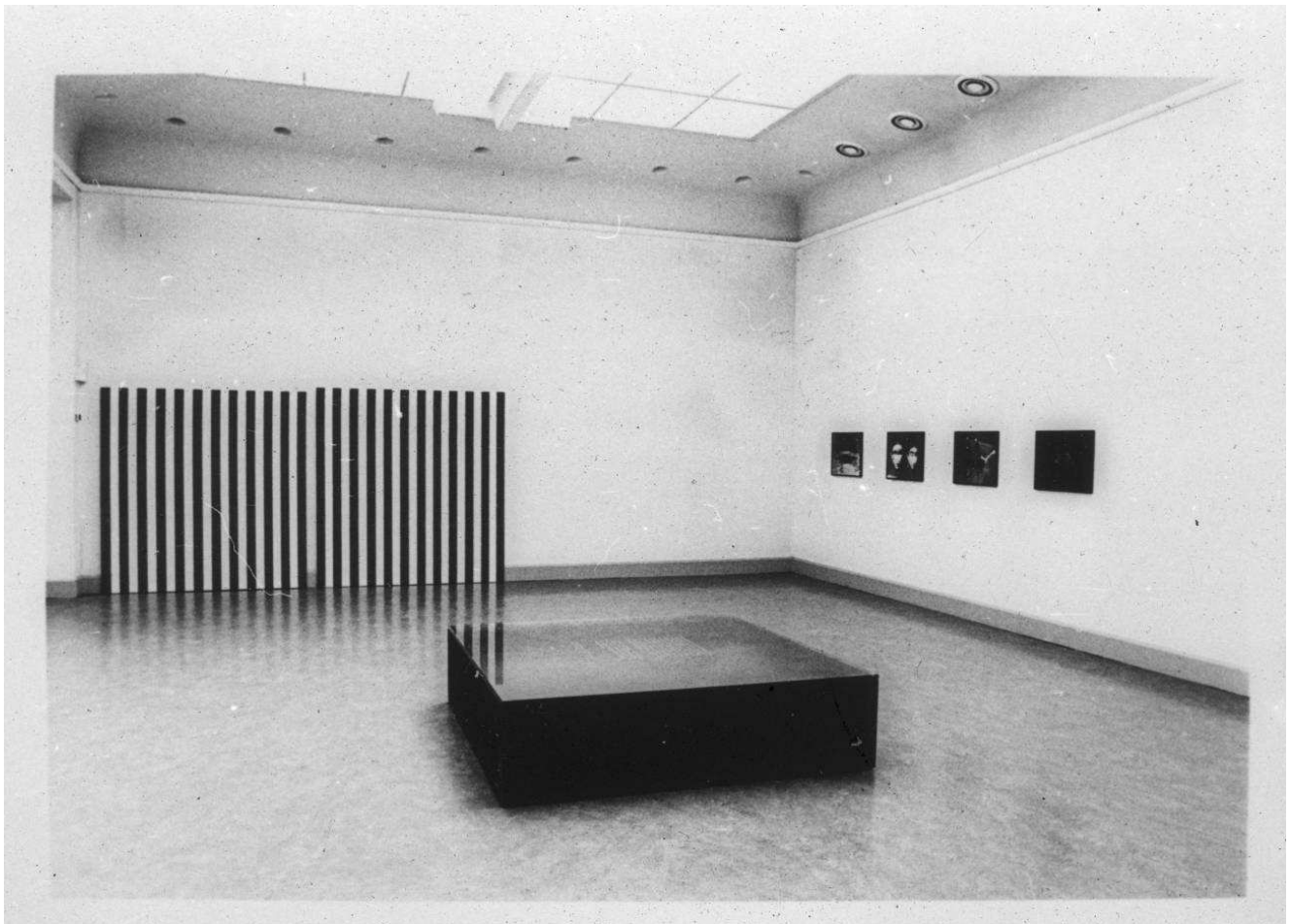


## Factsheet Repetition: Summer Display 1983

November 2009



Installation view *Zomeropstelling van de eigen collectie* (*Summer Display of the Museum's Collection*), Van Abbemuseum, 1983. Photo Hans Biezen. Works on display: Daniel Buren, Rebecca Horn, Lothar Baumgarten.

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| exhibition title | Repetition: Summer Display 1983   |
| part of          | Play Van Abbe, Part 1 – The Game and the Players  |
| location         | Oudbouw (Old building)  |
| duration         | 28/11/2009 – 28/02/2010   |
| curator          | Rudi Fuchs, director Van Abbemuseum between 1975-1987 together with Christiane Berndes, curator collection Van Abbemuseum |

In *The Game and the Players*, the first part of the *Play Van Abbe* programme, there is a reconstruction of the *Summer Display of the museum's collection* of 1983, which was organised by Rudi Fuchs, the director of the Van Abbemuseum at the time, and his curators. Fuchs set up the exhibition after his return from Kassel, where he organised documenta 7. He also presented a number of new purchases in this exhibition, including works by Georg Baselitz, Alighiero Boetti, Daniel Buren, Luciano Fabro, Gilbert & George, Rebecca Horn, Hermann Nitsch, Sigmar Polke, Lawrence Weiner, Ian Wilson. In addition an audio tour by Willem de Ridder was part of the exhibition. During the reconstruction, entitled *Repetition: Summer*

*Display 1983* this audio tour in its original form is again available for the visitor.

The reconstruction invokes questions like: What story did the original composers want to tell and how do we in our time experience this piece of history? Will the presentation in this context be a new exhibition or a copy of an exhibition? Archive material on the display in 1983 and on several individual works in the exhibition presents further information on the reconstruction process and the biography of some works during the past 26 years.

The reconstruction of this collection presentation from 1983, composed by the director at the time, Rudi Fuchs, is as true to the original as possible. The same works are set

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up in the same rooms in which they were displayed in 1983. However, there is a period of 26 years between the two presentations. To what extent does this reconstruction correspond to the original? What information do we base this on? What does it mean to reconstruct an exhibition? How do we look at it today? Is it actually possible to do a complete reconstruction? The building was renovated ten years ago, and as a result the architecture changed. The middle room was made smaller and the walls and flooring were changed. The artworks have travelled and have been displayed in different compositions and contexts. Some works have become world famous; others have been forgotten. A few works have been thoroughly restored or were not purchased in the end. Does a reconstruction erase time or actually reveal it?

By reconstructing the 1983 presentation, the Van Abbemuseum wants to focus the attention on the exhibition as an exhibition. In this way, the museum examines the meaning of the exhibition as a story, as a system of codes. Exhibitions are the visual stories around the artwork, and in addition to the written and spoken stories, they contribute to the meaning of the artwork. Fuchs put on the 1983 *Summer Display* after his return from Kassel where he had organised documenta 7 in 1982. He had been experimenting with a dialectic method of presentation for some time, in which he confronted artworks from different periods and with different starting points with each other in a space. According to Fuchs, the age of modernism, the common language of art, was definitively over. Every artist was once again speaking his own dialect, which becomes visible in the confrontation with the other. As Fuchs said in retrospective in 1999: "We certainly did not have unlimited funds in the Van Abbemuseum, and at the same time, these were arguments for producing special presentations. This immediately led to a scandal because – when we did not yet have many works – we placed Sol LeWitt, Alan Charlton and Mondriaan next to each other. You couldn't do that sort of thing!" This method of presentation can also be seen in the 1983 *Summer Display*. The individual visitor sees artworks which are confronted with each other on the basis of an individual autonomous position.

The autonomy of the artwork appears to be celebrated in the neutral, objective space of the museum. The emphasis is on the visual experience of the artwork. The title cards are small and positioned in such a way that they do not interfere with the artwork. There is no text for the room. The exhibition serves to nourish the eye.

An audio tour made by Willem de Ridder specially made for the Van Abbemuseum is part of the exhibition. De Ridder is well known as a storyteller and worked for radio and television in the Netherlands. This audio tour is

not a description of the works. De Ridder was inspired by the building and its function, and shows the museum in a completely different perspective with his story.

*Repetition: Summer Display 1983* it is a look back at the 1980s and the history of the Van Abbemuseum. By comparing the exhibition composed by the former director Rudi Fuchs with the exhibition *Strange and Close* by the current director Charles Esche, visitors can conclude what the differences are in the starting points of the two curators and discover the underlying vision of art and the function of the museum.



Installation view *Zomeropstelling van de eigen collectie (Summer Display of the Museum's Collection)*, Van Abbemuseum, 1983. Photo Hans Biezen. Works on display: Sol LeWitt, Pablo Picasso, Jan Dibbets.

### Important works

There are a number of classical works in the exhibition: *Buste de Femme* (1943) and *Femme en vert* (1909) by Pablo Picasso, *Hommage à Apollinaire* (1911-12) by Marc Chagall and *Blick auf Murnau mit Kirche* (1910) by Wassily Kandinsky. In the exhibition there are also some works which have not been seen for a long time in the museum, like *Das Goldene Bad* (1980) by Rebecca Horn and *Fragment of a Crucifixion* (1950) by Francis Bacon. The subject of Immendorff's work is the division between the two Germanys and is therefore interesting in the story of 1983-2009.

The subject of *BrrrD-DDrrr Café Deutschland* (1978), a painting by Jörg Immendorff, is the division between East and West-Germany, a turning point in the history of Europe. It is an interesting work in relation to the simultaneous presentation *Strange and Close* composed by Charles Esche in 2009.

### Part of van Play Van Abbe

*Play Van Abbe* researches the position of an art museum in the 21st century. *Repetition Summer Display 1983* is a critical reflection on the own history of the museum and the positions adopted at the time. These sharpen our view of the present.

This exhibition shows the story of Fuchs, as former director he was an important player in the history of the Van

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Abbemuseum. The exhibition was his game; he determined the rules of the game. The exhibition represents the vision of one of the most important protagonists in the museum world in the early 1980s, the period before the fall of the Berlin Wall. This makes this exhibition an important counterpart to the exhibition *Strange and Close*.

### Subsidisers

*Play Van Abbe* has been realised in part by contributions by the Mondriaan Foundation, BankGiro Loterij, Provincie Noord-Brabant and VSBfonds.



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