ALMINE RECH

Video Killed the Radio Star
The 1980s and their Cultural Echoes

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The 1980s are traversed by paradoxes that the image makes visible: behind the glittering veneer of pop culture, deep political fractures were taking shape on a global scale; the rise of new technologies clashed with outdated ideologies; the birth of MTV and the shadow of Chernobyl reached the public through the same media prism. 'Video Killed the Radio Star,' a new exhibition at Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, examines the transformations of an era in which the image supplanted the spoken word, in which access replaced ownership and in which aesthetics began to reflect power in unprecedented forms – and what remains of all this today.

From the last convulsions of the Cold War to the rise of neoliberalism under Thatcher and Reagan, the 1980s brought about a profound reorientation of Western culture, rapidly redefined by the emergence of other forces – notably cultural criticism and feminist and queer theory – which broadened and challenged the grand narratives of postmodernism. The exhibition invites reflection on what remains of that era and on what we may have lost from it – particularly in light of the current context, dominated by algorithmic influence, mediated intimacy and post-truth politics. By revisiting this pivotal moment in Western history and its global repercussions, it presents the 1980s as a decisive cultural turning point: a decade in which many of the tools, tensions and desires that define our present began to take shape.

Structured in two parts, the exhibition first focuses on the aesthetic revolutions of the early 1980s, driven by generations of post-war artists who questioned universalist and Western-centric perspectives. The second part explores the sociopolitical context of the decade, its ruptures and continuities, whose resonances are still felt today.

The exhibition brings together some fifty works by forty-two artists, many of them drawn from the Mudam collection: Bernd & Hilla Becher, Daniel Buren, Victor Burgin, Sophie Calle, Mel Chin, Günther Förg, General Idea, Nan Goldin, Jack Goldstein, Andreas Gursky, Peter Halley, Anne Imhof, Joyce Joumaa, Isaac Julien, Martin Margiela, Park McArthur, Albert Oehlen, Grayson Perry, Sondra Perry, Josephine Pryde, Julika Rudelius, Sarkis, Julian Schnabel, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Michael E. Smith, Thomas Struth, Leyla Yenirce. The ensemble is complemented by new loans from artists: 4FSB, Bless, Rhea Dillon, Andrzej Steinbach, Vivienne Westwood, Alvin Baltrop, Harun Farocki, Roman Ondak, Martin Wong, Hélène Yamba-Guimbi, Richard Haughton, Michel Majerus and Angharad Williams.

The exhibition is part of the celebrations marking the twentieth anniversary of Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean.