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Mudam Luxembourg  
Musée d'Art Moderne  
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# HARD TO PICTURE: A TRIBUTE TO AD REINHARDT

17.06.2017 – 21.01.2018

PRESS KIT

Press release

## HARD TO PICTURE: A TRIBUTE TO AD REINHARDT

Exhibition from June 17, 2017 to January 21, 2018

**Works on paper by** Ad Reinhardt

**With** Luis Camnitzer, Sara Cwynar, Judith Hopf, Kerry James Marshall, Álvaro Oyarzún, Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Olav Westphalen

**Curators** Diana Baldon, Marie-Noëlle Farcy

The exhibition *Hard to Picture: A Tribute to Ad Reinhardt* focuses on Ad Reinhardt's (1913-1967) largely unexamined work as a published illustrator, which ran parallel to his 30-year career as an abstract painter from the 1930s to the 60s. Featuring over 250 political cartoons and satirical art comics loaned from the archives of the Estate of Ad Reinhardt, New York, it is the largest presentation of this body of work ever exhibited. It is accompanied by *Abstract painting* (1956), one of the artist's minimal "black" canvases, a colour slide show, and a copious number of documents: a travel journal, pamphlets and sketches. It is their third presentation in Europe since the exhibition *Art vs. History* at Malmö Konsthall, Sweden, in 2015 and at EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Finland, in 2016.

*Hard to Picture: A Tribute to Ad Reinhardt* brings these works into dialogue with artworks by a number of contemporary international artists. The exhibition does not seek to represent Reinhardt's direct influence but addresses, instead, those intricate correspondences within practices and interests – biographical, methodological and conceptual – that preserve the influential ideas established by the American artist almost eight decades ago.

Reinhardt first developed an interest in cartooning as a child, refining his talent for drawing throughout elementary school before earning money for his illustrations in high school. This work-for-hire eventually allowed him to support his studies and career as an abstract painter, thus keeping his painting free of commercial considerations. Throughout the 1930s and 40s, his witty cartoons appeared in wide-ranging American publications, notably the daily newspaper *PM*, the Marxist periodical *New Masses* and magazines as diverse as *Glamour*, *Listen*, and *Ice Cream Field*. These activities were accompanied by his fierce commitment to politics, such as pro-labour rights and anti-war campaigns, that remained vital to his identity as an artist and a citizen. As illustrations for newspaper articles, they dealt with a range of topics from US domestic policies to World War II. In their use of collage techniques, they drew upon a variety of styles and techniques of early 20th century artistic movements, such as Dada, Cubism and Constructivism, and combined hand-drawn elements with cut-outs from 19th century engravings and other printed matter extrapolated from old books, a striking feature never seen in daily newspapers before.

Reinhardt's interest in caricature and visual incongruence resonates with **Olav Westphalen's** art world and political cartoons that he has produced since the 2000s for publications as diverse as the online resource *artnet*, the Swedish art magazines *Nu* and *Paletten*, the German newspapers *Die Zeit* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, among others. Inspired by a traditional crossover between fine art and illustration in Germany, his drawings introduce cartoon entertainment into the art world. Westphalen makes biting jokes directed against order, familiarity and normalcy within the field of contemporary art – a field known to be increasingly self-regulated. They are uncomfortable and outrageous, drawing attention to and directed at the taboos and moral blind spots of the art world, not dissimilar to the deadpan humour Reinhardt used in his art comics. The series of

works on paper *A junkie in the forest: doing things the hard way* (2012) – shown in the exhibition – moves into the more dysfunctional realm of comedy: it presents jokes without punch lines that become linguistic or rhetoric tools that turn sort of tragic. They were realised using a “gag-master”, a device invented in the 1930s for lowbrow entertainment that enabled cartoonists to create jokes quickly by spinning three concentric wheels. Parodying how creativity and satire rely on something akin to algorithms of data analysis to shape fast decision-making, their painterly gestures in red and blue recall informal abstract art, translating high art into low art craft.

Along a similar vein, the works of **Judith Hopf** adopt the concept of “bricolage”. Her series of caricatural sculptures, *Erschöpfte Vase* (2009-2017), are overturned and emptied of their functionality, fatigued and vacant heads facing the viewer that could be seen as “disinterested spectators”. Her *Untitled (Man)* (2010) series pokes fun in an analogous way: the formal and aesthetic representation of our use of laptops is absurdly restructured. Nonsense is close to outrageousness, and this is what effectively shifts and disrupts the accepted norms and structures of art, leaving the meaning of her works in crisis.

Reinhardt’s critical satire undermined prejudice, instead promoting tolerance, progressiveness and equality in his cartoons. An example is the pamphlet *The Races of Mankind* (1943), initially meant to be distributed to U.S. troops to combat ethnic stereotypes in fascist Europe during World War II, whose provocative depiction of Adam and Eve caused scandal within the government at that time.

Race is at the centre of **Kerry James Marshall**’s works: black pride, beauty, economic disadvantage, societal invisibility, parody. African and African-American traditions are confronted with the pictorial canons of Western art history and contemporary mass media. His prints, *Dailies from Rythm Mastr* (2010), are part of a serial comic-strip produced over two decades. They interweave scenes of teenagers in an African-American inner-city neighbourhood, where lawlessness has reached extreme levels. When superhuman intervention is called for, the protagonist, Rythm Mastr, shows up to teach the young heroes how to unlock their secret powers, which resemble those of the religious deities of the Yoruba African culture. The programmatic title of Marshall’s painting *Untitled, black*, (2012), instead, examines the way we look at abstract colour and large-scale formats as aesthetic reference to the systems of mid-century abstraction championed by, for instance, Barnett Newman and Reinhardt himself. Marshall’s “monochrome” sheds a different light on the imagery of black, juxtaposing the reduced brushwork and large chromatic expanses of Color Field painting with icons and symbols associated with, among others, the history of the Black Power movement in America. Marshall’s painting is confronted with one of Reinhardt’s minimal black canvases, *Abstract painting* (1956). In these works, Reinhardt mixed small amounts of colour (red, green, and blue) into black pigment. The chromatic subtlety of these paintings remains such that their effects are nearly impossible to reproduce in print. Rather, these artworks demand close attention from the viewer in person, allowing the colours, tones and forms to gradually emerge over time.

**Lili Reynaud-Dewar**’s installation, *Teeth, Gums, Machines, Future, Society* (2016), is a multi-media installation that explores the political, racial and gender stereotypes that make up one’s identity. Elements that on the surface seem rather disconnected are brought together: the city of Memphis (famous for its music scene and site of Martin Luther King’s assassination, who supported here a protest by African American waste collection workers in 1968), the iconic rappers’ “grillz” (a type of decorative jewellery worn over the teeth), and the renowned essay, *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985: Socialist Review) by the socialist-feminist scholar Donna Haraway. The core of the work is a film in which four stand-up comedians discuss these topics, embodying the most pared back type of performance using only their voice. Ideas transit through their bodies and, like their personal debris or the “grillz” used in hip hop culture, become public expressions of their identity, desires and consumption. This film is surrounded by posters and quotes from Haraway’s post-humanist thesis whereby only cyborgs can reject all rigid boundaries of a stable identity.

Reinhardt's celebrated slide projections, resulting from colour photographs taken during a series of travels abroad, offered a universal reading of picture-making and art history. Sharing an affinity with George Kubler's book, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962: Yale University Press), the artist juxtaposed artefacts, artworks, and stylistic and architectural motifs in carefully montaged, yet ever-changing sequences, underscoring their timelessness and overlooked affinities. Reinhardt's ground-breaking approach anticipates today's ungraspable flux of images found on the Internet, thanks to algorithms and search engines whose contents are compiled on the basis of the similarities and "tastes" of web users.

To reinforce this perspective, both of **Sara Cwynar**'s photographs in the exhibition result from groups of images that she obsessively collects, archives and reproduces. Digitally manipulated to foreground her interest in photography's power to deceive, their still-life quality is inspired by the aesthetics of antiquated studio photography and the unnatural cleanliness of commercial imagery. Cwynar's video *Soft Film* (2016) looks into the production and circulation of design and insignificant objects, purchased on the Internet, to explore how, once discarded, they circulate and over time get stuck within economic circuits. The work also focuses with humour on a post-feminist perspective that makes both the sexism and counter-sexism of earlier decades appear dated, even kitsch, just like her digitally-obtained wallpaper, *72 Pictures of Modern Paintings* (2016), where all masterpieces are transfigured.

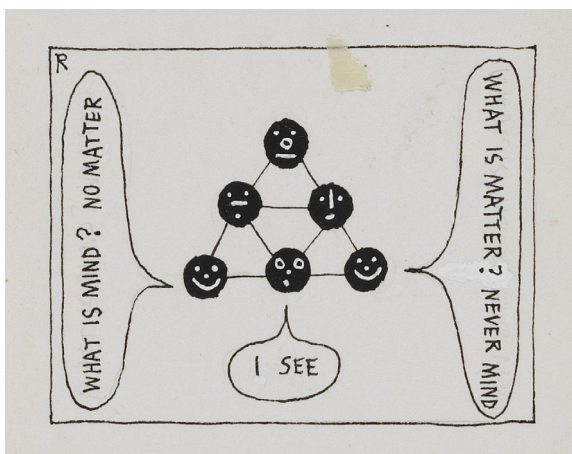
Reinhardt, in both his artistic work and in his teaching of art history at the university level, never lost sight of the role of education. His celebrated art comics series, *How to Look* (1946-61), focuses exclusively on slow, careful looking. It presents a didactic approach in which Reinhardt satirises the role of "explainer-entertainer", directed not only at the reader but also at fellow artists. Subverting the pedagogical charts made famous by Alfred Barr, the first director of New York's Museum of Modern Art, they introduce readers to the "difficult art of seeing." The popular series appeared in the Sunday edition of *PM* newspaper between 1946 and 1947 and served as a platform upon which Reinhardt could adamantly defend the growth and understanding of abstract art in America. After this time, Reinhardt published additional art comics only occasionally in the art periodicals *ARTnews*, *trans/formation* and *Art d'aujourd'hui*, among others.

Like Reinhardt, who taught art history most of his life, **Luis Camnitzer** has worked for decades as an art teacher, cherishing a similar concern in art history as well as art education. His installation, *Art History Lesson no. 9* (2000), follows the path of an art history to be written from scratch, no longer imparted according to the accepted structures, where there is an authoritative relation between teacher and pupil, partly determined by slide shows that define what is good and therefore valuable. In this sense, the piece is a sort of "lesson" that takes the opposite course of art history and does not pretend to give any lecture. Chest, chair, books and stool, ladder, stacked pieces of wood and buckets of paint amassed in the museum's storage, all turn into precarious plinths that, allegorically, highlight the instability and the fugacity of knowledge, always in the process of being built.

In response to an invitation from Mudam Luxembourg, **Álvaro Oyarzún** has realised, on site, a "map" that explores some of the themes that embody the artistic universe of Reinhardt and his posthumous influences. The works of this artist combine intricate drawings and elliptical inscriptions that he brings together in large, organic compositions. Their dynamic lines recall continents, islands and peninsulas, while the scraps of text evoke the complex representation of information found in an encyclopaedia. However, they have no apparent order and appear fractured, contradictory and historically anachronistic. They are mind maps whose itineraries parallel the crisis of art with that of the artist's personal breakdown.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue which will be released in November 2017.

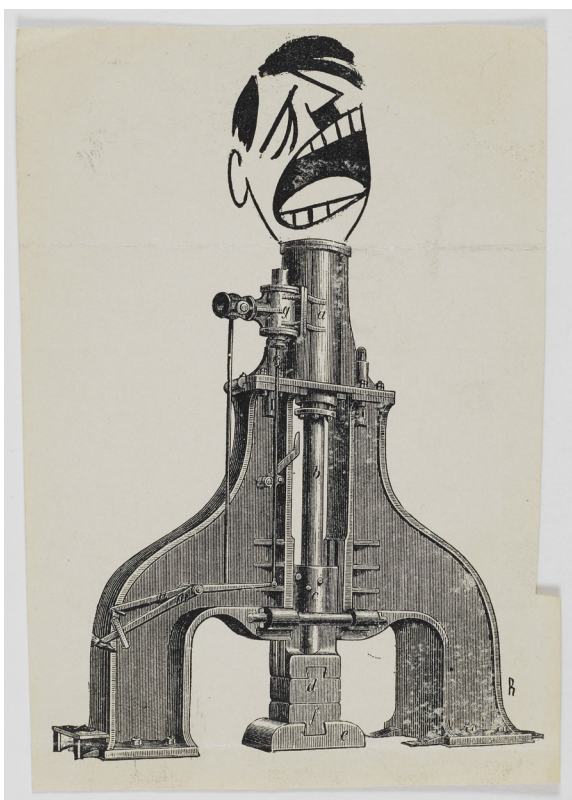




Ad Reinhardt, *Untitled*, 1946  
Published in *PM* on May 17, 1946  
© Estate of Ad Reinhardt; courtesy of David Zwirner, New York/London



Ad Reinhardt, *Untitled*, c. 1946  
© Estate of Ad Reinhardt; courtesy of David Zwirner, New York/London



Ad Reinhardt, *Untitled*, 1942  
Published in *New Masses* on March 3, 1942  
© Estate of Ad Reinhardt; courtesy of David Zwirner, New York/London



Ad Reinhardt, *Untitled*, 1943  
Published in *PM* on April 13, 1943  
© Estate of Ad Reinhardt; courtesy of David Zwirner, New York/London

## LIST OF THE EXHIBITED WORKS

### Ad Reinhardt

Enlarged reproductions of a selection from the  
*How to Look* series and additional art comics, 1946-56  
*How to Look at a Cubist Painting* (PM, 27/1 1946)  
*A Portend of the Artist as a Yhung Mandala* (ARTnews, May 1956)  
*How to Look at an Artist* (PM, 7/4 1946)  
*How to Look at Space* (PM, 28/4 1946)  
*How to Look at Iconography* (PM, 20/10 1946)  
*How to Look at a Spiral* (unpublished 1946)  
*Art of Life of Art* (trans/formation, 1952)  
Wallpaper  
7 black and white prints, 2017  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

*Travel journal*, 1952-66 (excerpt)  
Digitised document  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

*Travel slides*, 1952-67  
360 colour photographs, digitised  
18 min  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

*Abstract painting*, 1956  
Oil on canvas  
203 x 127 cm  
Private collection  
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, Zurich

*How to Look*, 1946-47  
22 tear sheets from the newspaper *PM*  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

*How to Look* series and additional art comics, 1946-56  
Preliminary sketch for *How to Look at Modern Art in America* (1946)  
Preliminary sketch for *Museum Landscape* (1950)  
Preliminary sketch for *Imaginary Museum* (1951)  
Preliminary sketch for *A Portend of the Artist as a Yhung Mandala* (1956)  
Ink, pencil, coloured pencil, gouache and collage on vellum  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

*How to Look* series and additional art comics, 1946-52  
6 original art comics  
Ink, pencil, gouache and collage on paper  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

Newspapers and Magazines, 1946-65  
*Critique*, October 1946. Art periodical  
Illustration for Selden Rodman's book, *The Insiders*, 1960  
*Art d'aujourd'hui*, June 1952. Art periodical  
*trans/formation*, 1951. Art periodical  
*"Documents of Modern Art"*, PAX, # 13, 1960  
*Poor.Old.Tired.Horse.*, # 18, 1965. Poetry magazine  
Sections of *How to Look at a Good Idea*, PM, 4/8 1946 and  
*How to Look at It*, PM, 17/11 1946  
ARTnews, Summer 1961. Art periodical  
*trans/formation*, 1950. Art periodical  
*trans/formation*, 1951. Art periodical  
ARTnews, April 1954. Art periodical  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

Original Cartoons, 1933-47  
276 individual works  
Ink, gouache, coloured pencil and collage on paper, etc.  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

Newspapers, Magazines and Pamphlets, 1934-48  
PM, 22/5 1946. Daily newspaper  
PM, March 1946  
*America's Share in Japan's War Guilt*, 1938. Pamphlet  
PM, 3/1 1946. Clipping  
*Students Fight War*, 1935. Pamphlet  
*Jester*, February 1935. Magazine  
*Jester*, November 1934. Cover  
*New Masses*, 9/2 1937. Magazine  
*Every Worker a Voter*, 1943. Pamphlet  
*...is it true what they say about Cohen?*, 1948. Pamphlet  
*The Races of Mankind*, 1943. Pamphlet  
PM, 14/8 1946. Clipping  
PM, 26/10 1943. Clipping  
*The White Collar Workers Organize*, 1938. Pamphlet  
*The Labor Spy Racket*, 1939. Book  
*Soviet Russia Today*, February 1947. Magazine  
Estate of Ad Reinhardt  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

### Luis Camnitzer

*Art History Lesson no. 9*, 2000  
Slide projectors, empty slide mounts,  
variable stands, plastic sheets  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund, 2014

### Sara Cwynar

*72 Pictures of Modern Paintings*, 2016  
Wallpaper  
Courtesy the artist

*Encyclopedia Grid (Abstract Art)*, 2014  
Chromogenic print mounted on Plexiglas  
102 x 81 cm  
Private collection

*432 Photographs of Nefertiti*, 2015  
Collaged UV coated archival pigment prints  
mounted to Plexiglas and Dibond  
137 x 109 x 2 cm  
Collection of Terry Golash, New York

*Soft Film*, 2016  
16 mm film on video, sound. 7 min 6 sec  
Courtesy Foxy Production, New York

### Judith Hopf

*Erschöpfte Vase*, 2017  
Pottery and lacquer  
23,5 x Ø 23,5 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Kaufmann Repetto, Milan/New York

*Erschöpfte Vase*, 2017  
Pottery and lacquer  
27 x Ø 20 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Kaufmann Repetto, Milan/New York

**Judith Hopf**

*Erschöpfte Vase*, 2017  
Pottery and lacquer  
32 x Ø 18 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Kaufmann Repetto, Milan/New York

*Erschöpfte Vase*, 2017  
Pottery and lacquer  
20 x Ø 22,5 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Kaufmann Repetto, Milan/New York

*Erschöpfte Vase*, 2017  
Pottery and lacquer  
33,5 x Ø 19 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Kaufmann Repetto, Milan/New York

*Untitled (Man 1)*, 2010  
Wood, paint  
160 x 35 x 75 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Kaufmann Repetto Gallery, Milan/New York

*Untitled (Man 2)*, 2010  
Wood, paint  
152 x 58 x 98 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Deborah Schamoni, Munich

*Untitled (Man 3)*, 2010  
Wood, paint  
88 x 176 x 48 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Deborah Schamoni, Munich

**Kerry James Marshall**

*Untitled, black*, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
244 x 544 cm  
Rennie Collection, Vancouver

*Dailies from Rythm Mastr*, 2010  
Suite of 8 silkscreen prints on paper  
61 x 80 cm, each frame  
Courtesy the artist and  
Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

**Álvaro Oyarzún**

*Cartographie thématique autour de Ad Reinhardt*, 2017  
Wall drawing  
Marker pen, acrylic paint  
Courtesy the artist  
Commission and production Mudam Luxembourg

**Lili Reynaud-Dewar**

*Teeth, Gums, Machines, Future, Society*, 2016  
HD video installation, colour, sound  
36 min  
Production red shoes  
Courtesy Clearing, New York/Brussels, Kamel Mennour,  
Paris/London, galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna  
With the support of Fondation d'Entreprise Hermès within the  
framework of the New Settings program  
This project was selected and supported by the patronage committee  
of the Fondation Nationale des Arts Graphiques et Plastiques (FNAGP)  
With the participation of CNC DicRéam

**Olav Westphalen**

*A junkie in the forest: doing things the hard way*, 2012  
Series of drawings based on randomly-generated  
joke premises  
Ink and acrylic on paper  
Courtesy the artist

*Cartoons, 1999 till 2017*, 2017  
Selection of cartoons made specifically for  
publication in art magazines, redrawn for the  
purpose of this exhibition  
Ink on paper  
Courtesy the artist  
Production Mudam Luxembourg

## EVENTS

### WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EXHIBITION



© Photo: Mudam Luxembourg

#### MUDAM PUBLICS SUMMER PROJECT: NOUS VOUS / AD REINHARDT

17.06.2017 - 10.09.2017

This summer, Mudam invites *Nous Vous* to take over the Henry J. and Erna D. Leir Pavilion, the museum's dedicated educational space. For Mudam Publics Summer Project, the three London-based artists will be acting as visiting professors at The Ad Reinhardt Summer School and create a curriculum, drawn from Reinhardt's polemical ideas in his *How To Look* taking a poetic, provocative and playful approach to the artist's work.

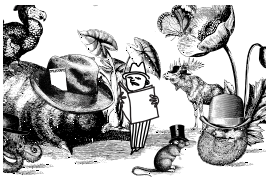
Detailed programme: [www.mudam.lu](http://www.mudam.lu)

## d'Land

#### MUDAM & D'LÉTZEBUERGER LAND

16.06.2017 - 21.01.2018

In collaboration with Mudam, the weekly newspaper *d'Lëtzeburger Land* invites, once a month during the exhibition, an artist to design one of its pages. The project starts on Friday, June 16, with a drawing from the series *How to Look* by Ad Reinhardt, first published in 1946 in *PM* magazine.



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#### AD REINHARDT FAN CLUB

17.06.2017, 1.30pm-6.00pm

For this year's Mudamini opening, the museum offers a festive programme for kids with workshops and activities celebrating Ad Reinhardt's practice.

Free entrance for 6 to 12 year-olds and two adults. By booking and upon presentation of the invitation. Private event for Mudamini only

More details on: [www.mudam.lu/mudamini/vernissage](http://www.mudam.lu/mudamini/vernissage)



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#### REGULAR GUIDED TOURS

LU – Saturday, 11.00am

DE – Saturday and Sunday, 3.00pm

FR – Saturday and Sunday, 4.00pm

EN – Wednesday, 7.00pm and Sunday, 11.00am

Guided tours of the current exhibitions

For individual visitors and small groups (max. 5 people)

Duration: 45 min. Tours free of charge, except for the entrance fee

Information: [visites@mudam.lu](mailto:visites@mudam.lu); t. +352 45 37 85 531

No booking required



© Photo: Mudam Luxembourg

#### VISITES MUDAMINI

15.07.2017 - 15.09.2017

FR – Wednesdays, 3.00-3.45pm

LU – Friday, 3.00-3.45pm

Guided tours for 6 to 12 year-olds. Duration: 45 min. Tours free of charge

Free entrance for children regular entrance fee for adults

Booking requested: t. +352 45 37 85 531; [workshop@mudam.lu](mailto:workshop@mudam.lu)



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## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Address and information

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### Opening hours

Thursday-Monday and public holidays	10.00am-6.00pm
Wednesday	10.00am-11.00pm (exhibition spaces: 10.00pm)
24.12 and 31.12	10.00am-3.00pm
Tuesday and 25.12	Closed

### Entrance fee

Adults	7€
Under 26 years old, groups	5€
Mudami card (valid 1 year for 2 persons)	50€
Under 21 years old	free
Students under 26 years old	free
Wednesday, 6.00-11.00pm	free

### By car

Kirchberg -> Avenue John F. Kennedy -> Philharmonie -> Tunnel -> Mudam  
GPS: X 49.62 - Y 6.14

### Images

Available on request

### Press contact

Julie Jephos, [j.jephos@mudam.lu](mailto:j.jephos@mudam.lu), t. +352 45 37 85 633

## MUDAM THANKS

All the donors and the sponsors, and particularly



Delfin



as well as

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Mudam is financed by the Ministry of Culture.



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DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG  
Ministère de la Culture