



## HOLBEIN TO TILLMANS

Prominent Guests from the Kunstmuseum Basel

4 April to 4 October 2009

### MEDIA INFORMATION

This year's exhibition at Schaulager, 'Holbein to Tillmans', assembles approximately 200 paintings and sculptures, created between 1500 and the present, from the collection of the Kunstmuseum Basel. They are joined by several works from private collections and roughly thirty works from the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, which is associated with the Kunstmuseum. With this exhibition, Schaulager, which until now has been exclusively dedicated to contemporary art, is setting out on different paths for once.

The external occasion for this unusual project is the major Van Gogh exhibition at the Kunstmuseum, which makes it necessary to remove parts of its collection. In response to this situation, Schaulager proposed accommodating these works, but, rather than storing them, displaying them with other works in a special exhibition. The Kunstmuseum accepted this proposal and approved the loan of such a large number of important works for the first – and probably last – time in its long history.

The exhibition includes works from storage that have not been seen in a long time alongside familiar masterpieces from Cranach to Holbein, from Arnold Böcklin to Ferdinand Hodler, from Edgar Degas by way of Paul Cézanne to Giacometti and from Andy Warhol by way of Joseph Beuys and Bruce Nauman to Jeff Wall and Wolfgang Tillmans. All these works have left their familiar surroundings and found a temporary home at Schaulager.

At Schaulager, the Museum's collection has become an exhibition. It forms a large store of images, where each single art work was chosen for its own sake: hand-selected, explicitly desired, considered particularly beautiful, particularly attractive or particularly mysterious. The selected works – paintings, sculptures, videos and installations – cover a broad span of time, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first century. Outside of their familiar surroundings and beyond the classic order of a museum, they reveal other, unexpected sides.

Some of these "guests" are displayed in the exhibition in a state of unpolished raw material, merely roughly sorted. Spread out on a monumental wall, these paintings hang beside, beneath, and above one another – as an enticing treasure for the imagination. This wall forms the frame of the exhibition.

The concept of the exhibition is based on consciously choosing to look at the art works – no matter whether they are contemporary or historical – with today's eyes. This perspective produces surprising and unexpected relationships between works which are normally not seen together. The works enter into a dialogue with one another and thus make it evident that certain themes and questions keep being relevant over the ages.

Two focuses form the core of this exciting sequence of images, articulating the exhibition: the perception of the exterior world looking at people and things (starting with the portrait and the still life) and the orientation of human beings in the world (starting with the landscape and the standing figure). Already in the modern era, the places and spaces in which we live, and the people and things that surround us, have become elementary sites of reflection and imagination. They remain so today, in ever new and different ways, as the exhibition 'Holbein to Tillmans' demonstrates.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue in the still young 'Schaulager-Hefte' series. The catalogue includes colour illustrations of all the works as well as an introduction and explanatory commentaries on the "stations" of the exhibition and on individual works.