

DR. DANIELÈ PERRIER

PRESS RELEASE

*We cordially invite you to the opening of the exhibition*

## HERMANN NITSCH ORLAN ANKE RÖHRSCHEID

Physis der Seele – inszenierte Rituale  
(Physique of the Soul – staged Rituals)

**Curator:** *Dr. Danièle Perrier*

**Kunstraum Dreieich | Artspace Frankfurt, Inhaber Eric Bernard Beuerle de Castro**

*Daimlerstraße 1K, D-63303 Dreieich/Frankfurt am Main*

**Opening in presence of the artists: Friday, March 21st 2014, 7 pm**

*Duration of exhibition: March 22 - May 23, 2014*

*Opening hours: Thu - Sat 3 - 6 pm and by arrangement*

*We are at your disposal concerning press previews and interviews.*

### **Content:**

*The works of Nitsch, ORLAN and Röhrscheid are diverse but they can be reduced to one common denominator: The presence of the body as organism. Thanks to it we can sense the external world and have perception. While our eyes optically capture impressions and send signals to the brain which in turn animates all other senses, it is our skin that functions as “feeling organ”. Through it we can feel warmth, coldness, caresses, pain. These emotions though do not stick with the skin surface. The more intense they get, the more they go deeper into our innermost part. Pleasure, pain, violence, desire, sensuality and sexuality go under our skin; they concern us - body and soul. The focus of the exhibition is placed on the interaction between external and internal (-ization) and all the facets of intellectual and mental relations.*

### **About the Artists:**

*The central theme in **Hermann Nitsch's** actions is the encounter of Dionysian ecstasy and Christian suffering. His actions consist in a series of rituals: the slaughtering of the bull, the erection of his insides along the sidewalk, the carrying of the crucified actors who get watered in blood, the self-composed organ music. But despite their seemingly catholic ritual background, they also are profane rites. Heurigen music alternates with organ pieces, wheelbarrows full of roses spread a festive smell that strongly contrasts the smell of the blood; people smoke, eat, drink and fuddle – everybody enjoys life. Apart from the involvement of the participants, every action is precisely orchestrated and staged. Many sketches, plans and compositions that constitute the rituals of action (painting and material actions) are developed in the forefront. The ritual and the scared are the essential elements in his works. The body is the scene of events.*

*In **ORLAN's** work the body also plays a central role, namely her own. It is the measure of all things but nevertheless the artist permanently transforms it. She takes up different identities ranging from Venus or the Blessed Virgin Mary to African totems. Transformations are generally immanent to life; ORLAN artificially creates such to assume different identities again and again which over time are supposed to manifest a change of*

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public mood. The relation between defilement and sacralization is essential. Her work *Le Baiser de l'artiste* is about her kissing everyone in public who is willing to pay: a double defilement of privacy; this has to be understood in the light of the cultural revolution of May 68. It in fact had real consequences for the artist who therefore lost her teaching position at the Ecole des trois Soleils.

When ORLAN slips into the role of Saint Thérèse and into the ecstatic state that was given to her by Bernini, she replaces her passivity with a provocative and vivid gesture of leadership which secularizes the baroque icon. ORLAN also reveals the mystery of aesthetic surgery, which usually is kept secret by women making use of it. She turns it into a public performance – to theatricalize it even more she loudly reads philosophical or literary texts during the operations. The private is made public and transparent. Desacralization also contrasts sacralization, for example in the sculptural realization of the performance *Le Baiser de l'artiste*, which shows a photograph of ORLAN as the saint ORLAN placed on a socket together with the bust (a remnant from the performance) arranged on a chair and a written demand for payment. Saint and whore coexist.

ORLAN's works are full of enthusiasm and eroticism with Baroque references. That contrasts the brutality of her videos and photographs showing the surgical operations. This dichotomy is again one aspect that she has in common with Nitsch.

*Anke Röhrscheid*, a master student of Nitsch, plays the calmer counterpart to Nitsch's and ORLAN's extraverted corporeality. Her small-format paintings are mellow and abstract, but everything in it suggests liveliness. There are entwined bodies of undefinable beings – no individuals, not even human beings but soulful organisms as we can find them in the depths of the sea or in science fiction. Sometimes they seem to copulate or they tumble free fall like we know it from the pictures of Breughel the Elder or from Rubens' monumental *The Great last Judgement*. The reference to the Baroque is not only a compositional one, it can also be found in the tactile surfaces inviting the viewer to touch as it suggests the softness and subtlety of the skin. Her works show lyrical spheres, sensual and organic. They are serial ones. Sometimes it seems the motifs emerge in grey from a black ground, sometimes in pink from a red one. They seem to stand out – but what we perceive as the background is in fact the top layer of the painting. It can be compared to the skin that provides our organs with a protective coating – an additional note on an organic inner life.

#### Works:

The exhibition shows Nitsch's energetic action paintings of the last 10 years, photographs of his actions and over-worked graphic pieces as well as relics from his former actions; it presents ORLAN's self-stagings in the form of photographs, videos and objects and Anke Röhrscheid's watercolor paintings as well as her first video.

A catalogue will be published by Edition Minerva to coincide with the exhibition. ISBN 978-3-943964-09-7

*Please ask for individual dates to pre-view the exhibition for any reviews or interviews with the artists. We gladly send you visual material upon request.*

Best wishes,

Danièle Perrier

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Translation Julia-Constance Dissel