

SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT

THE SCHIRN HAS CONCEIVED AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP EXHIBITION ON THE INDIVIDUAL'S SITUATION IN TODAY'S SOCIETY WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

INFINITE JEST

June 5 – September 7, 2014

Press preview: Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 11 a.m.

The credo of today's society without boundaries reads "ever faster, ever higher, ever further." In the early 21st century, man, oscillating between euphoria and depression, finds himself confronted with the promising opportunities of a global and virtual world and the challenge to constantly improve, optimize, and shape his life more efficiently. The exhibition at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt on display from June 5 until September 7, 2014 will focus on this phenomenon. Based on works by eighteen contemporary artists such as Maurizio Cattelan, Peter Coffin, Judith Hopf, Andrea Fraser, Claire Fontaine, Alicja Kwade, Ryan Trecartin and Daniel Richter, the exhibition will unfold an image of today's world with the individual in its center. Analogous to the narrative structure of the eponymous novel "Infinite Jest" by David Foster Wallace, the exhibition explores the various demands confronting the contemporary individual, in which the modes of resistance and the contradictions of a reality often described as lacking any alternative make themselves felt.

Just as Wallace's novel set in the near future seismographically records possible results and consequences of an event and fun society that presents itself as a performance-oriented society at the same time, the works of art assembled for the presentation of the same name in the Schirn reveal how the present circumstances' consequences and excesses make man revolve around himself almost without end. Which methods and ways do we find or invent to continually optimize and perfect ourselves in order to fulfil the requirements of modern society? Subjects like addiction in its various forms, the localization of the self, depression, the emptying of meaning, as well as absurdity, irrationality, and a sometimes lethal irony have been put into question. Visually and conceptually, the presented works shed light on the meaning of the term "hysterical realism" which has been coined for a certain kind of literature some years ago.

"Expressions like *quantified self*, *body hacking*, and *burnout* are endemic in today's media. Absolute optimization and perfection are required from each individual in the global world around the clock. What about the other side and the consequences of this continuous circling of man around himself? The Schirn want to dedicate itself to these phenomena in this year's summer exhibition and provide a terrain for the artistic exploration of such issues," says Max Hollein, Director of the Schirn.

Matthias Ulrich, curator of the exhibition: "There has never been so much I. We incessantly revolve around ourselves. And everything around us also goes on this roundabout. Each individual has to cope with what happens in today's world, has to find his place as a person, or even develop survival strategies for this. The pictures by the artists presented in the exhibition confront us with this endless circling around oneself. They raise questions that concern all of us and play with situations that we can all relate to."

David Foster Wallace's novel "Infinite Jest" does not provide any advice as to how the individual might make heads or tails of the harsh reality of life, the absurd madness of the everyday world, the fast-moving times informed by the Internet, virtual worlds, and a wide range of different channels of communication. His diagnosis of society remains a negative one. Wallace's text is pivoted on images and stories in which pleasure and pain, fun and addiction, religion and

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insanity, the private and the public, dream and reality, seriousness and irony, entertainment and death lie very close together for everybody, marking the hinges of daily life.

The works of the eighteen international artists featured in the Schirn exhibition "Infinite Jest" reflect connectedness, human relations, and subtle contexts as thematized in the novel in which the individual is always the foremost focus of attention. In the exhibition architecture each artist has a room of his own. The rooms are connected with each other in a labyrinthine manner, thus resembling the literary composition of the novel. In varied genres of art, such as installation, film, painting, or performance, the artists presented in the group show hold a mirror up to both society and each individual. They approach the threshold of a new era in which the "transparent man" lives within a digital social network rather than only using it and in which life has turned into an optimization and experience project.

LIST OF ARTISTS: Francis Alÿs, Maurizio Cattelan, Claire Fontaine, Peter Coffin, Lara Favaretto, Andrea Fraser, Karl Holmqvist, Judith Hopf, Ceal Floyer, Josh Kline, Alicja Kwade, Joep van Liefland, Helen Marten, Kris Martin, Daniel Richter, Anri Sala, Ryan Trecartin, and the Kopp Collection.

CATALOGUE: Unendlicher Spaß / Infinite Jest. Edited by Matthias Ulrich and Max Hollein. With a foreword by Max Hollein, essays by Alex Danchev, Lars Bang Larsen, and Matthias Ulrich and short texts by Lisa Beißwanger, Sigrun Galter, Heide Häusler, Katharina Knacker, Carolin Köchling, and Clara Wörsdörfer. German/English edition, Design: Studioheyhey, Frankfurt; Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nürnberg 2014, ISBN 978-3-86984-093-2.

VENUE: SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, D-60311 Frankfurt. **EXHIBITION DATES:** June 5 – September 7, 2014. **OPENING HOURS:** Tue, Fri–Sun 10 a.m. – 7 p.m., Wed and Thur 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. **INFORMATION:** www.schirn.de, e-mail: welcome@schirn.de, phone: +49.69.29 98 82-0, fax: +49.69.29 98 82-240. **ADMISSION:** 9 €, reduced 7 €; family ticket 18 €; combination ticket also admitting to the "Paparazzi. Photographers, Stars and Artists" show: 16 €, reduced 12 €; free admission for children under eight years of age. **GENERAL GUIDED TOURS:** Wed 11 a.m., Thur 8 p.m., Sat 6 p.m., Sun 3 p.m. **CURATOR:** Matthias Ulrich. **CURATORIAL ASSISTANCE:** Katharina Knacker.

SOCIAL MEDIA: The Schirn communicates the exhibition in the social web with the **HASHTAG:** #infinitejest. **ONLINE MAGAZINE:** www.schirn-magazin.de. **FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/Schirn. **TWITTER:** www.twitter.com/Schirn. **YOUTUBE:** www.youtube.com/user/SCHIRNKUNSTHALLE. **INSTAGRAM:** @schirnkunsthalle.

PRESS OFFICE: Axel Braun (Head of Press/Public Relations), Pamela Rohde (Press spokeswoman), Simone Krämer, Lara Schuh (Trainee). **SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT**, Römerberg, D-60311 Frankfurt, **PHONE:** +49.69.29 98 82-148, **FAX:** +49.69.29 98 82-240, **E-MAIL:** presse@schirn.de, www.schirn.de (texts, images, and films for download under PRESS), www.schirn-magazin.de