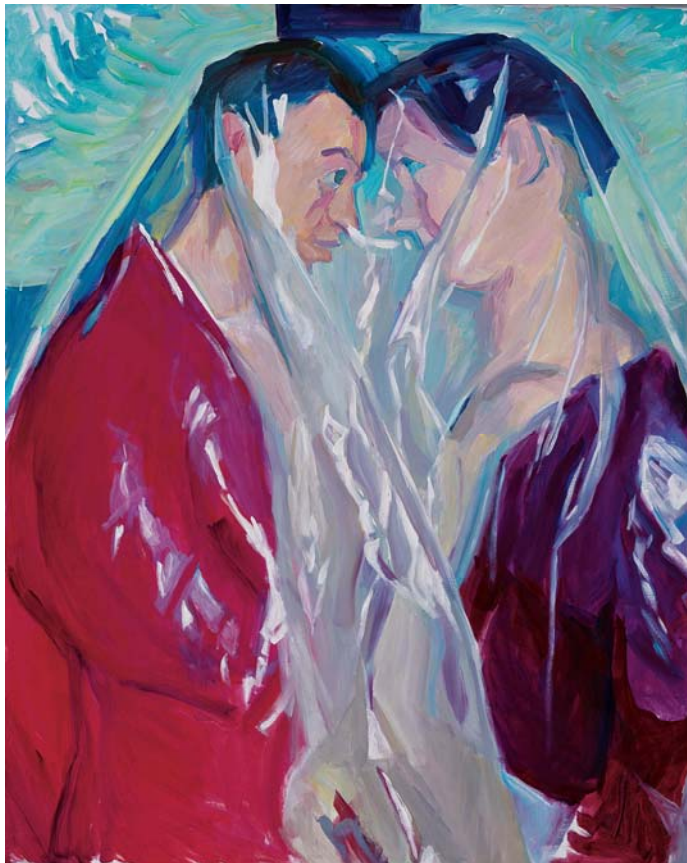


Serpentine Gallery

Teachers' Resources

Maria Lassnig

25 April – 8 June 2008



Maria Lassnig
Couple 2005
Oil on canvas
125 x 100 cm
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig

Supported by

Council of the Serpentine Gallery
Hauser & Wirth Zürich London

Exhibition Patrons

Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York
Christine and Andy Hall
And those who wish to remain anonymous

Additional assistance

austrian⁺ cultural forum^{lon}
Austrian Embassy

These notes are designed to support your visit to the Serpentine Gallery, including planning prior to your visit and suggestions for discussion and activities back at school when you return. They are aimed primarily at Key Stage 3 but include activities that can relate to all key stages, enabling you to develop them to suit your needs and inspire discussion and practical work.

The Teachers' Notes have been designed in collaboration with Art, Design and Museology at the Institute of Education, University of London. Focusing on **Learning Beyond the Classroom in Art and Design**, PGCE students Anna Jones, Rosie Lock, Dwywen Davies and Joel Papps have undertaken a placement at the Serpentine Gallery to develop resources for the *Maria Lassnig* exhibition.

Please note that some images in this exhibition contain nudity and material of a sensitive nature.

The Maria Lassnig Teachers' Notes are also available as a **Power Point Resource** at www.serpentinegallery.org

Please visit www.serpentinegallery.org to download free Teacher's Notes for previous exhibitions:

Derek Jarman

Anthony McCall

Matthew Barney: *DRAWING RESTRAINT*

Hreinn Fridfinnsson

Paul Chan: *The 7 Lights*

Allora & Calzadilla

Karen Kilimnik

In the darkest hour there may be light, works from Damien Hirst's murderme collection

Runa Islam: Conditional Probability

China Power Station: Part 1

Uncertain States of America

Thomas Demand

Ellsworth Kelly

Elmgreen & Dragset

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov

Oliver Payne & Nick Relph

Rirkrit Tiravanija

Andreas Slominski

Tomoko Takahashi

Monika Sosnowska

Glenn Brown

Gabriel Orozco

Cy Twombly

State of Play

Hiroshi Sugimoto

John Currin

Cindy Sherman

Takahashi Murakami

Kutlug Ataman

Contents

- **Background information:**
Maria Lassnig – Artist and exhibition
- **Themes, ideas and questions to explore:**
These include useful quotes, cross-curricular links, classroom discussions, activities and related artists.
 1. **BODY, MOVEMENT & EXPRESSION**
 2. **COLOUR & PAINTING**
 3. **SYMBOLISM**
 4. **ANIMATION AND ICT**
- **Further reading and related links**
- **Planning a visit to the Serpentine Gallery**

Background information

'I step in front of a canvas naked, as it were. I have no set purpose, plan, model or photography I let things happen. But I do have a starting point, which has come from my realization that the only true reality is my feelings, played out within the confines of my body.'

Maria Lassnig is an avant-garde pioneer, whose work, produced over 60 years, appears remarkably fresh and vibrant, consistently engaging with successive generations of artists. While her work resists art-historical categorisation, the significance of her innovative practice, which opened up a new territory for painting, has been increasingly acknowledged.

Lassnig was born in Carinthia, Austria in 1919 and trained in Vienna. She spent time in Paris in the 1950's where she was exposed to **Art Informel** and **Surrealism**. She then lived in New York from 1968 to 1980, where she made films with inventive and humorous narratives. On her return to Austria in 1980, she became the first female professor of Painting in a German-speaking country at Vienna Academy of Applied Arts.

The Serpentine exhibition, the first solo presentation of her work in a public gallery in the UK, includes a selection of recent large-format oil paintings, and several of her films.



Maria Lassnig
3 ways of being (3 Arten zu Sein) 2004
Oil on canvas
126 x 205 cm
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig

Themes, ideas and questions to explore

1. The body, movement and expression



Maria Lassnig
The Dream Couple (Das Traumpaar) 2004
Oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig

'The struggle here is between two worlds: the surface (of the skin, of the painting, of paint) and the inner world (of the painter, of the person looking at the painting).'

Too Few Words, Jennifer Higgie, exhibition catalogue 2008

Lassnig coined the phrase 'body-awareness paintings' to describe a visual language that she invented and uses in her work to depict invisible aspects of inner sensations. She has repeatedly used her own body as a source to explore human sensory experience and paints her inner self on to canvas.

Keywords

Expression – the figure – portraiture – shape – self – emotion – mortality – sensation – symbolism – anthropomorphic – relationships – identity – communication – movement – gesture – form – body language – gender

Cross-curricular links

Biology – Citizenship – R.E – Psychology – Philosophy – Drama

Discussions

- What does it mean to be alive?
- How do different artists use the body in painting, sculpture, photography and performance to express their ideas?
- How do different artists communicate movement or stillness in their work?
- What identities and relationships are portrayed in Maria Lassnig's paintings?

Practical Activities

- Using only your body (no spoken words or sounds), describe a feeling or emotion.
- Working in pairs, form a pose to describe an emotion, and study carefully the pose of your partner for two minutes. Turn around and paint your partner from memory. Can you guess other students' chosen emotions from their paintings?
- Create a painting or drawing from memory of someone you know well but haven't seen for a long time.

Artists and links:

- Amramovich & Ulay
- Francis Bacon
- Georg Baselitz
- Vanessa Beecroft
- Caravaggio
- John Copland
- Leonardo da Vinci
- Willem de Kooning
- Lucien Freud
- Yves Klein
- Paula Rego
- Jenny Saville
- Egon Schiele
- Cindy Sherman
- Sam Taylor-Wood

2. Colour and painting



Maria Lassnig
Spell 2006
Oil on canvas
125 x 100 cm
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig

Lassnig uses bold forms, strong contrasting colours and powerful brushstrokes to create self-portraits and semi-figurative abstractions.

Keywords

Colour – language – tone – hue – expression – composition – portrait – mark making – gesture – view point – abstraction – surrealism – imaginary – memory – scale

Cross-curricular links

Citizenship – R.E – Science

Discussion

- How can paint and colour be used to express an idea or emotion?
- How has Maria Lassnig used colour to communicate and how do the paintings make you feel?
- How do the paintings in the Gallery relate to their surroundings?
- How does a title influence your interpretation of a painting?
- How does the scale of the paintings make you feel?

Activities

- Working in small groups, use postcards (or print-outs) of examples of colourful paintings, and carefully arrange them according to their various colours. Discuss the findings as a group.
- Using different coloured plasticine make a three-dimensional interpretation of one of Lassnig's paintings.
- Using coloured tissue paper and a mirror create a self-portrait, either two or three-dimensional.

Artists and links:

- David Batchelor
- Angela Bullock
- Sonia Delaunay
- El Greco
- Dan Flavin
- Katrina Fritsch
- Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster
- Gary Hume
- Damien Hirst
- Anish Kapoor
- Yves Klein
- Jim Lambie
- Frank Stella
- Jessica Stockholder

3. Symbolism



Maria Lassnig
Lady in Plastic 2005
Oil on canvas
100 x 125 cm
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig

'There are too few words, and that is why I draw'

Maria Lassnig

Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien / Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes and
Fonds Régional d' Art Contemporain des Pays de la Loire, exhibition catalogue., 1999, p65

Keywords

Symbolism – metaphor – analogy – simile – semiotics – narrative – meaning – dada – ready made – found objects – surrealism – signs – codes – language

Cross-curricular links

Citizenship – R.E – English – History – MFL

Discussions

- How has Maria Lassnig used objects to communicate meaning in her painting?
- How do we use signs and symbols in everyday life?

- How have artists Frida Kahlo and Louise Bourgeois used symbolism in their work? Have a look at their work and discuss the differences and similarities between their work and Maria Lassnig's paintings

Activities

- In a group each of you has a piece of paper. On the first sheet write a sentence, pass the piece of paper to the person on your left, they then draw what you have written underneath the sentence, fold the paper so that you can no longer see the sentence, and pass the drawing on to the left, then write a sentence from the image.
- Tell a story without words, use props or objects instead.
- Chose an object and 3 member of the class to come up with as many different ways in which the object could be used, limit yourself to 2 minutes per object.

Artists and links:

- Louise Bourgeois
- Michael Craig-Martin
- Salvador Dali
- Marcel Duchamp
- Tracey Emin
- Eva Hesse
- Damien Hirst
- Frida Kahlo
- Lara Schnitger
- Jan van Eyk
- Harmen van Steenwyk
- Richard Wentworth

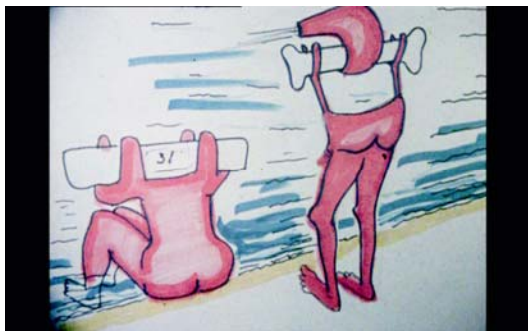
4. Animation and ICT



Kantate 1992
35 mm film transferred to DVD
8 minute loop, colour
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig



Maria Lassnig
Shapes 1972
16 mm film transferred to DVD
10 minute loop, colour
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig



Maria Lassnig
Couples 1972
16 mm film transferred to DVD
10 minute loop, colour
Courtesy the artist
© 2008 Maria Lassnig

Whilst living in New York between 1968 and 1980 Lassnig made films with inventive and humorous narratives. She experimented with using techniques such as **stop frame animation**.

Keywords

Animation – autobiography – stencils – colour – layers – movement – figure – metamorphosis – malleable – silhouette – stop frame – narrative – storyboard – music – sound – mood – film

Cross-curricular links

ICT – English – Drama – Music

Discussions

- How does music communicate meaning and mood in Lassnig's films?
- What do the films remind you of and how do they make you feel?
- What qualities do her films share with her paintings in the Gallery?
- Discuss different ways in which ICT can be or is used to create works of art.
- What other artists use film and animation to create artwork?

Activities

- In Lassnig's animations she used a variety of techniques such as stencils, cut outs, drawing, and three-dimensional objects. Create your own stop frame animation, think of different ways or techniques you could use to tell a story.
- Use Photoshop and digital media to create a single image that shows movement.
- Explore ways of creating a story using everyday sounds and music.

Artists and links:

- Terry Gilliam (Monty Python)
- Michel Gondry
- William Kentridge
- Len Lye
- Edward Muybridge
- Tony Oursler
- Nick Park
- Roobarb and Custard
- 2001: A Space Odyssey (Film)
- Gillian Wearing

Further information and related links

Seminar and Education Private View

Creative responses to curriculum change

Tuesday 13 May

5 – 6.30 pm

A seminar to discuss the launch of the new secondary curriculum, and share new developments to learning in schools and galleries

In collaboration with Art, Design and Museology, Institute of Education, University of London

6.30 – 8 pm

A special evening viewing of the *Maria Lassnig* exhibition with Serpentine staff on hand to discuss workshops, projects, resources and opportunities for involvement in the Education Programme



Photograph, James Mulkeen 2008

The *Maria Lassnig* exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, co-published with Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne. This publication features essays by Robert Storr, Jennifer Higgin and a short text by Paul McCarthy.

ISBN 978-1-905190-21-8

Two or three or something, Maria Lassnig, Liz Larner

Peter Pakesch, Adam Budak, Luce Irigaray, Penny Florence, Russell Ferguson, John Rajchman

Published by Walther Koenig Books

ISBN 3865600557

Frieze Magazine, issue 103 first published in November 2006: Jörg Heiser interviews Maria Lassnig. http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/inside_out

Web links:

Maria Lassnig film information:

<http://www.sixpackfilm.com/catalogue.php?pid=119&lang=en>

Len Lye examples found at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3y1offmJ4Y>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_9kk59t-tU&feature=related

William Kentridge:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqyc37aOqT0>

Roobarb and custard:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_rK4F1BaIQ&feature=related

Michel Gondry:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hghFCkIKmPY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWHyNnsjsJQ&feature=related>

Planning a Visit to the Serpentine Gallery

Contact Details

Eleanor Farrington, Education Organiser

Serpentine Gallery

Kensington Gardens

London W2 3XA

Tel 020 7298 1516

Email eleonorf@serpentinegallery.org

Tel 020 7402 6075

Fax 0207402 4103

www.serpentinegallery.org

Transport

The nearest tube stations are South Kensington (1.25 km walk),

Knightsbridge (1.25 km walk) or Lancaster Gate (1 km walk)

Bus routes 9, 10, 52, 452, 94 and 148 stop near the Gallery

Group Visit Guidelines

To make your visit as enjoyable as possible, please read the following:

Before your Visit:

- Adult supervision of students under 16 is required at all times, including in the shop. An adult student ratio of 1:5 for under 5's, 1:10 for 5 - 11 year olds, 1:15 for 11 - 16 year olds and 1:20 for 16 - 18 year olds is required.
- We recommend a preliminary planning visit, as for some exhibitions there may be works that you consider unsuitable for your group.

During your Visit:

- Teachers/group leaders and accompanying adults are responsible for their group's behaviour whilst at the Serpentine Gallery.
- Please make sure your group is aware of the following Gallery guidelines:
 - No running
 - No touching
 - No leaning against walls or plinths
 - No shouting
 - No photography
- Many contemporary artworks are fragile and damage easily. Please make sure that your group understands that this is why they are not allowed to touch the art.

- Lecturing: If your group is larger than 30 please split them into smaller groups in the exhibition space and do not lecture in rooms where talks are already in progress.
- Drawing: If you would like to do some drawing please check with the gallery what materials you will be able to use in the exhibition

Education and Family Events

Education is at the core of the Serpentine Gallery's activities. Through practical, artist led workshops and discussion, talks, events and projects the Education Programme offers a diverse range of innovative ways to engage with modern and contemporary art and architecture for all ages.

Please refer to the Serpentine Gallery Bulletin or www.serpentinegallery.org for information on events and activities taking place as part of the Education Programme during the Maria Lassnig exhibition