ALMINE RECH

Endless Sunday

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Endless Sunday. A suspended moment between leisure and revolt. To celebrate its 15th anniversary, the Centre Pompidou-Metz is inviting the public to take a dizzying plunge into the history of art with Dimanche sans fin, an extraordinary exhibition taking over the entire museum. Nearly 400 pieces from the Centre Pompidou's collections are brought face to face with the implacable gaze of Maurizio Cattelan, 40 of whose works question our modern mythologies with lucidity and melancholy.

The exhibition is structured like a primer, alternating iconic works with unexpected pieces and transhistorical dialogues. Berger&Berger's immersive scenography transforms the museum into a circular wanderer, echoing the cycles of time and the architecture of Shigeru Ban and Jean de Gastines.

The exhibition catalogue, designed by Irma Boom, takes this reflection even further. In it, Maurizio Cattelan takes a unique look at his own work and personal history. More than a collection, it's an autobiography.

The texts in the exhibition room are embodied in the words of Maurizio Cattelan and the inmates of the Giudecca Women's Prison in Venice, in the form of an alphabet book. Prisoners trained in mediation from the Metz Prison Centre are on hand to accompany the groups from time to time.

What does “an endless Sunday” mean? A day that stretches out between freedom and constraint, memory and projection, wandering and commitment. With this exhibition, the Centre Pompidou-Metz presents a labyrinth of narratives in which art, in dialogue with reality, continues to open up gaps in our perception of the world.

Fifteen years after its inaugural exhibition Chefs-d'œuvre ? (2010), in which the Centre Pompidou-Metz questioned the achievements of art history, the institution is continuing its exploration of the way we look at works of art and the notion of the collection. This reflection culminates in Dimanche sans fin. Maurizio Cattelan et la collection du Centre Pompidou, a major exhibition celebrating both the 15th anniversary of the Centre Pompidou-Metz and its fruitful dialogue with the Centre Pompidou, which is undergoing a major metamorphosis.

A fresh perspective on an exceptional collection

Spread throughout the museum, from the Forum to the Grande Nef, from Galerie 1 to the roofs of the Galeries, transformed for the first time into a sculpture garden, and all the way to the Jardin Sud, the exhibition brings together nearly 400 works from the various departments of the Musée national d'art moderne, with 40 works by Maurizio Cattelan. The internationally-renowned artist and guest co-curator casts his incisive eye over the collection, offering a play of unexpected correspondences.

Since its opening in 2010, the Centre Pompidou-Metz has had the privilege of hosting a number of major works from the Musée national d'art moderne, essential milestones in its history and exhibitions. Dimanche sans fin (Endless Sunday) builds on this momentum by immersing visitors in the collection across all media - painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, installation, video, film, etc. - in an unprecedented dialogue with the Musée national d'art moderne. - in an original dialogue with the world of Maurizio Cattelan. A major contemporary artist, Maurizio Cattelan brings an incisive, offbeat approach to the exhibition, and his presence brings a fresh perspective to this prestigious collection. His thinking cuts across societal contradictions, thwarting authority structures and questioning belief systems. His universe, which has been striking a balance between subversion and commitment since the 1990s, reveals our changing world.

Sunday: between ritual, leisure and revolt

In many ancient cultures, Sunday - dies solis in Roman - is associated with the sun and its worship. In 321 AD, Emperor Constantine made it a day of rest and prayer throughout the Roman Empire. Over the centuries, its meaning has evolved, and from sacred time to free time, in the 20th century Sunday became the day for leisure, sport and, more recently, consumerism. It's also a day for strolling in a park, visiting a museum, lazing around at home or sharing a meal with the family, all the while keeping in mind the muted music of revolt and uprising that can erupt at any moment.
With this complexity running through it, the exhibition wavers between tenderness and guilt, pointing out the impasses of our times, the better to speculate on alternative futures.

Traditionally associated with rest and contemplation, Sunday is a paradoxical day. From a sacred day to one of leisure and consumption, it sums up the changes in our societies. The exhibition explores the different facets of Sunday through a thematic tour in the form of an alphabet book, in a nod to Gilles Deleuze. Each section, named after a poem, a film or a novel (A for ‘Air de famille’, B for ‘Bats-toi’, C for ‘Conduis-moi sur la lune’, etc.), is an invitation to revisit the ideas associated with Sunday and to immerse oneself in the complex and tortured universe of Maurizio Cattelan, who guides visitors on a transhistorical and sensory exploration.

Architectural and scenographic immersion

Among the 26 letters of the alphabet - plus a 27th entry, dedicated to the ‘Sunday’ section - which form as many chapters, visitors wander freely along a route designed by scenographers Berger&Berger. It's a drift through the history of art that plays on surprising associations.

The layout plays on shapes and cycles. Echoing the hexagonal architecture of Shigeru Ban and Jean de Gastines, the route is organised around a circular circulation in the Grande Nef and concentric circles in Galerie 1, punctuated by lines that structure the wanderings.

The exhibition is spread over several levels, taking visitors on a journey through the history of art and its ruptures. In the Forum, the monumentality of L.O.V.E., Cattelan's iconic sculpture of a hand with its fingers amputated, leaving only the middle finger outstretched, establishes a direct face-to-face relationship with visitors as they enter the museum. This anti-monument raises questions about the relationships of power and belief that play out in public spaces.

In the Great Nave, the Uroborus snake, a figure of the infinite cycle, opens the exhibition and sets the pace for the tour, which brings together ritual objects, anonymous artefacts and contemporary works. Chinese Pî discs, funerary ornaments evoking infinity, meet Meret Oppenheim's Old Serpent, a symbol of both origin and denouement. Maurizio Cattelan's Felix, with its gigantic cat skeleton on the scale of a dinosaur, challenges institutional classifications and notions of fiction and reality. It invades the “Dimanche” section, where major works such as Sonia Delaunay's Le Bal Bullier reveal the polysemy of the concept of this day. Its bright, warm colours, as if bathed in light, respond to that of Felix Gonzalez-Torres's Last Light, a string of 24 lights corresponding to the hours of the day, representing the passage of time, a fragile cycle in memory of the victims of AIDS.

In Galerie 1, Sunday becomes the theatre of political and artistic tensions: ‘Ils ne passeront pas’ presents works revealing the traumas of the post-war period, such as Souvenirs de la galerie des glaces à Bruxelles by Otto Dix, or capturing the violence of physical combat, with Les Lutteurs by Natalia Goncharova.

Other works mark the transgressive spirit and radical breaks made by the avant-gardes: Georges Braque's Grand Nu explores the limits of Cubist perception, Kasimir Malévitch's Carré noir pushes abstraction to its purest essence, and Sophie Taeuber-Arp's Tête Dada portrays the Dadaist revolution in a resolutely anti-authoritarian gesture.

‘When We Cease to Understand the World’ highlights the idea of hijacking: Maurizio Cattelan tapes a banana to the wall in his now landmark work Comedian, which is held together not so much by the tape as by the enunciation that establishes it as a work of art. Cattelan questions the legitimacy of the object by marking it with a symbolic signifier. The gesture is an enactment of a collective fantasy: art as the pure circulation of monetary signifiers. If the work fascinates as much as it exasperates, it's because it lays bare the unthought of the market, the space where the object of desire confronts the recognition it elicits. Here, the object has the consistency of a fetish that holds the art scene together not on a truth or a vision, but on an economy of the gaze and of exchange.

Another highlight of the exhibition is the presence in the Grande Nef of the Wrong Gallery - New York's smallest gallery, originally set up in the Chelsea district from 2002 to 2005. An emblematic project by Cattelan with Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Subotnick, the Wrong Gallery, which measures 2.5 m2, will host a programme of exhibitions within the exhibition on the occasion of “Dimanche sans fin”. The first guest artist is Sidival Fila.

Duchamp, Breton and the spirit of the game

The ‘Hate, friendship, seduction, love, marriage’ section is based on the passion of Marcel Duchamp and his entourage for chess. An exceptional loan, his game table is revealed to the public for the first time, and presented in conjunction with creations by Max Ernst, Hans Richter and Maria Helena Vieira Da Silva that offer a metaphor for games of class, gender and power. Maurizio Cattelan, a well-known chess player, offers his own vision of the game with his evocatively titled work Good versus Evil, composing a new body of pawns.

Finally, an exceptional moment in the exhibition is the presentation of André Breton's studio wall. This free accumulation of objects and works collected throughout his life by André Breton offers a lively reflection on chance, surrealism and the freedom of the gaze, at the heart of the intuitive wanderings of “Dimanche sans fin”. The legendary Gradiva bas-relief from the collections of the Vatican Museums, which has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration in the history of modern and contemporary art, particularly for the Surrealists, is also on display in the “Odyssey” section. Gradiva - ‘she who walks’ - evokes the idea of travel, myths and stories, the unconscious and desires. It introduces the teeming universe of André Breton's Studio Wall, displayed majestically alongside it, and presented for the first time outside its Parisian setting.

Le Mur de l'atelier d'André Breton, the emblematic ensemble that joined the Centre Pompidou at the dawn of the year 2000, consists of 255 heterogeneous objects and works assembled by Breton in the office of his studio at 42, rue Fontaine in Paris: African, Amerindian and oceanic masks, found objects, minerals, shells and fossils combine without hierarchy with Surrealist works by Alberto Giacometti or Joan Miró. A veritable collection within the collection, the wall of André Breton's studio, with its free and inventive juxtapositions, paves the way for the casual journey of “Dimanche sans fin”, which attempts to sketch out new meanings and hitherto unexplored trajectories.

The meaning of freedom: the exhibition labels and in-store mediation

The exhibition labels, written by Maurizio Cattelan and the inmates of the Giudecca Women's Prison in Venice, explore multiple facets of the alphabet. Through their words, a common reflection emerges, oscillating between the intimate and the political, between personal demands and collective commitment. These intersecting voices feed the exhibition's journey, adding a profound dimension to the exploration of the human condition and imprisonment, while resonating with the idea of “Sunday without end”, a day when freedom may sometimes seem suspended, but where hope also takes shape. This collaboration embodies the power of language as a means of liberation.

Directly linked to the written labels, the mediators in the galleries are accompanied by prisoners trained to guide groups of visitors through the exhibition from time to time. This initiative, in collaboration with the Metz Prison Centre, invites prisoners to reclaim their role in society through art. In this way, they become players in the artistic dialogue, translating the notion of freedom into a museum space, while offering visitors a unique perspective on the works on display. Their work as mediators gives new meaning to the notion of rehabilitation, restoring art's role as a vehicle for reconciling the individual, society and freedom.