

Past and Present

The Kunstverein Nürnberg – Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft was founded in 1792 as a “Kunstsocietat”, or art society, by art lovers, and, as such, is the oldest Kunstverein in the German-speaking world. Ever since the union with the Albrecht Dürer Verein in 1830, the Kunstverein has included the name of Nuremberg’s most important artist in its title. For a long time, the Kunstverein was the only institution in Nuremberg to organise exhibitions, and guested in places such as the old Norishalle, the present-day Kunsthalle, and the former Frankische Galerie, as well as the rooms of the Germanic National Museum, founded in 1871.

Since the founding of the Kunsthalle, and up to the present day, the presentation, communication, and sponsorship of contemporary art have constituted the Kunstverein’s core activity. Throughout a richly varied history, it has been possible to stage a great number of very important art exhibitions, among them those shows that not infrequently featured artists who would later achieve great fame. In this way, connections with the head of the Academy in Berlin, Max Liebermann, led to the presentation of graphic works by artists such as Adolph Menzel, Carl Spitzweg, and Arnold Böcklin, from an early stage in Nuremberg. In the 1920s, Oskar Schlemmer, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky staged exhibitions in the Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft. Worthy of mention is a highly regarded exhibition by Pablo Picasso in response to Lucas Cranach, which took place during Picasso’s lifetime.

Since 2003, the Kunstverein Nürnberg has occupied representative rooms in the administrative building of the former Milchhof (built by Otto Ernst Schweizer in 1930) opposite Lake Wöhrder Lake. This design is considered to be a prominent example of early modernist industrial architecture. Under the directorship of Natalie de Ligt, and enjoying its new home, the Kunstverein was much talked about on account of, among other things, exhibitions featuring young Polish artists, but also as a result of an exhibition by the Leipzig School of Contemporary Painting. Since Kathleen Rahn has assumed directorship, the focus of the programme has centred on historical, spatial, as well as performance-oriented approaches.

Tours, talks on various exhibitions, as well as art excursions (which are offered exclusively to members) foster and intensify the exchange on the subject of art. Over and above this, members are given the opportunity to acquire art works at affordable prices, in the form of annual editions. The Kunstverein was and continues to be a platform for contemporary art on a regional and international level, but also a place for encountering art lovers and people generally interested in art!

The basis of the Kunstverein is its membership. They elect the board, which in turn is committed to the work of the Kunstverein. The board consists of Peter Naumann (Chairman), Christiane Böhm, Dr. Christoph Giehl, Dr. Renate Hilsenbeck, Manfred Rothenberger, and Elke Antonia Schloter. Anton Wolfgang Graf von Faber-Castell is the honorary chairman and a sponsor of the Kunstverein.

Interview with Kathleen Rahn: http://www.art-magazin.de/szene/7893/unser_e_v