

Conversation(s)

Jun 26 — Dec 7, 2026 | Musée Unterlinden, Colmar, France

The Unterlinden Museum in Colmar presents, from June 26 to December 7, 2026, 'Conversation(s)', curated by Nino Barattini, curator of the modern and contemporary art collections.

Conceived as a trans-historical journey, the exhibition brings medieval masterpieces from the museum's collection into dialogue with works of modern and contemporary art. By bringing together creations from very different contexts, media, and eras, it proposes to reconsider the collections through a play of resonances and confrontations.

A fresh reading of the collections

With this in mind, 'Conversation(s)' reflects a desire to bring together the museum's two great ensembles — early art and the modern and contemporary art collections — which have long been presented separately. Brought together within a single itinerary, enriched by exceptional loans, the works enter into dialogue beyond the usual historical frameworks and open up new perspectives, inviting a renewed reading of the collections.

Affinities, confrontations, resonances

This juxtaposition reveals the persistence of major artistic concerns — the body, the sacred, memory, violence, and matter itself.

Some works reveal affinities, others give rise to genuine confrontations, while still others resonate in a more subtle way. These multiple relationships bring forth correspondences, tensions, and echoes between works that the centuries had kept apart.

The face-off between a portrait by Hans Holbein and a painting by Pierre Soulages, separated by five centuries, offers a particularly striking example. On one side, a late Medieval painting marked by great formal mastery and attention to detail; on the other, a work grounded in gesture and matter. Despite these differences, the two works engage in an unexpected dialogue around color — black — revealing sensitive correspondences between otherwise distant practices.

Artists and works

In this expanded dialogue, the Unterlinden Museum's collections are enriched by numerous outside loans. The exhibition brings together major artists such as Niki de Saint Phalle, César, Pierre Soulages, and Maryan, as well as key figures of the contemporary scene, including Ron Mueck, Annette Messager, Maurizio Cattelan, and Robert Combas. The exhibition also makes room for emerging talent, with works by Théo Mercier and an original creation by Malo Chapuy, designed specifically for the exhibition.

A visit guided by the works

Conceived against the grain of a chronological path, the exhibition offers a free-flowing stroll. Visitors are invited to move about with no set direction, to multiply their points of view, and to weave their own connections between the works, following the correspondences as they emerge.