ALMINE RECH

The Life of Things

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Things are everywhere. We create them, collect them, cherish them, give them meaning, and just as easily discard them. Artists notice what we often overlook — hidden within all these objects around us: the stories, memories, societal developments, and even new artworks. In the collection exhibition 'The Life of Things', Voorlinden delves into the world of objects: what do they really reveal about us?

With sculptures, still lifes, readymades, and installations, the artists in 'The Life of Things' reveal what the objects around us convey — about our relationships, systems, and the meanings we create through them. The collection exhibition opens with the impressive work *Famished Road* (2023) by Ibrahim Mahama. He has constructed a monumental 5-by-10-metre wall made up of around 2,000 shoemaker's boxes. Created especially for Voorlinden, the work almost obstructs the passageway, embodying histories while exuding life and hope.

Suzanne Swarts, director Voorlinden: *'When you really think about it, it is truly breathtaking how many things you surround yourself with. In* The Life of Things*, we delve into the world of things. What are they doing here? What histories do they harbour? And what do they say about us?'*

Collection Voorlinden reflected

From Ai Weiwei, Hans Op de Beeck, and Michael Craig-Martin to Sun Yitian, Evelyn Taocheng Wang, and Wouter Paijmans – the exhibition *The Life of Things* reflects the breadth of the Voorlinden collection. It showcases works by both internationally renowned artists and emerging talent from the Low Countries, alongside globetrotters such as He Xiangyu and Anouk Kruithof. The latter constructs a pixelated landscape at Voorlinden using 3,500 books from the former GDR. Each book has its own story, and together they reflect how digitalisation seems to be replacing the physical object. *The Life of Things* concludes with an installation by Oliver Beer, giving a voice to objects from all eras and across the world.

Barbara Bos, head of exhibitions: *'Artists in* The Life of Things *have put their ear to things like shoe maker boxes, stools, books, school chairs and fire hoses and invite you to do the same. You'll discover that things are containers of stories; they are anything but silent.'*

Artists and catalogue

'The Life of Things' features work by: Ai Weiwei, Hans Op de Beeck, Oliver Beer, Joseph Cornell, Tony Cragg, Michael Craig-Martin, Martin Creed, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Theaster Gates, Sayre Gomez, Joseph Grigely, He Xiangyu, Niels Hoebers, Raoul Hynckes, Jannis Kounellis, Anouk Kruithof, Ibrahim Mahama, Giorgio Morandi, Noor Nuyten, Claes Oldenburg, Ornaghi & Prestinari, Wouter Paijmans, Sun Yitian, Gavin Turk, Edmund de Waal, Evelyn Taocheng Wang. A catalogue has also been made to accompany the exhibition, including an introduction by Barbara Bos, Head of Exhibitions, an interview with Ibrahim Mahama, and an essay by philosopher Emanuele Coccia.