

April 12–July 13, 2014

Mapping Spaces. Networks of Knowledge in 17th Century Landscape Painting

Opening: Fri., April 11, 2014, 7 p.m.

The ZKM exhibition **Mapping Spaces** casts new light on the genre of landscape painting. As a genre, landscape painting is indebted not to the painters who depicted nature in the most authentically realistic manner possible, and who thus established the genre, but far rather to the advances made in craftsmanship, engineering, ballistics and fortification – so runs the thesis of the exhibition curators. With approximately 200 works of art all dating from the 17th century – among other things, from the Prado, Louvre and Rijksmuseum – the ZKM | Karlsruhe presents both the most recent research findings on the subject and, consequently, a previously unknown aspect of painting.

“It was not the ‘bataille’, but the advances inscribed in landscape by craftsmanship, engineering, ballistics, and fortifications that comprised the real vanguard – a message reflected in Snayers’ minutely detailed precision, and the connection between map and image. By also introducing different lines of horizon in one and the same painting, the artist succeeded in simultaneously depicting differing space-time events. Thus, here spatial depth emerges not by means of extensions to a given pictorial space, but through a multiple succession of finite landscape prospects. Since, however, this invention is based on the templates of surveyor and etcher Jacques Callot, the visual dissolution of boundaries as found in Dutch history painting is not exclusively indebted to developments within art itself, but to the collaboration of cartography, geodesy and art.” (Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gehring)

Mapping Spaces is the first exhibition to have examined, on such a scale, the influence of early-modern guidebooks in geography, geodesy and the construction of fortifications on Dutch painting around 1650. The prelude to the project, developed at the University of Trier, comprises Pieter Snayer’s large-scale panoramic depictions of battles scenes in which maps and landscape paintings are superimposed in projected layers for the purposes of documenting the most recent achievements of modern engineering, ballistics and the construction of fortification. Thus, the exhibition is unique in citing guidebooks in the subject of geodesy by way of explaining the emergence of this specific kind of landscape painting. As the exhibition shows, like modern satellite surveying (GPS) true-to-scale landscape pictures were indebted to a complex networking of knowledge: the alliance of geodesists, mathematicians, instrument-makers and painters. Therefore, artists had designed modern remote exploration systems long before the new media began drawing on digital images from space.

Press Information

March 2014

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Location

ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art

Press Conference

Thurs, April 10, 2014, 11 a.m.

Opening

Fri, April 11, 2014, 7 p.m.

Duration

April 12–July 13, 2014

Press Contact

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It is in view of this background that, as an institute of culture, the ZKM has pursued new paths and thus presents for the first time in the exhibition Mapping Spaces **around 200 works dating from the 17th century** across a 2000 m² exhibition area. Paintings, measuring instruments, plotters, books, maps and globes drawn from the most important collections of the world, such as the Prado (Madrid), the Louvre (Paris), the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam) or the Kunsthistorischen Museum (Vienna) testify to this new thesis in visual culture. The new mapping of an early modern field of knowledge is accompanied by contemporary works of art that treat the influence of technological developments on our present-day perception.

“Hence, the relationship between science, technology and art – the signature of the ZKM – has been in existence for centuries. The 17th century art of painting is similarly indebted to contemporary media technology.” (Prof. Peter Weibel)

Curators: Ulrike Gehring, Peter Weibel and Andreas Beitin

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