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KATHARINA GROSSE

SHIFTING THE STARS

Katharina Grosse. Shifting the stars

01.06.24 → 24.02.25

Curator: Chiara Parisi

German artist Katharina Grosse was born in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1961. She lives and works in Berlin and New Zealand. In the 1990s, Grosse became established as a key figure in the contemporary art scene, known for her airbrushing on an architectural scale, applied to fragments of nature as well as everyday objects.

The exhibition Katharina Grosse. Shifting the Stars at Centre Pompidou-Metz is a journey in three parts. The first takes place in the middle of the Forum where one of Grosse's historic works is presented. The Grande Nef is subsequently transformed into an immersive cathedral devoted to colour, body and gesture. Finally the exhibit spills out onto the forecourt in an aim to link art to the real world in which it is always rooted.

You are entering a unique place. Young or old, let yourself be transported. Walk, touch, breathe and explore the space—it will intoxicate you.

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The exhibition Katharina Grosse. Shifting the Stars begins in the Forum. In its centre, Grosse has chosen to install *The Bed*, a pivotal work in her career and the key to entering the Centre Pompidou-Metz exhibition. The year is 2004 and the artist is re-examining her practice and the relationship of her work to the institutions that host it. Covered in paint by the artist, the bed exhibited here is her own, taken from her bedroom in Düsseldorf exactly as it was at the time; the objects and sheets arranged without artifice according to their everyday use. From a bed, where we lie in a horizontal position, our relationship to the world is different. It is a place of intimacy and reverie, an everyday and a private space. By making her bed into a work of art and displaying this work in the freely accessible, public space of Centre Pompidou-Metz, Grosse reminds us that the most intense subjective experiences often open up immense creative possibilities in our relationship to others.

You are now in the artist's psychic universe as much as your own. You can head on up to the Grande Nef and discover *Shifting the Stars*. Remember that we all live on the edge of the Milky Way and change your perspective. Imagine that you are not looking at the stars from below, but that you can also fly over them.

By choosing this title, Grosse names the shifting of her œuvre, transported to France from Carriageworks, one of Sydney's largest theatre complexes where it was installed in 2018. The work's theatricality was realised in its initial location, unfurled in 8,000m² of fabrics hung from the ceiling of this Australian building: a vast, flexible space—an inverted tent that visitors could enter. When the Sydney installation was dismantled, Grosse decided to keep the fabric, which had to be cut into several strips. If the Sydney work could not exist outside the building that hosted it, its move to Centre Pompidou-Metz is an invitation to nest in the membranes of an architecture conceived by architects Shigeru Ban and Jean de Gastines in 2010. The work changes the space and the space changes the work, which Katharina Grosse repainted once the fabric had been installed.



Installation model

Grosse began her artistic process by creating a model. A rigorous study of space-management lies at the heart of these reduced-scale replicas, which accommodate the transposition of Grosse's project to the scale of the building. Her careful thought process is combined with her team's multiple skills to produce a work of art, the complex creation of which is revealed through her sketches and preparatory plans. Great strips of fabric were sewn into the enclosure of the Grande Nef using a mobile sewing machine. Significant assembling and hanging techniques, provided by steeplejacks and hidden from the spectator's view, bear the weight of the fabric that unfolds in the space. Grosse spent two weeks spraying her paint onto the fabric, like an on-site performance from which a colourful world emerges underneath.

From Sydney to Metz, Europe and Oceania find themselves linked through a work that takes on a different form in every exhibition. The artist was scrupulous in studying the new possibilities open to her gigantic canvas in the unprecedented volumes of Centre Pompidou-Metz's Grande Nef.

You can now enter the canvas, move through the colours and shapes of the painting, let your thoughts expand. The colours blur and merge, changing your senses and orientation. *Shifting the Stars* is also a poetic reference to marine navigation where you could find your way by means of the stars in the sky: let yourself be guided by the colours and the shapes around you.

La Grande Nef is the ideal place to stage a creation by an artist who thrives on architecture. Soaring to a height of more than 20 meters, it is scenographically uninhibited, allowing the work to unfold in the space where visitors too, can use the place as they wish, to get involved in the visit, to decide on their path and which way to take it, free to and fro. Naturally, a host of experiences from other places and other artistic or everyday situations will come to you as you explore this space. Just like a hike or a walk along a path where landscape is discovered along the way, the installation in the Grande Nef is not revealed in a single glance. It is where you are that, subconsciously, tells you where you are going. Your brain, your senses, your perceptions and your body are simultaneously mobilised to explore this new place.

Coming back down to Earth, a return to nature is a must, with the third work composed of trees. Contact with the environment is central to Grosse's creativity and is reflected here at Centre Pompidou-Metz in the presence of uprooted trees. The oaks and hornbeams, originally from the Vosges Black Forest before being transported to the exhibition location, are the result of collaboration with the National Forestry Office (l'Office national des forêts). Marked by a trip to the Kakadu National Park in Australia, Grosse fell in love with the land and its crops. By inviting nature into a space normally devoid of it, the artist reinforces links with the outdoor landscape. After arranging these trees in the space, she painted them one by one, infused them with her pictorial energy and transformed them into a painting.



On your way out, take the time to discover or rediscover the extension of Grosse's œuvre by going out onto the forecourt. The artist takes her exhibition beyond the confines of the gallery as a way of spreading the energy and power that inhabit her installation. The inside and the outside speak to one another, look at one another.

One does not think without the other. By occupying the forecourt of Centre Pompidou-Metz, Grosse frees herself from the limitations of interior museum space by expanding it. There are no more limits to the frame, not even that of the building. So the work lives on outside the building and the exhibition is never completely closed. The transparency of the walls allows the spaces to be porous and establishes a dialogue between the verticality of the Grande Nef and the horizontality of the forecourt. The stars are everywhere, protected by the architectural roof, and enveloped in a united exhibition.

VISITORS INFORMATION

OPENING HOURS

Every day, except Tuesdays and 1st May

SCHEDULE

1st november to 31 march

Monday → sunday: 10-18:00

1st april to 31 october

Monday → thursday: 10-18:00

Friday → sunday: 10-19:00

TICKETS

On sale at desks and on-site
at Centre Pompidou-Metz
as well as from resellers

Information

Tél. : +33 (0)3 87 15 39 39

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Exhibition catalog

Katharina Grosse, Shifting the stars

Under the direction of Chiara Parisi,
Director, Centre Pompidou-Metz

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