

PRESS RELEASE

On Everybody's Lips

From Pieter Bruegel to Cindy Sherman

In Aller Munde

Von Pieter Bruegel bis Cindy Sherman

Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg

31 October 2020 - 6 June 2021



As part of the group exhibition, Shaun Stamp will be showing a new body of work *I Used to Love You* (2019-2020) in the section of *Air and Sounds*

Artists

Hans von Aachen (Umkreis), Marina Abramović & Ulay, Vito Acconci, Nobuyoshi Araki, Arman, Dirck Barendsz, Lenora de Barros, Franz von Bayros, Dirk Bell, Johannes Bendzulla, Bernhard Johannes Blume, Louis-Léopold Boilly, Hieronymus Bosch (Nachfolger), Louise Bourgeois, Pieter Bruegel d. Ä., Anton Büschelberger, Luca Cambiaso, Javier Castro und Luis Gárciga, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Francesco Clemente, Otto Coester, Tony Cragg, Lucas Cranach d. Ä., Walter Crane, Martin Creed, John Currin, Natalie Czech, Thomas Demand, François Desprez, Birgit Dieker, Mark Dion, Cheryl Donegan, Albrecht Dürer, Bogomir Ecker, Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, Antje Engelmann, Fantich & Young, Harun Farocki, Thomas Feuerstein, Urs Fischer, Anselmo Fox, Moritz Frei, Lieselotte Friedlaender, Gauri Gill, Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, Vivian Greven, Robert Haiss, Richard Hamilton, Johann Gottlieb Hantzsch, Mona Hatoum, Eberhard Havekost, He Xiangyu, Egbert van Heemskerck d. J., Jeppe Hein, Gottfried Helnwein, Gary Hill, Klara Hobza, Jenny Holzer, Benjamin Houlihan, Lisa Junghanß, Michael Kalmbach, Isabell Kamp, Christian Keinstar, Johann Georg Kern (zugeschr.), Walther Klemm, Max Klinger, Christoph Knecht, Herlinde Koelbl, Kurt Kranz, Alfred Kubin, Mathäus Küsel, Raimund Kummer, David LaChapelle, Maria Lassnig, Lucas van Leyden, Lee Lozano, Sarah Lucas, Anna Maria Maiolino, Jeanne Mammen, Man Ray, Jan Mandyn, Fabian Marcaccio, Christian Marclay, Teresa Margolles, Oliver Mark, Bernhard Martin, Kris Martin, Jonathan Meese, Ulrich Meister, Isa Melsheimer, Ana Mendieta, Charles Meryon, Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, Duane Michals, Marilyn Minter, Edvard Munch, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (zugeschr.), Natalia LL, Bruce Nauman, Marcel Odenbach, Adolf Oexle, Tony Oursler, Georg Pencz, Pablo Picasso, Rona Pondick, François Rabelais, Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Pipilotti Rist, Michele Rocca, Ulrike Rosenbach, Aura Rosenberg, Miguel Rothschild, Raphael Sadeler d. Ä., Sam Samore, Johann Gottfried Schadow, Godfried Schalcken, Thomas Schütte, Lorentz Schultes, Elfie Semotan, Mithu Sen, Cindy Sherman, Slavs and Tatars, Andreas Slominski, Kiki Smith, Daniel Spoerri, Shaun Stamp, Peter Stauss, Jan Steen, Barbara Steppe, Sam Taylor-Johnson, David Teniers d. J., Paul Thek, Wolfgang Tillmans, Joe Tilson, Ane Tonga, Rosemarie Trockel, Wilhelm Trübner, Piotr Uklański, Maarten de Vos, Kemang Wa Lehulere, Franz Erhard Walther, Andy Warhol, Hans Wechtlin, Peter Weibel, Hans Weiditz d. J., Tom Wesselmann, Antonie Wierix, Peter Zizka u. a.

At Kunst Museum Wolfsburg in Germany, Shaun Stamp is showing a series of self-portraits of his latest photographic work *I Used to Love You*.

The group exhibition *In Aller Munde / On Everyone's Lips – From Pieter Bruegel to Cindy Sherman* will trace the broadly diversified path of the history of the motif of the mouth, and open between 31 October 2020 to 5 April 2021.

Born in Wales, UK based visual artist Shaun Stamp of mixed heritage that considers himself a product of colonial ghosts, spanning from European to Native American, West African and Rhajastani Indian; forms objects and images through multi-media experiments, making photography, objects and text to installation. Stamp creates work as a biographical diary that explores and flickers through a philosophy of identity, symbolism and confessionalism.



"My work explores my own mixed heritage and identity, by exploring the human condition existing in our time, flickering in all its complexities and vulnerabilities, through margins of cross-cultural viewpoints. By delving in, into psychological, philosophical, biographical and historical themes, I am seeking to explore within the periphery, an aid to questioning, looking, and reflecting a mirror, that aims to understand existence between the man-made and natural worlds, and what it is to be human in our time" Shaun Stamp

The series of polyptych photographic work *I Used to Love You* (2019) is a 3.6-meter photography work, displaying 15 individual portraits, sliced into a triptych for the installation.

Stamp's work is connected to psychological traumas from his childhood into adulthood, carried forward and held close. Through dealing with love and loss of past and present, the flirting of the camera shutter crystallises the immediacy of his mouth in a confessional expression. His work reveals the innards of the fabrication, that has been opened up like a tin-can, exposing the Self in a moment of release. Witnessing how the lens captures the artist's head resting on a sculpture armature, points to

Stamp's long history of object making, and his on-going self-portrait series that started in 2005. Stamp's jaw is seen here pressing against the armature support, forcing the mouth in a tussle from stuttering to shouting, to release those familiar words "*I used to love you*".

The large-scale exhibition at KunstMuseum Wolfsburg, addresses several themes through the mouth, that will include the work of Shaun Stamp *I Used to Love You* alongside Marina Abramović, Natalia LL, Bruce Nauman, Kemang Wa Lehulere and Tony Oursler and others in the *Luft und Laute / Air and Sounds* section, which focuses on breathing, sound, whistling and speech.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 300-page publication "*On Everyone's Lips - The Oral Cavity in Art and Culture*" in English and German.

"Mouth, lips, tongue, and teeth - speech, pain, and screaming - eating, devouring, spitting, and spewing - lust and passion. The oral cavity is an extremely stimulating bodily zone in the truest sense of the term. It is, however, not only the experience of sensuality and the ability of the mouth to produce sound and speech, but also the aesthetics of this intimate space that make it so attractive." Curator Dr Uta Ruhkamp, (2020)

"Just as a beehive's flight hole shimmers with wax from within, so the mouth - in a magical way, the most important opening of the body - is moist from the comings and goings of the soul, which enters and exits in the form of breath." Marcel Griaule, (1929)



Installation view of *I Used To Love You* 2019-20
Kunst Museum Wolfsburg 2020

INTRODUCTION

We are born without teeth, and the first tooth is painful, a pain we endure only to lose the “suffered” deciduous teeth just as quickly. This is followed by eternal dental care and the fight for tooth retention. Teeth determine our life cycle. The cultural scientist Hartmut Böhme assumes a second birth of the human being through the oral cavity, because the moment we detach ourselves from the mother as caregiver, we explore the world by tasting it. The mouth becomes the individual center of judgement, even before our mind can do this; it is our sensorial “means of discovering the world.” At the same time, it is also the basis of our development as subjects. A large part of this important threshold space lies beyond the human gaze. Rainer Maria Rilke even speaks of a world: “One space extends through all beings: the world’s inner space” (Rilke, *Werke II*, pp. 92). Jan Mandyn opens in his vision of a *Fantastical Landscape* (undated) in a bizarre and almost exemplary way the gateway to this “world’s inner space” and thus serves as a prelude to the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg.

Approximately 350 years later, Piotr Uklanski designed a space-filling oral portal titled *Open Wide* (2012), which provides a view into the oral cavity, while Mona Hatoum follows the path into the depths of the throat in her humorous multimedia installation *Deep Throat* (1996). The dark opening of the mouth has always offered ample projection space, as Harun Farocki notes in his film *Transmission* (2007), in which tourists place their hands in the world-famous *Bocca della Verità* in Rome—an antique lie detector of sorts, the mouth as a place of ascertaining the truth. The mouth and throat form a transit space that controls and opens the path from the outside to the inside and from the inside to the outside. Food, liquids, and air enter the body through this gateway to the interior of humans and animals, while sounds, speech, singing, and saliva are divested. Breathing in and out defines the rhythm of life more than anything else. Essential components of these vital processes and the pharynx are its biting and chewing tools: the teeth. - Curator Uta Ruthkamp

A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH

Long before the coin, teeth were used as a means of payment; in non-European cultures, they were used as magical objects or jewellery or were transformed into valuable assets through precious metals and ornamentation. Especially today, in our age of permanent self-portrayal and as suggested by advertising for decades, teeth are the most expensive jewellery, including gold teeth and the so-called “grill,” a braces-like dental decoration made of silver, gold, or platinum as a status symbol in hip hop culture. Tooth relics are part of the cult of veneration of saints—not only in the form of the teeth themselves. Depictions of St. Apollonia, the patron saint of dental medicine, with forceps and teeth in book miniatures, as a statue, or even the scenic depiction of her tooth torture in the course of her martyrdom are increasingly found from the fourteenth century onward. Inspections and treatments of the mouth, tooth extractions, the crude work of the tooth breaker, tooth puller, or quack doctor are popular motifs, especially in genre painting from the sixteen and seventeenth centuries, exemplified in the oeuvres of Jan Steen and David the Younger Teniers.

Such often-satirical depictions of fraudulent dental experts and experiences of pain can also be found in contemporary art. Dentition itself, in the form of dentures and artificial teeth, gained intrinsic artistic value especially in the twentieth century: from Arman’s *Accumulation* (1960) to Richard Hamilton’s laughing art critic (1968–71) and Mithu Sens’ dental explosion with the revealing title *Phantom Pain 2* (2018).

A DELICIOUS BITE

The mouth is a danger zone: For the determinative faculty of the teeth is to bite. “Teeth are the armed guardians of the mouth,” Elias Canetti explains (*Crowds and Power*, p. 209). In the image culture of horror, the all-devouring mouth reflects a primal fear of humankind. Gaping mouths, jaws, and threatening monsters become an expression of danger. The Hellmouth devours not only the damned in the Apocalypse of John, but also Satan himself. Jonah is swallowed by the whale and spat out again, while in Roman mythology Saturn himself becomes a perpetrator and eats his own son, a scene which Alfred Kubin relentlessly depicts in his by Francisco de Goya and Peter Paul Rubens inspired drawing Saturn (1935-36). The lethal bite, which literally sucks life out of the body, is also the core act of the vampire, to this day a leitmotif in literature, film, and art—from Edvard Munch’s “kiss of death” (1895) to the humorous photograph Vito with Vampire Pacifier (2009) by Berlin based photographer Oliver Mark.

PLEASURE AND KISS

For humans and animals: The bite is followed by the sensation of good or bad taste, in which the tongue with its taste buds plays a decisive role. Eating and drinking are not only everyday rituals for providing energy and sustenance, but also experiences of lust, as the countless depictions of the Bacchus, the god of wine, illustrate. The mouth and the oral cavity are places of sensual and erotic pleasures, some of which have written their very own cultural history, especially the kiss. Wolfgang Tillman’s photograph *The Cock (kiss)* from 2002, for example, has become iconic in this sense.

The oral libido finds its artistic expression in direct pornographic quotations, such as the much discussed lithographs and sculptures from the *Made in Heaven* series (1989–91) by Jeff Koons and Cicciolina, as well as the photographs and paintings of the American artist Marilyn Minter: The mouth as an erogenous zone has been one of her leitmotifs since the late 1980s.

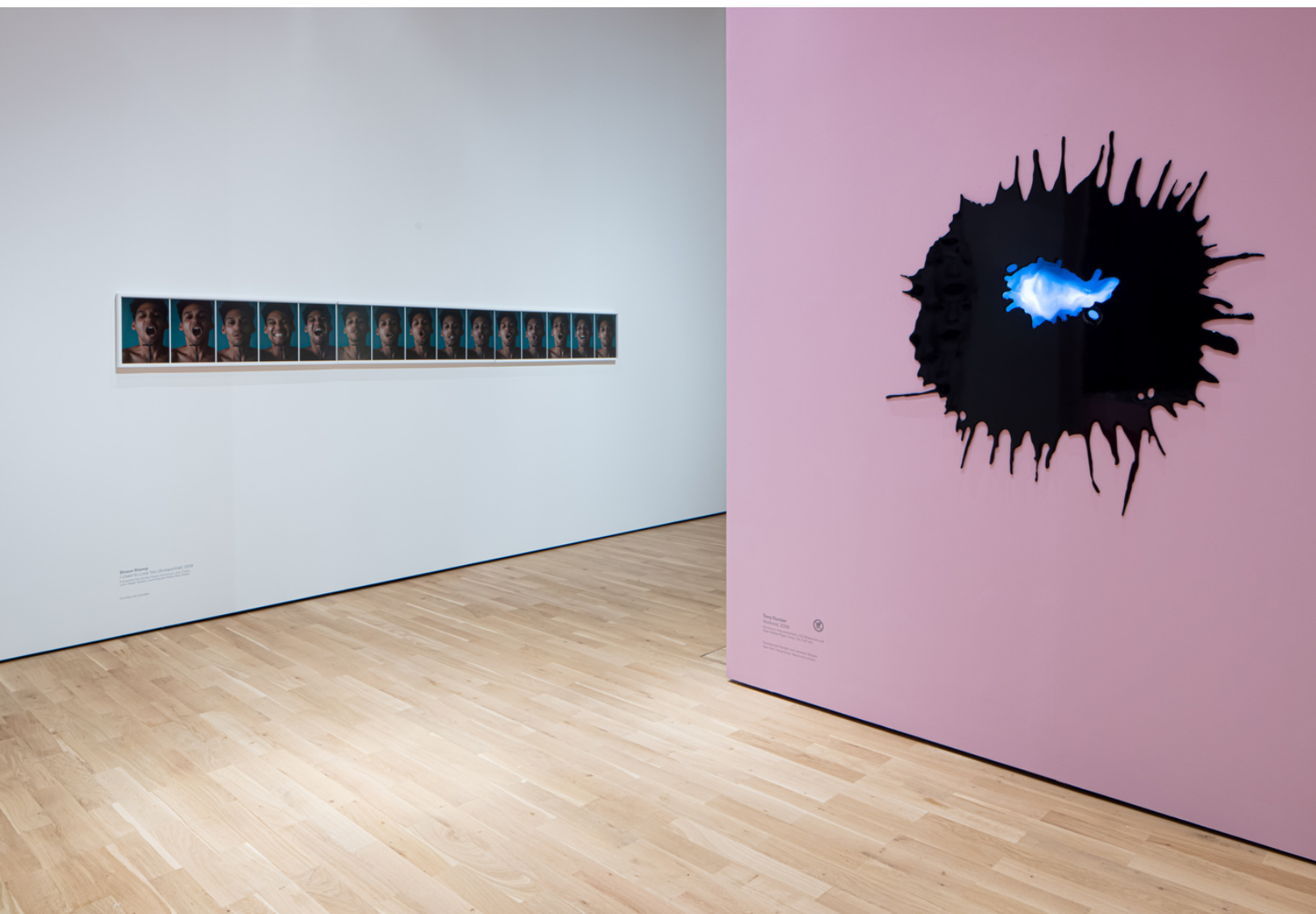
GIFT OF THE GAB

Although spitting and spewing have their own iconographic tradition, processes of divestiture often arouse disgust, at least in those cases when they are not intended as libidinous provocation. Artful gargoyles and water-spewing fountain figures date back to pre-Christian times. Franz Erhard Walther and Bruce Nauman humanize these waterworks in their self-portrayals (1958/1966–67), while the Berlin-based artist Michael Kalmbach embeds his figures in a narrative and, as in a story of creation, has them “throw up” an entire world.

Language, screams, noises, and singing, in short, the generation of sounds, is one of the most elementary functions of the oral cavity: The voice and language decisively determine our identity beyond external appearance, a second important step in becoming a subject. Joe Tilson inserts exclamation marks directly into the opened mouth and underscores this with the word VOX (*Vox Box*, 1963). Sounds of any form contradict the silent image: Here, facial expressions and gestures play a decisive role as means of articulation of a non-linguistic nature. The gaping mouth, for example, has a long pictorial tradition as a characteristic of the scream, as in the works of Adriaen Brouwer (1636–38) and Francis Bacon (1949) or in the Pop Art of Roy Lichtenstein (1990).

LUFT UND LAUTE

Within the show, Stamp will be sharing the work *I Used to Love You (2019)* in the *Luft und Laute / Air and Sounds* section, themed on topics of breathing, sound production, whistling, speech and language.



Installation view of section *Luft und Laute*; Artworks Left: Shaun Stamp Right: Tony Oursler



I Used to Love You 2019-20 Shaun Stamp

Polyptych photography, variable triptych frames

Measurements 37.3 x 117.3 x 3.5 cm per roll on French Giclee Photographic paper. Framed 38.5 x 118.5 cm (Unique variable triptych frame) Technique Object, Photography and Frame

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