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Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin

Invalidenstraße 50/51, 10557 Berlin

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Balance

10 June – 9 October 2022

A special exhibition by the Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

From Minimal Art to the Transavanguardia movement, from Pop Art to the art of today: the works on show in the exhibition “Balance” at the Hamburger Bahnhof deal with individual and societal struggles seeking to attain balance, harmony and stability. Spanning from the 1960s to the present day, the exhibition is divided into five thematic sections that explore the human desire for balance; the perception of equilibrium; the tensions inherent in interpersonal balancing acts; the perilous imbalance in the relationship between humankind and nature; and the weighing up of individual and societal expectations in economic contexts. “Balance” highlights dwindling certainties about the possibility of maintaining a permanent state of equilibrium. This new exhibition marks the reopening of the Kleihueshalle following extensive renovation works.

The historical focus of the exhibition is on the period from the late 1960s onwards, when major shifts occurred in many areas of society. While personal responsibility and opportunities for individual creativity increased, people became less firmly embedded in the social fabric. At the same time, the dominant goal in the economic realm was continuous growth in the cross-border movement of goods and capital; this created an imbalance in the use of natural resources and the distribution of global income. Under the headings **Gravity, Position, Weight, State** and **Balance**, the exhibition explores different aspects of these societal balancing acts, ranging from questions of form to pressing political issues.

From a physical point of view, every balanced body relies upon the effect of **gravity**, even when a body hovering in the air – such as that of a tight-rope walker – appears to defy its laws. The works by Ulrike Rosenbach and Anselm Kiefer in the first room of the exhibition illustrate this suspended state in all its fragility.

The upright **position** of a human being is based on the complex interaction of many different sensory perceptions. Works by Donald Judd and Günther Förg show that the relationship between form, space and viewing position was a central concern of Minimal Art in the 1960s, while Leonor Antunes’ sculptures channel historical figures and their struggle to assert their position in society.

Whether it is in the judicial system, the presentation of economic theories or the ancient concept of weighing souls, the symbol of a set of scales is often used to create symmetry between two **weights**. The very nature of a scale, however, means that the balance is always in danger of being up-

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set. Establishing a balance between weighted forms is the main theme in the third section of the exhibition, which includes a sculpture by Inge Mahn and paintings by Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, Mark Lammert and Georg Baselitz, among others.

When more than two forces are involved in a biological system, the continual input and output of mass and energy can create a **state** that is simultaneously stable and dynamic; this is known as the 'steady state' phenomenon. Any major disruption of this exchange process can inhibit the functionality of the system. Works by Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Francesco Clemente, Fiona Tan and Raul Walch show how events such as earthquakes or global warming can disturb the balance of ecosystems.

Economic systems also invoke notions of **balance**. The commonly used accounting term 'balance sheet' is derived from the Latin *bilancia* (= 'scales'). In addition to purely financial accounts, companies are increasingly being called upon to draw up social and ecological balance sheets. Against the background of interconnected economic and social issues, the paintings by Warhol and Rauschenberg, as well as the works by Sturtevant, Jeff Koons and Kawita Vatanajankur, criticise the demand for self-optimisation. The difficulties involved in trying to overcome societal imbalances by establishing new political systems are addressed in the works by Joseph Beuys, Douglas Gordon and Gülsün Karamustafa, and also in Andy Warhol's monumental painting *Mao*, which is now back on display in the Kleihueshalle after a lengthy absence.

To mark the reopening of the Kleihueshalle following its extensive renovation and refurbishment, the new collection display features 39 works from the Marx Collection and the Collection of the Nationalgalerie, as well as a number of loans. *Balance* presents artworks by Leonor Antunes, Georg Baselitz, Joseph Beuys, Ross Bleckner, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, Dan Flavin, Günther Förg, Douglas Gordon, Andreas Gursky, Keith Haring, Donald Judd, Gülsün Karamustafa, Anselm Kiefer, Imi Knoebel, Jeff Koons, Mark Lammert, Inge Mahn, Robert Rauschenberg, Ugo Rondinone, Ulrike Rosenbach, Salomé, Sturtevant, Fiona Tan, Cy Twombly, Kawita Vatanajankur, Raul Walch and Andy Warhol.

Curated by Nina Schallenberg

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