

LIVING ARCHIVE

MIXED MESSAGES
15/04/08 – 14/09/08

The Red Diamond, American Dream # 3, Robert Indiana, 1962



From Tuesday, 15 April, *Living Archive – Mixed Messages* is on display at the Van Abbemuseum. This is the sixth presentation in the *Living Archive* series - an on-going series of documentary exhibitions which uses the archives of the Van Abbemuseum as a starting point. Eight works from the Van Abbemuseum collection will be presented in seven small rooms. The key features are the various identities and significances that are attributed to individual works of art.

Mixed Messages

Living Archive – Mixed Messages looks in different ways at eight works of art from the collection. Apart from the title of the exhibition and the description of the material characteristics of the work, this presentation visualises the way in which and the reason why the artwork has been included in the Van Abbemuseum collection. Is the work displayed frequently? Does it keep travelling the world on loan or is it almost always in storage in the depot? What are the values attributed to it from prevalent opinions, both now and in the past? Each work of art is also influenced by social, political and economic factors and may also be a medium displaying the ideological opinions from that period, or a national identity. The context in which it is presented with respect to the theme of museum exhibitions and with regard to other works, gives visitors a fresh approach to learn more about the work.

Sluijters – Reclining Nude

One of the works in the exhibition is Jan Sluijters' *Reclining Nude* from 1931. In the 'fearful 30s', nudes were part

of the discussion about normative values. Dictated by political tension, museums served as sentinels watching over moral, religious and political boundaries. Until after the Second World War, Sluijters' nudes continued to offend more conservative art lovers.

Bacon – Fragment of a Crucifixion

Francis Bacon almost always painted tormented people, expressing his own feelings about life: fear, desperation and suffering are all to be found in his work. Personally, Bacon liked to be in control. As his career progressed, he created an atmosphere around himself and his work, like an actor, making it hard for outsiders to see where the fiction stopped and reality began. Apart from the subject of violence, his lifestyle – in which he did nothing to conceal his homosexuality even though it was illegal at the time – his penchant for decadence also provided the subject of many a discussion and interview. It was sometimes mentioned that Bacon lived his paintings, as it were. This is also clearly visible in *Love is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon* from 1998. This unconventional biopic by filmmaker John Maybury shows

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Reclining Nude, Jan Sluijters, 1931



Fragment of a Crucifixion, Francis Bacon, 1950



Bacon's life in all its facets. Does this information make us look differently at *Fragment of a Crucifixion* in the Van Abbemuseum?

Artworks in Mixed Messages

- *Reclining Nude*, Jan Sluijters, 1931
- *Stadsgezicht*, Carel Willink, 1934
- *Fragment of a Crucifixion*, Francis Bacon, 1950
- *The Red Diamond*, *American Dream #3*, Robert Indiana, 1962
- *Untitled*, Per Kirkeby, 1979
- *Frans van Dooren: the casual passer-by I met*, Braco Dimitrijević, 1976
- *Cultural Soup*, 1987 and *Family Tyranny*, 1987, Paul McCarthy

Living Archive

Living Archive is the title of a series of documentary exhibitions in which the Van Abbemuseum archives are used as an active working memory, with the relatively static archive being linked to dynamic and contemporary subjects. As the museum's memory, the archives provide the opportunity to display more than contemporary exhibitions. By responding to discussions, opinions and achievements that come to the fore in the development of the museum, it provides a historical basis to this development. The series is on display in seven small rooms in the museum's new building.

Van Abbemuseum
Bilderrijcklaan 10
Eindhoven

Opening hours
tuesday - sunday, 11.00 - 17.00
thursday, 11.00 - 21.00

Admission
adults: € 8,50
groups of 15 or more, visitors 65 and over: € 6
students and CJP card holders: € 4
thursday night: free admission (until 31/12/2008)

For more details visit www.vanabbemuseum.nl

Note for editors
More information and images can be downloaded directly at:
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