# Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht

Press release 5 September 2012

**BACA Laureate 2012: Mary Heilmann Good Vibrations** 

& BACA Projects

02.10.2012 - 27.01.2013



Mary Heilmann, Good Vibrations Diptych, Remembering David, 2012, Photo: Alex Delfanne

## **BACA Laureate 2012: Mary Heilmann**

On 29 September 2012, the Bonnefantenmuseum is presenting the BACA AWARD 2012. The recommending committee, comprising Jenni Lomax, Roland Wäspe and Paula van den Bosch, were unanimous in their decision to present the award to Mary Heilmann, for her exceptional oeuvre and her great influence on younger generations of artists. The award ceremony will take place on Saturday 29 September, by invitation only, and the official opening of the exhibition is on Sunday 30 September.

The museum considers it a great honour to organise Heilmann's first European museum retrospective, entitled 'Mary Heilmann Good Vibrations', for the occasion of the BACA Award. The exhibition gives insight into the varied oeuvre she has created over fifty active years, which comprises gouaches, graphic work, sculpture, furniture and ceramics, besides her paintings.

Mary Heilmann (1940 San Francisco) is a typical example of a leading artist who is not a household name outside the art world. Since the seventies, the pioneering American painter has been blending abstraction with elements from popular culture and craft traditions. Heilmann's straightforward,

seemingly nonchalant approach to paintings belies an astute and witty dialogue with all sorts of arthistorical preconceptions; an attitude that now serves as a shining example for artists of different generations all over the world. The huge interest in catalogues of Heilmann's work and the long queues of people waiting to hear her public lectures speak volumes.



Mary Heilmann, 2011, Malevich Spin, photo: courtesy of Hauser & Wirth



Mary Heilmann, Rietveld-Remix #2, 2012, photo: Alex Delfanne

#### **Biography**

Mary Heilmann, born in San Francisco in 1940, spent her childhood on the beaches of Los Angeles, returning to her hometown at the age of thirteen. She studied literature at the University of California and saw the emergence of the Beat Generation. She studied poetry and ceramics at San Francisco State College and made sculptures of clay, wood, tar and steel, while dreaming of *Fluxus* happenings and *Warhol's Factory* in New York. When she moved to the Big Apple in 1968, she immersed herself in the bohemian lifestyle of the avant-garde. She started by creating sculpture, feeling an affinity with *Bruce Nauman*, *Keith Sonnier* and *Eva Hesse*, but switched in 1970 to painting – a medium that had been utterly dismissed at the time. As a painter in New York and a teacher in California, she worked on the sidelines of the art world for a long time, until she regained popularity in the mid-eighties through the gallery of Pat Hearn and through younger artists' recognition of Mary Heilmann as an important predecessor.

The exhibition is a collaborative project between the Bonnefantenmuseum and Neues Museum – Staatliches Museum für Kunst und Design in Nuremberg, where the exhibition will travel to in spring 2013. The BACA Award 2012 exhibition Mary Heilmann Good Vibrations is accompanied by a catalogue: *Mary Heilmann Good Vibrations*, which is available from the museum shop.

The text above was written on the basis of interviews with Mary Heilmann and an adaptation of the article by Dominic van den Boogerd, *Eternal Sunshine*, from the catalogue *Mary Heilmann Good Vibrations*, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht 2012.

## **BACA Projects**

#### **Theatre of Thought**

The exhibition *Theatre of Thought\** is an experimental collaborative project between the Bonnefantenmuseum and the Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht.



Nathania Rubin, 2012

Six artists from Europe and America, and associated with the postgraduate institute in Maastricht, are exhibiting their work in two adjoining rooms of the museum. Their individual contributions support the concept of this exhibition, which has been developed around the ideas of 'display', 'stage', 'body' and 'performance'. Using the metaphors of 'stage' and 'backstage' as two essential functions of the theatre, both rooms are seen not as a platform for representation, but rather as a synonym for a personal investigation into conscious and sub-conscious ideas.

Artists: Adrian Alecu (RO), Clifford Borress (USA), Christophe Lemaítre (FR), Snejanka Mihaylova (BG), Nathania Rubin (USA) and Esmé Valk (NL).



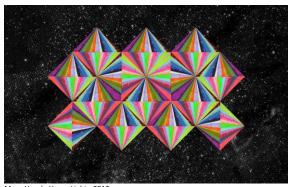
Snejanka Mihaylova, Theatre of Thought, 2012

As part of this collaboration with the Jan van Eyck Academy, Mary Heilmann will give a lecture in the auditorium of this academy on Friday 28 September, starting at 19:30.

A catalogue designed by *Emilio Macchia* will be published during the course of the exhibition and will be available from the museum shop.

\*After the book of the same name by Snejanka Mihaylova.

#### Maya Hayuk: Heavy Lights





Mary Heilmann & Maya Hayuk, 2012

Maya Hayuk, Heavy Lights, 2012

For the occasion of the presentation of the BACA 2012 to Mary Heilmann, the American artist Maya Hayuk has created a site-specific installation in the Bonnefantenmuseum on the basis of new and existing work.

Maya Hayuk (1970, Baltimore) is obsessed by symmetry and saturated colours. She likes to incorporate her paintings and wall paintings in monumental installations, on which she regularly works with other artists and musicians. In the world of applied art, she also designs record and CD covers, videos and sets for artists like The Beastie Boys and singer/songwriter Bonnie Prince Billy. Like Mary Heilmann, her artistic attitude is characterised by the incredible freedom with which she operates in a world of painting that is burdened with the history of art.

Her installation in the Bonnefantenmuseum is site-specific, responding directly to the specific qualities of the exhibition space, such as the dimensions and incidence of light.

Besides the site-specific wall painting, the exhibition includes various other paintings by Hayuk.

Hayuk describes the relationship she feels with Mary Heilmann: "We both have a free, apparently slapdash approach to painting, with a preference for dripping brushstrokes and recalcitrant compositions, and for grid patterns and an elementary geometric vocabulary. We are influenced by music, film, personal experiences and the weaving patterns of the Navajo Indians. We both have Californian roots, no formal training in painting and are crazy about the Simpsons. We don't take ourselves too seriously and we both have the initials M.H."

#### About the award

As the initiator and organiser, the Bonnefanten has previously presented the award to the following artists: *Eija-Liisa Ahtila* (2000), *Neo Rauch* (2002), *Pawel Althamer* (2004), *Bethan Huws* (2006), *John Baldessari* (2008) and *Francis Alÿs* (2010).

The BACA (Biennial Award for Contemporary Art) is a biennial international art award, comprising a sum of fifty thousand Euros, a publication and an exhibition in the Bonnefantenmuseum. The main criteria for the award are 'influence' and 'personality'. The BACA is the Netherlands' most important award for international visual art.

### **Press conference**

There will be no press conference for the BACA 2012 exhibition: Mary Heilmann Good Vibrations. Mary Heilmann will be available to talk to the press on Friday 28 September and the morning of Saturday 29 September. Maya Hayuk will also be in the museum at the same time. Any members of the press wishing to interview one of the artists should contact the Press & Publicity department of the museum: pressoffice@bonnefanten.nl / +31 (0)43-3290110.

## Support

For the organisation of the BACA, the Bonnefantenmuseum can count on the generous support of DSM. The BACA also receives support from the City of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg, who thereby underline the significance of this art award. The media partner of the exhibition is Klara.

With thanks to Galerie Hauser & Wirth and Walther König for their support in the creation of Mary Heilmann's exhibition and catalogue.



NOTE FOR THE PRESS: For more info, please see our press page or contact the press department (Tues-Fri), Avenue Céramique 250, Postbus 1735, 6201 BS Maastricht. Tel. +31 43 329 01 10, fax +31 43 329 01 99, Noortje Fischer / Lieke Heijmans: pressoffice@bonnefanten.nl