

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

Gold and Magic

ARKEN Museum of Modern Art presents the special exhibition *Gold and Magic* in which golden treasures from The National Museum of Denmark enter into dialogue with works by some of the greatest contemporary artists. The exhibition takes visitors on a journey through many millennia to explore the power of gold and magic.

Gold has fascinated humankind since ancient times. We express ourselves through gold, and the way of using gold mirrors who we are: from the sacrificial offerings of antiquity and the golden altars of the Middle Ages to contemporary art, which uses gold as a vehicle for pointing out the connection between value and identity. In this spring's major special exhibition, a range of historical artefacts and precious national treasures from the National Museum of Denmark is exhibited at ARKEN, creating an exciting encounter between cultural history and art. A meeting that offers new perspectives on our thousand-year history with gold.

Golden traces in contemporary art

All over the world, artists are currently turning to gold as a means of expression. They use it to tell stories about humanity and our society – and to question issues such as nationalism and conspicuous consumption. In *Gold and Magic*, international artists like Damien Hirst, Sylvie Fleury, Lorna Simpson, Thomas J. Price, Bill Viola and Ugo Rondinone show how wealth, identity and the exercise of power are closely interwoven, using gold to highlight our eternal pursuit of happiness and beauty. Some artists are particularly preoccupied with the magic and religious aspects of gold, while others use the precious material to address the global colonial history so inextricably linked with gold. By entering into a dialogue with contemporary art at ARKEN, these historical objects take on new significance and a new identity.

Across continents

Gold and Magic takes visitors on a tour around the world. There are golden objects from Colombia, Thailand and Japan, from Danish kings and ordinary Danes. The National Museum of Denmark's collection demonstrates how gold has travelled with people across continents ever since antiquity – as well as how riches often accumulate in very few hands and in national treasuries. *Gold and Magic* is the result of an innovative collaboration with the National Museum of Denmark and will be on view at ARKEN until 8 August 2021.

The special exhibition presents works by El Anatsui, James Lee Byars, Chris Burden, Eva Steen Christensen, Zhang Ding, Sylvie Fleury, Subodh Gupta, Louis Henderson, Damien Hirst, Alicja Kwade, Runo Lagomarsino, Mercedes Lara, Klara Lilja, Grayson Perry, Thomas J. Price, Ugo Rondinone, Lorna Simpson, Alexander Tovborg, Bill Viola and Ai Weiwei.

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