

There is scarcely any other artist who has shaped our current understanding of painting and the cultural landscape as significantly as Jutta Koether (born 1958). *Tour de Madame* is the first in-depth survey show dedicated to her work and, as such, represents a unique opportunity for the general public to view the astonishing and spectacular scope of her paintings. In many respects the exhibition will be a journey of discovery, bringing together more than 150 paintings in a totally novel fashion. Many of the works have either never been exhibited before, or have not been on display since their initial presentation. One highlight of the exhibition will be a newly produced 15-part series of paintings – with a nod to Cy Twombly's *Battle of Lepanto* cycle on permanent display at Museum Brandhorst – embodying Koether's own "battle" with art history.

The exhibition offers a chronological overview of Koether's multifaceted oeuvre. It goes back to her beginnings in the context of Neo-Expressionism in Cologne in the early and mid-1980s, and her subsequent exploration of the colour red as an expressive device – presenting a response to the cliché of male painters. After moving to New York in the early 1990s, Koether began making breathtakingly intense and colourful large-scale paintings that layer motifs from pop culture, literature and art history in dense painterly gestures. In the early 2000s, Koether's approach became increasingly involved with performance and music, culminating in inky black canvases and assemblage paintings incorporating devotional objects from punk and noise culture. The final chapter of the exhibition is dedicated to Koether's eccentric turn to history painting and her latest appropriations from art history's visual memory.

As a female artist, Jutta Koether's work is programmatic in its challenging of the male-dominated canon of art history. She reflects this history and adopts motifs from the work of other female artists, such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Eva Hesse, or Louise Bourgeois. An example of this would be Koether's decision to make the color red the central focus of her art. According to the respective context, red stands for pain, shame, hysteria, intensity, aggression, provocation, make-up, desire, femininity. The bringing together of all the disparate work groups consequently permits an appreciation Koether's oeuvre in terms of its historical significance: as an ambitious attempt to posit a counterhistory to the (male-dominated) canons of modern painting. The systematic and consistent nature of her oeuvre leaves us in no doubt that, above all else, Jutta Koether is one of the most important German painters in recent decades.

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