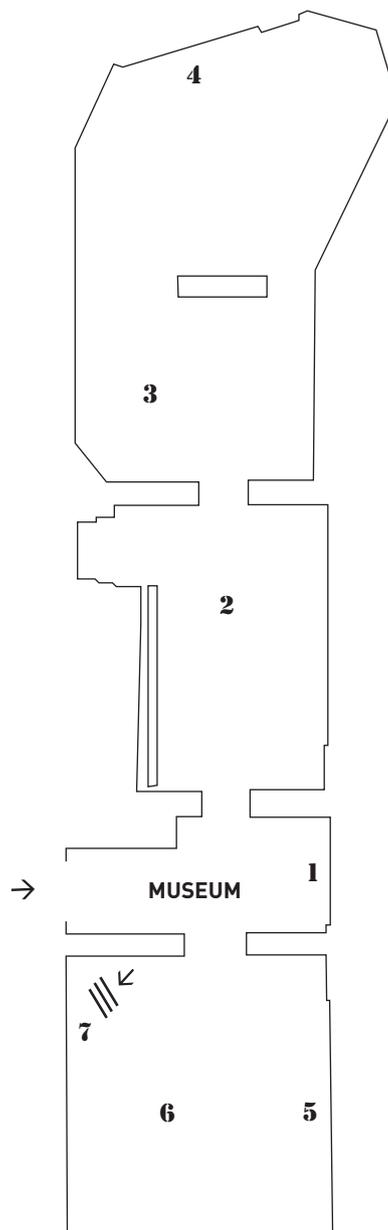
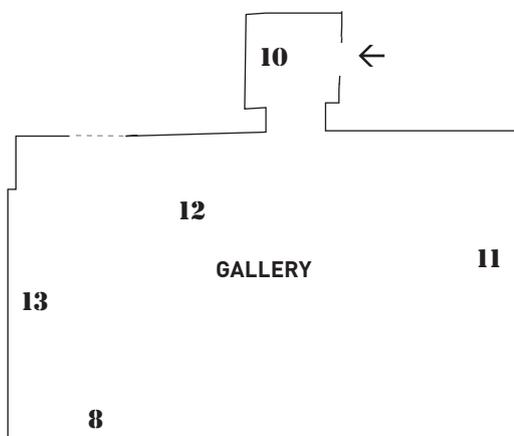
inkjet print on fine art paper  
40 x 55 cm  
2006/ 2012

**„sans titre / extrait de la série ephemera“**

inkjet print on fine art paper  
20 x 30 cm  
2008/2012

**12**  
**CHRISTOPH MEIER**

**ohne Titel (Love)**  
dimensions variable, steel, wood,  
styrofoam, plastic, rope, glue,  
varnish. Courtesy the artist,  
Galerie Kamm Berlin and Galerie  
Nosbaum & Reding Luxembourg  
2012



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