

The Museum Ludwig is hosting the first comprehensive exhibition in Germany of the American Conceptual artist Louise Lawler (born 1947, lives and works in New York). The exhibition comprises around 80 works, which are positioned throughout the entire building, thus engendering surprising situations through their encounters with the Museum Ludwig's permanent collection. In addition, a new series of ten "tracings" has been created for the show—outline drawings that are reminiscent of children's coloring books and draw on earlier works by Lawler. Furthermore, the artist has agreed to create two new, large-format "stretches" for the Museum Ludwig. These are photos that she has printed out on self-adhesive vinyl film and whose proportions she tailors to the space in question—even if that means deforming the motifs.

Lawler's work has been featured in numerous international exhibitions, including Documenta 12, the Whitney Biennial 2008, and recently in a large overview at the Wexner Art Center in Columbus, Ohio.

Louise Lawler photographs works by other artists and captures them in their various contexts: in museums, in private collections, at auctions, or in storage. Her works illustrate just how much the meaning of art is influenced by how it is presented and by the attendant circumstances in the institutions where it is located. Her analytical and at times ironic approach is revealing, but by no means evaluative, such as when her view of an abstract work by Jackson Pollock correlates with the way she looks at a decorative soup tureen.

Louise Lawler, who embarked on her oeuvre in the late 1970s, belongs to the broader field of the "Pictures Generation," which also includes Sherrie Levine, Jack Goldstein, Richard Prince, and Cindy Sherman. At the same time, her beginnings were also strongly shaped by the institutional critique of the early 1970s, and consequently her works were initially interpreted as sociological commentaries reflecting on esthetic, economic, and historical factors in art. Yet beyond this, her photographs illustrate to this day that an impartial presentation of art simply does not exist; they reveal the ideological implications inherent in the suggestive settings given to artworks, which would otherwise scarcely be visible. Lawler directs her gaze toward the fringes of art, as it were, creating subtle commentaries of a poetic casualness via compositions that distinguish themselves by their formal approach as well as by their eccentricity.

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