

Press release

The Archive

Jürgen Partenheimer

Unique international museum project

28 June – 9 November 2014

Gemeentemuseum Den Haag

Jürgen Partenheimer (b. Munich, 1947) is one of Germany's most prominent and literary artists. His work is renowned for its minimalistic but highly poetic visual idiom. Since his participation in the biennales of Paris, Venice and São Paulo, he has enjoyed great international fame. *The Archive* is a unique collaborative project involving the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, the Deichtorhallen Hamburg / Sammlung Falckenberg and the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver. The forthcoming exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag will gather together paintings, works on paper, ceramics, sculptures and selected artist's books from various periods. A particularly noteworthy feature will be the presence of the first model of *Weltachse*, a vertical axis built of stacked blue cubes on a return visit from a Dutch private collection to the museum where it was exhibited for the very first time twenty years ago.

The Archive will be the third presentation of Partenheimer's work at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag.. In 1993 he exhibited *Weltachse* ('World Axis') as part of one of the first site-specific exhibitions to be held in the museum's Projects Gallery. The original wooden version of *Weltachse* was to become the model for a bronze version twice its size, which was displayed in Amsterdam's Vondelpark to coincide with the Partenheimer retrospective at the city's Stedelijk Museum. The vast sculpture subsequently travelled the world, being exhibited as far away as China's Forbidden City before returning to the Netherlands to be shown in the courtyard garden of the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag in 2000.

The Archive is like a journey through memory. The artist has selected works from early and late in his career to form an impressively orchestrated presentation that unites the past with the present and blends personal recollections with associations and fragments from our collective memory. Partenheimer sums up the project as follows: 'The artist's archive denotes neither a place nor a room, it is rather a synonym for all that exists and all that has been gathered within and without an open terrain of imagination and reality.'

The Archive has already been shown in differing forms at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich and the Deichtorhallen / Sammlung Falckenberg in Hamburg. Following the presentation in The Hague, a new body of work, *The Raven Diaries*, developed in Vancouver during a residency will be exhibited at the Contemporary Art

Gallery (CAG) in Vancouver. Each of its appearances features a rather different selection of works. For example, the exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag will include additional works borrowed from collections in the Netherlands. The various presentations are linked by a book entitled *Jürgen Partenheimer, Das Archiv / The Archive*, published last January by German publishers Distanz Verlag. The book was designed in close collaboration with the artist and contains German and English-language contributions by authors from a range of disciplines, including Anne Carson, Franz Kaiser, Lebogang Mashile, Carla Schulz-Hoffmann, Rudi Fuchs and Nigel Prince.

Jürgen Partenheimer has expanded both content and form within the tradition of post-minimalism and lyrical abstraction. He has made his “metaphysical realism” a distinctive universe in which drawings, paintings, sculptures and artist’s books open the gates to a new spiritual reality. In his exploration, he links together art, music, philosophy and literature, but drawing remains the basis. Partenheimer is regarded as one of the most important artists working in Germany today. Not only has his work won a host of national and international awards and distinctions, but he was the first contemporary German artist ever to be given a retrospective in China (shown at the National Gallery in Beijing and the Nanjing Museum in Nanjing). This year he has received the Audain Distinguished Residency Award, one of the foremost Canadian art prizes, from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver.

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