

cobra

amstelveen

museum voor moderne kunst
museum of modern art

**gewoon
anders!**

just different!



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14 juni t/m 21 september 2008
Cobra Museum voor Moderne Kunst
Amstelveen

This publication accompanies the exhibition
Just Different!
From 14 June to 21 September 2008
Cobra Museum of Modern Art Amstelveen

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Open: dinsdag t/m zondag 11-17 uur
Tuesday to Sunday from 11 to 17 hours
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Foreword

One of the big achievements of the Western civilised world is the realisation that human sexuality is more complex than the straightjacket that restrained our thinking in the 19th and 20th centuries. Not until the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century did broad layers of the population begin to accept bisexuality, homosexuality and transsexuality. In some European countries, however, this emancipation is still very much taboo today. Not long ago in Milan, for example, a major presentation of homosexuality and art was banned by the city council the day before it was due to open, principally because it included an explicit nude photo-graph of a hermaphrodite.

Artists have played a role which we ought not to under-estimate in this emancipation process. Whether they are homosexual or heterosexual, in the past years they have in surprisingly large numbers explored the themes of sexual desire, gender and identity construction; matters which transcend the heterosexual dominance of our daily life.

The search for sexual identity and the wish to put this into some form or other is inherent to our humanity. It affects us all at various stages in our lives. Artists are no exception. At times their work takes the form of explicitly erotic images, presented with great panache, but equally it can be just an intimate glimpse into the artist's own life.

No matter how important these feelings are, sexual identity has so far rarely been considered as the subject for a museum exhibition – let alone the emancipation of sexual identities that deviate from the 'normal'.

This exhibition, which includes the work of almost fifty famous artists from all over the world, shows an artistic reality and subject matter that is *Just Different*

In a recent survey of museums the Cobra Museum of Modern Art was declared 'Best museum of 2008'. One of the deciding factors in choosing the Cobra Museum was the challenging content of the art it displays. This positive evaluation has encouraged us to pull out all the stops for the present exhibition – one of the most ambitious the museum has organised.

Particular gratitude is due to the artists, many of whom have made personal contributions, either by producing new work or by offering advice to our guest curator.

I wish to thank the town of Amstelveen for its generous support for the educational project that has been organised around the exhibition. This shows that Amstelveen is a community that has a real commitment to liberal values.

I am also most grateful to all the lenders, among them numerous prominent museums and collections from across the world. I especially wish to thank Kasper König, director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, who organised an exhibition with a similar theme in 2006.

Many other institutions have given valuable assistance and support, including the Dutch gay rights organisation 'COC Nederland' and ING. With support from the Business Club of the Cobra Museum we have been able to install the imposing statue of David by Hans-Peter Feldmann in front of the museum.

My final thank-you is to our guest curator, Frank Wagner, for his expertise and dedication; together with the staff of the Cobra Museum he has made *Just Different* into a deeply impressive experience.

John Vrieze
Director

Sex: Aroma of Passion

This section examines the sexual politics of desire, and the implicit beauty as well as explicit ecstasy of sex. The representation of sexuality and sexual practice has changed dramatically over recent decades, with many things no longer considered dirty or taboo, and with the emergence of a new self-awareness. Sex, whether Gay and lesbian, or of any kind, no longer serves only to maintain or confirm identity. Social and power-political questions are coming increasingly to the fore, yet one fundamental question still being asked is how to represent eroticism, in all forms including porn and what lies beyond the patriarchal gender discourse, without renouncing passion and drive. Eye contact, poses and places are becoming more important: power relationships less so.



David Armstrong's portraits were taken after sex. They are relaxed portrait studies, studio photographs of Puerto Rican rent boys, taken in a hotel where rooms are let by the hour. They revolve very seriously around the dignity of the depicted person. A woman reveals her genitals in Patricia Cronin's picture. The body is pressed and cropped into the picture format. The observer is allocated the role of interactive partner.

Patricia Cronin

Untitled #118

Zonder titel #118

1995

aquarel op papier / water colour on paper

61 x 53,4 cm

Courtesy of the artist