

Hieronymous Bosch

MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN
Rotterdam

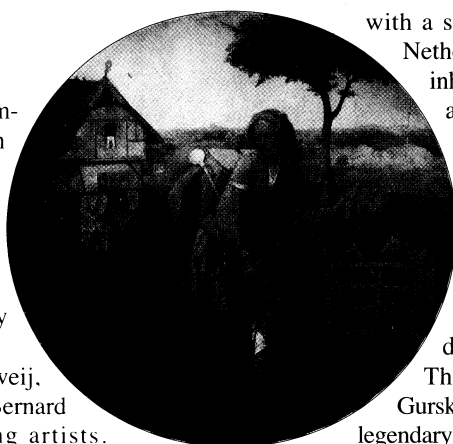
This was the only venue for the most comprehensive Hieronymous Bosch exhibition to date. This inspired show not only looked at Bosch's paintings and drawings of heavenly grace and the torturing of the damned but at those by his followers and other artists influenced by his vision, from 15th-century painters to late-20th-century video artists.

The exhibition—curated by Jos Koldeweij, Matthijs IJssink, Paul Vandenbroeck, and Bernard Vermet—started with works by living artists. R. Crumb, the genius of *Zap* comics, fit in perfectly. His *People, Ya Gotta Love 'Em* (1989) portrays a beach with sunburned bathers packed shoulder-to-shoulder along a frothing, toxic ocean. Another room contained a survey of early-20th-century heroes with a taste for the strange. Usual suspects included Dalí, Kahlo, Beckmann, Ensor, and Bellmer.

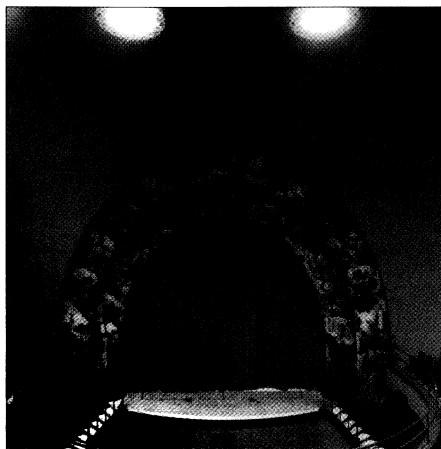
Eighteen Bosch panels (only 25 are known to exist) were hung in a separate gallery. Death, vice, and stupidity were everywhere, and *The Cure of Folly* (all Bosch works are dated ca. 1450–1516) underscored the hopelessness of any earthly remedy. Here, a quack doctor pierces the skull of a hapless imbecile in a futile attempt to remove the stone of his innately human blockheadedness. In *The Pedlar* the central figure departs from a ramshackle farmhouse. In the doorway a man is groping the breasts of a resisting woman, while another man urinates against a wall. Analysis of the painting in preparation for the show yielded a major discovery: *The Pedlar* and three other Bosch panels, reunited for this exhibition, were all originally part of one triptych. A 19th-century art dealer is thought to have cut the work into four pieces.

Also on view were seven exquisite Bosch drawings (only eight attributed to the master survive) and many other drawings by members of his atelier. A 16th-century copy of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* filled in for Bosch's original (too fragile to travel from the Prado in Madrid). Emanating from a ramp that led to this copy was a stray bit of light, easily missed. Bending down, one saw a tiny video screen installed in a hole punched out of the floor. It portrayed a naked woman reaching up from a lava pit of flames, screaming imprecations and warnings almost inaudibly in several languages. It was Pipiloti Rist in hell.

The exhibition ended with a massive but endlessly fascinating array of period costumes, gorgeously illustrated books, medals, and pottery to provide viewers



Hieronymus Bosch,
The Pedlar,
ca. 1450–1516, oil on
panel, 28½" x 28¼".
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen.



Candida Höfer,
*Bourse du Travail
Calais IV*, 2001,
photograph, 5' x 5'.
Hauser & Wirth &
Presehuber.



Teresa Hubbard and
Alexander Birchler,
Eight, 2001, still
from DVD.
Bob van Orsouw.

with a sense of 16th-century cultural life in the Netherlands. It eased visitors from the worlds inhabited by monsters and demons, imbeciles and charlatans, to the humdrum reality of everyday life.

—Rex Weil

Candida Höfer

HAUSER & WIRTH & PRESEHUBER
Zurich

People tend to compare the work of Candida Höfer with that of "Struffsky"—Thomas Struth, Thomas Ruff, and Andreas Gursky. The four overlapped as students under the legendary teachers Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. But while there may be family resemblances among the Becher protégés, Höfer, the eldest, has cultivated her own spare aesthetic.

Recent color photographs of museum interiors were included here. Unlike Struth's famous images of museum galleries, Höfer's are devoid of people. What catches the eye are the odd details she shrewdly exploits. In *Palacio Real Madrid IV*, a Rococo furniture exhibition's haughty gilded ornamentation is undercut by the fact that the room's carpet has been casually rolled back, exposing its pale underside to the camera. Likewise, *Schindler House Los Angeles VII* is all raw beams, pure light, and irregularly textured gleaming concrete. It's a paradise of modern minimalism—except for the electrical wires draped across the rafters like Eden's snake.

In counterpoint to such subtle notes, Höfer also plays with stark angles. In one photo of a giant auditorium, *Bourse du Travail Calais IV*, the rows of seats arc across the photo and toward the viewer as if they were swinging rapidly around an axis.

The paradox of Höfer's work is that while she has eliminated people from these photos, the images are more intimate, more lively, than those of Struth, Ruff, or Gursky.

—Marc Spiegler

Teresa Hubbard and Alexander Birchler

BOB VAN ORSOUW
Zurich

Collaborating since 1990, Teresa Hubbard and Alexander Birchler have created staged photographs that suggest unfolding stories. Recently, they have been working in video. This show consisted of

single video loop that functioned as a narrative Möbius strip wound around an American girl's birthday party. In the video, the girl, a young Chicana in a frilly pink dress, stands at a window, looking out at pelting rain and gently steadying herself by placing a hand on the sill. We also see her outside, stoic under the deluge,