

WALL TEXTS

28.02. 15.11.2026

1 Raum 1 Werk Installationen aus der Sammlung

This exhibition is devoted to installation art: one work in one room. Viewers can become fully immersed in an artistic universe. Such works are of interest for the collection as they were often conceived for a specific exhibition, integrate local givens and enter into a relationship with the space. In this way, the works also document the exhibition activities of the Kunstmuseum Luzern.

The challenge faced by the Kunstmuseum Luzern team in presenting the installations lies in the fact that there is a lack of documentation on the works, especially those dating from the 1970s to the 1990s. Some of the works shown were conceptualized for a specific space that no longer exists today. As a result these works have to be adapted to the new space. Therefore, the team is faced with the task of presenting the work, if at all possible, in the way it was originally intended.

For more information on this topic:

- Please approach us directly during public guided tours or events!
- The exhibition is divided into three phases in order to display as many installations as possible. New installations will be on display from 09.06. and from 08.09.2026.

PHILIP TAAFFE (*1955)

SANCTUARIUM. A ROOM FOR LUCERNE, 2010

Monotype, screen print on paper, variable dimensions
Kunstmuseum Luzern, acquisition made with a contribution from the Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis & Gyr, acquired in 2010

The exhibition starts with the work *Sanctuarium. A Room for Lucerne* by the American artist Philip Taaffe. Specially produced monotypes and serigraphs make up a dense mesh of different forms reminiscent of plants, insects or symbols from different cultures. The vocabulary created by this artist ties in with historical pictorial traditions, ornaments and natural forms. He gathers these forms for his extensive archive while travelling the earth, to rainforests, to archaeological sites, and to modern museums. That archive serves him as a point of departure for his artistic work.

In the exhibition space, the motifs exude a mystical energy, giving rise to a kind of refuge, a shrine, a sanctuary for Lucerne. The title also refers to this: Lucerne, a place strongly linked not only with Central Swiss Catholicism, but also with the sublime landscape, is Taaffe's source of inspiration. The artist conceived the installation for the group exhibition *Lebenszeichen* (Signs of Life) at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in 2010. Thanks to the Landis & Gyr Foundation, it entered the collection of the Kunstmuseum Luzern after the exhibition closed.

LAURE PROUVOST (*1978)**WANTEE, 2013**

Multimedia installation, video 14:24 min., sound, variable dimensions
Kunstmuseum Luzern, deposit from the Stiftung BEST Art Collection Luzern, formerly Bernhard Eglin-Stiftung, acquired in 2017

With her installation *Wantee* the French artist Laure Prouvost has created a world in which we may immerse ourselves, a work that combines video, everyday objects, ceramics and painting with architecture. Fiction, art history and personal history blend into a wilful reality in which truth can no longer be distinguished from poetry. The room contains various items of furniture, hand-made tableware, paintings and obscure objects arranged around a central table. Viewers are invited to take a seat, like at a tea party, and watch the video in which the artist speaks about her grandfather, who was a concept artist and close friend of Kurt Schwitters. With the title *Wantee* Prouvost alludes to Kurt Schwitters' partner Edith Thomas. Schwitters called her *Wantee* because she is supposed to have habitually asked: "Want tea?"

In 2013, Prouvost's *Wantee* won the famous Turner Prize. In 2016 the work was shown at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in her first survey exhibition. During that period, her London gallery went bankrupt so that the Kunstmuseum had the opportunity to acquire the installation at very advantageous conditions, as the gallery could no longer store it. With the help of the BEST Art Collection Luzern Foundation, formerly the Bernhard Eglin Foundation, this key work in Prouvost's oeuvre could be secured for the collection.

ANDREAS GEHR (*1942)**LEITSTERN, 1979**

Star: metal, polyester paint; clay parts, variable dimensions
Kunstmuseum Luzern, deposit from the City of Lucerne, acquired in 1982

Leitstern (Lodestar) by Andreas Gehr occupies the whole space in the form of a monumental gesture. The work consists of numerous clay shards which, on closer inspection, turn out to be fragments of shattered casts of a naked body read as male; the casts are actually of the artist himself. Their arrangement seems almost surrealistic, for example, a nose lying on a leg. The massive angular metal star marks the end of the installation and contrasts with the fragility of the individual pieces of clay making up the star's train. In this installation there is a great tension in relationship between the individual parts and the whole: Does the star point the way through the expanse of debris, as the title "Lodestar" would seem to indicate? Or is it responsible for the heap of shards?

The work was first shown in 1979 in the Kunstmuseum Luzern building designed by Armin Meili. For the Kunstmuseum's new premises, the work had to be adapted to the architecture of Jean Nouvel.

The work *Leitstern* entered the collection of the Kunstmuseum Luzern having been donated to the City of Lucerne by the Nordmann Foundation. Andreas Gehr was the first artist to win the Nordmann Art Prize, which was inaugurated in Lucerne in 1982. Today that prize is known as the Manor Cultural Prize.

VIVIAN SUTER (*1949)**UNTITLED, 2018-2021**

Mixed media on canvas, variable dimensions
Kunstmuseum Luzern, deposit from the Stiftung BEST Art Collection Luzern, formerly Bernhard Eglin-Stiftung, acquired in 2022

The Argentinian-Swiss artist Vivian Suter has her canvases hung from the ceiling in the form of airy installations.

For 40 years, Suter's main place of residence and work has been in the heart of the tropical rainforest in Guatemala, in Panajachel on the shores of Lake Atitlán. Pivotal moments in her

life's work were the tropical storms Stan in 2005 and Agatha in 2010, which destroyed many of her canvases and caused her to reconsider her artistic practice. She then accepted nature's incursion into her art. Since that time, her works bear traces of her environment, are mixed with mud or organic matter and thus grant nature an active say in the artistic process. Viewers walk between the canvases and as they do so experience an atmosphere marked by forms, colours, abstraction and traces of weathering. Every new viewing position they take up reveals a new perspective.

Although the artist was active in Basel into the 1980s, it was only after her participation in documenta 14 (2017) that she gained recognition, both in Switzerland and around the world. The works on show here entered the collection of the Kunstmuseum Luzern in the course of her retrospective exhibition (2021/22). Of the almost 200 canvases presented then, eight were chosen, as they best convey the character of her oeuvre and the atmosphere of the installations, and at the same time are flexible enough to be adapted to different spatial situations.

WALTER PFEIFFER (*1946)

BEI DIR WAR ES IMMER SO SCHÖN, 2023

Video installation, sound, variable dimensions
Kunstmuseum Luzern, acquired in 2023

A person with a wreath of flowers in their hair is sucking on a strawberry, feet in colourful socks are playing with a ball, a naked person wearing a mask and a fox's tail is nodding mischievously—Walter Pfeiffer carries his audience off into a merrily pleasurable pictorial world with his video installation *Bei dir war es immer so schön* (It has always been so wonderful with you). Tiny flaws, glaring flashlights, naked bodies, strong colours, intense gazes are typical of Pfeiffer's art. His takes on rebellious adolescents in the Zurich gay scene or dynamically draped still lifes seem to be removed from everyday life. Yet the poses adopted by the models, the arrangements of the objects or the framing of a landscape are anything but chance elements. Pfeiffer stages his motifs like theatre plays, yet makes the result seem as easy as taking a snapshot.

The installation shows extracts from Pfeiffer's life, as if taken from a diary and with a considerable amount of humour. Together these extracts make up a spatial collage. The mounted film scenes were shot by the artist over several decades, using both analogue and digital media. The cheerful-sounding melody was composed especially for this work by a musician-friend of his. Pfeiffer made the work in 2023 for the comprehensive retrospective *Sincerely, Walter Pfeiffer*, and it was conceived explicitly for the space in the Kunstmuseum Luzern. After the exhibition, the installation was acquired for the museum's collection.

MARIA NORDMAN (*1943)

DE LUCERNA E, 1992

Wooden objects, painted canvas, two slit drums, variable dimensions
Kunstmuseum Luzern, acquired in 1992

De Lucerna E combines painting with architecture and utility items. Maria Nordman's work is reminiscent of a compact furniture system, possibly of a guestroom with minimal furnishings. Wooden objects covered at the front with canvas, like a painting, feature a shelving structure at the back. In addition there are four stools, two tables and two beds, the surfaces of which are also covered in canvas painted red, green, blue or white. The choice of colours is characteristic of Nordman's art, for she uses exclusively red, green, blue. These are the basic colours in the RGB model, which is based on an additive colour mix. Additional light brightens the respective colour. All three light colours together create white light.

The work is part of a project of the same name, *De Lucerna E*, which was shown at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in summer 1992. By emphasising the interplay of light, colour and space, the artist allots viewers the role of urban planners, in a kind of utopia. The project came about within the framework of the series entitled *New Conjoint City Proposals*, for which, between

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1989 and 1993, Nordman realised different architectural projects, including one in New York's Central Park. For Lucerne she engaged in a site-specific debate with the architecture of the Kunstmuseum Luzern building, designed in 1933 by Armin Meili. For this purpose, she used light colours to transform the exhibition rooms into a "Gesamtkunstwerk" or artistic synthesis. In that context, the section of the work on show here was acquired for the museum's collection as it constitutes the central element and represents the concept of the 1992 exhibition. That year, the work was activated with a performance in which two musicians played drums—guided by the rhythm of the waves of Lake Lucerne.

curated by Alexandra Blättler