

“FORBIDDEN FRUIT: SCULPTOR CHRIS ANTEMANN AT MEISSEN” EXHIBITION AT THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM IN ST PETERSBURG



Meissen/St Petersburg, 20 May 2019 The exhibition “Forbidden Fruit: Sculptor Chris Antemann at MEISSEN” will be on display at The State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg from 5 June to 1 September 2019. With this installation, American artist Chris Antemann is expanding the museum’s extensive porcelain collection while also drawing on the long historical connection between Meissen and Russia.

It was Augustus II the Strong, founder of the Meissen Manufactory, who first sent larger quantities of porcelain to the Court of the Tsar in St Petersburg in 1729. This was followed by Empress Catherine the Great’s “large Russian order” in 1772, as well as countless orders for personal use.

The cultural exchange between Saxony and Russia, which was initiated by Augustus II the Strong, continues to this day and is reflected as well through this exhibition, which will feature individual unique pieces and limited edition works of art. Chris Antemann is the first American female artist to have a solo exhibition at The State Hermitage Museum.

The manufactory has been working together with Chris Antemann since 2011. She is known for her contemporary parodies of 18th century porcelain figurines. For her work, Antemann spent a great deal of time studying historical porcelain figurines and designs from the manufactory in depth. These historical designs and figurines form the basis of her modern stories of love, relationships and societal taboos.

Antemann worked together with master artisans from the Meissen manufactory for more than two years on the idea of a table centerpiece in the style of Meissen master porcelain sculptor Johann Joachim Kaendler – a dream came true for the artist. The result: “Forbidden Fruit”, a grand installation that functions as a contemporary in-

terpretation of and an impressive homage to the table settings of the 18th century. During this period, banquets were a social construct involving festive formal dress, exquisite dishes, lavish decorations and, of course, porcelain. Chris Antemann draws inspiration from historic porcelain figurines and table settings and uses the individual pieces in her collection to tell stories of love, longing and desire. The five-foot-tall *“Temple of Love”* was inspired by Kaendler’s historic model from 1750. Together with the *“Forbidden Fruit Dinner Party”* – a work of art that is integrated into the temple itself – it forms the centerpiece of the opulent exhibition. The artist stripped the original design of the Temple of Love down to its essential form before adding her own embellishments and ornamentations to the construction. With delicate flourishes, Antemann creates a feminine counterpart to the masculine architectural elements by reinventing Kaendler’s masterpiece in her own unique style. Chris Antemann’s sculptures allude to classic Baroque-era Meissen porcelain figurines while at the same time telling new, contemporary stories: scantily clad and gazing seductively, the guests sit around an opulent table that is overflowing with exotic dishes. The central figures were inspired by the “Three Graces”: the goddesses of grace, beauty and creativity in Greek mythology.

The elaborate centerpiece is accompanied by the impressive porcelain *“Lemon Chandelier”*. Embellished with intricate figurines, birds, leaves, flowers and lemons, the piece is evocative of the tradition of palatial porcelain rooms. The small, intimate vignettes depict playful scenes of temptation and seduction.

In parallel with the exhibition at The State Hermitage Museum, Meissen will be hosting an event in St Petersburg which will exhibit pieces by Chris Antemann along with other porcelain works of art from the manufactory’s more than 300 years of history.

At the close of the exhibition, the Dresden Opera Ball will be held on 31 August 2019 in St Petersburg. Especially for this event, Meissen will be presenting the “Welcome Key” featuring the Semperoper opera house in Dresden on one side and the Winter Palace in St Petersburg on the other. The Welcome Key will be presented to important personalities on 31 August 2019 at the Dresden Opera Ball in honour of the German-Russian friendship.

DATE

EXCLUSIVE OPENING AT 4 JUNE 2019

EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 5 JUNE TO 1 SEPTEMBER 2019

LOCATION

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