

Marlene Dumas

Name No Names

October 11 – December 31, 2001. Galerie d'Art Graphique, Level 1

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The Musée national d'art moderne at the Centre Pompidou is the first French institution to devote a solo show to Marlene Dumas, a key figure in Europe's contemporary art scene of the past twenty years. Held in the Galerie d'art graphique from October 11 to December 31, 2001, this exhibition of Dumas' work on paper will cover her entire career, from the 1970s until today.

Most drawings have never been publicly displayed, and come from the collections of the Centre Pompidou, the Centraalmuseum in Utrecht, the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Strasbourg, and numerous private collections as well as the artist's own archives.

Marlene Dumas was born in 1953 in Cape Town, South Africa. After studying at the Michealis School of Fine Arts in Cape Town, Dumas left South Africa for the Netherlands in 1976. She continued her art education at Ateliers 63 in Haarlem, then studied psychology at the University of Amsterdam.

She had her first solo show in 1979, in Paris. In 1982, she was invited to exhibit her work at Documenta VIII in Kassel. Since that time, she has steadily confirmed the originality of an oeuvre that is simultaneously intuitive and analytical. Natural expressionism is combined with a controlled distantiation, as manifested in the precise, incisive titles she gives to her works.

The exploration of the human body in Dumas' paintings – and more particularly in her drawings – enables her to deal with life's crucial issues: birth, love, sexuality, religion, death. These concerns are then joined by issues more directly linked to her personal history – the art world, racism, Africa.

Currently famous on the American and northern European art scenes, Dumas remains little known in France despite her participation in the "Concept to Image" show at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1994, followed by the Pompidou Center's 1996 exhibition "*FemininMasculin, le sexe de l'art*". The exhibition of her drawings now organised by the Centre's Cabinet d'art graphique will therefore be not only her first solo show in a major French institution, but also the very first retrospective of works on paper by Dumas. It stems from the Cabinet's long-term policy of acquiring works by the Dumas, having bought five works in the years 1987 to 1996.

The show will bring together some one hundred drawings, organised chronologically and thematically. The works executed in the late 1970s – often employing collage techniques – already prefigured the theme of the human body, yet are followed by several pieces in the 1980s that directly involved a critique of the art world.

Africa then became a recurrent theme through which Dumas could express both nostalgia for her homeland and a fierce denunciation of apartheid.

The late 1980s were marked by the birth of her daughter Helena in 1989, triggering an abundance of drawings of pregnant women, foetuses, and babies. Religion also figured prominently – a 1994 series of twenty-one portraits of *Jesus Serene*, for instance – leading to reflections on notions of guilt and redemption.

The 1990s were marked simultaneously by several series of heads (for example, the six drawings of *Mixed Blood*, 1996) and by large figures of standing women (majestic drawings that illustrate both the beauty and the decay of the human body). Images of naked men, often highly sexual, have recently appeared in Dumas' work. These drawings, exhibited for the first time, occupy a prominent place in the show. Finally, pursuing the explicitly committed approach of the 1980s, Dumas has very recently produced a series of drawings based on Delacroix's *Women of Algiers*, as viewed in the light of the current political situation there.

Marlene Dumas works from reproductions, from photographs taken by herself, from images noted while leafing through a magazine, from postcards she has bought or received. "Second-hand images," she says, can generate "first hand emotions."

The exhibition Marlene Dumas, *Name No Names*, will also be presented by the New Museum for Contemporary Art in New York from February 21 to June 2, 2002, and by the De Pont Foundation for Contemporary Art in Tilburg, Netherlands from June 22 to September 29, 2002.

Exhibition curator:
Jonas Storsve, Curator, Cabinet d'Art Graphique

This exhibition has received support from the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam.

From October 2 to November 4, 2001, the Institut Néerlandais in Paris is presenting *Strippinggirls*, a show of work by Anton Corbijn and Marlene Dumas.

Publications

The exhibition is accompanied by a bilingual French-English catalogue, published as part of the Pompidou Center's "Carnets de Dessins" series. The 120-page catalogue will include texts by Marlene Dumas and Jonas Storsve, as well as many illustrations in black and white and colour.

Price: FF 160 € 14.39