Thomas Nölle
My Way
1956–2019

Opening Exhibition

Lux 48

3.12.2025 – 13.3.2026

Curatorial team

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Thomas Nölle was born in Soest (Germany) on 2 December 1948. He lived for several years in Bonn and for a few years in Brazil and Portugal. He died on 3 June 2020 in Barcelona, where he had lived and worked since 1988. From a very early age, he showed an interest in art. At only eight/ten years old, he created *Horse-Motif Mosaic*, work exhibited here. He began taking photographs at age 14; he held his first photography exhibition at age 15, and from then on, artistic creation became the centre of his life.

Curatorial concept

My Way brings together works created over more than six decades, selected by a group of professionals and friends who knew and/or worked with Nölle at different stages of his career. In tribute to the artist, they generously accepted the invitation to choose a work or a set of works from a series that they considered particularly relevant or for which they felt a personal appreciation. This selection is accompanied by a text or statement in which each one expresses their particular vision.

This anthology, without claiming to be exhaustive or chronological, reveals the major thematic areas that guided Nölle's creative work. It also highlights characteristics that profoundly marked his production: conceptualisation linked to unconventional transdisciplinary aesthetic solutions and experimentation with a wide variety of media, materials and techniques—photography, painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, assemblage, electrography, mixed media, installation, video art, performance for the camera, action and intervention in public spaces.

Nexus Between Themes

The exhibition also features, for the first time in Spain, singular works from his early period, which reveal the conceptual genesis of his future work: *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* [The Principle of Hope], a photograph from 1965 that the artist considered one of his first artistic pieces at the age of 15. This work reveals a search for the transcendent dimension of light in photography,

which he systematically revisited from 2008 onwards in the series *Cosmic Delight* (*Lichtstrom*, 2008) and *Way of Light* (*Celeste*, 2008) exhibited here, which led to his experimentation with photographic abstraction.

Toter Hase [Dead Hare], a 1968 photographic collage using hand-painted black-and-white silver gelatin—a technique he began using in 1966—dedicated to themes that run through all his work: nature and ecology, also addressed in the micro-assemblages of the *Fabled Sea* series (1993–1996), in *Farmacia Mediterránea* [Mediterranean Pharmacy] (2000) and in the *Musa* series (2012), included in this exhibition.

Skin of Sensibility (1976) is a notable example of performance for the camera, a format that Nölle explored from the early 1970s onwards, in which he traced an individualistic and impassive portrait of the subject in industrialized society. Reflections on human nature, the fugacity of life and the transience of cultures were evident in his large-format paintings of the 1980s—palimpsests of memories—, in the photographic sequence *Into Nature II* (1979), as well as in the series *By the Way* (2008–2020) and in the video art piece *Just a Moment* (2010/2015). The conditioning that techniques/technologies impose on human life and the functioning of society is outlined in *Symphonie Technique* (1997), a series in which he returned to the practice of palimpsests, but using artificial materials and procedures.

Ironic explorations of the context of art and the relationship between art/life and the market were often the subject of works in different formats, such as the action *Das ist doch keine Art* [That's no way to behave or This is not art] and the intervention in public space *Kunst ist Gesundheit – Remember Yves Klein* [Art is Health – Remember Yves Klein], both from 1984 in Bonn and Düsseldorf respectively, described by Jürgen Pech, with whom he collaborated.

The installation/sculpture *In the Garden of Spain* (1992) addresses another issue to which Nölle devoted special attention from 1970 onwards: the impact of (neo)colonialism on native peoples and their territories. The piece engages in a thematic dialogue with the collage *Brasil* (1980) and works from the series *Um índio em Brasília* [A Native in Brasilia] (1980) and *Tiempos dorados* [Golden Times] (2007–2008).

Catalogue Raisonné

The exhibition is complemented by the presentation of the first three volumes of his Catalogue Raisonné, which will gradually document his entire body of work: *Selbst* | Self-portraits 1964–2020 (Volume 1); *Photography – The Early Works 1963–1973* (Volume 2); *Artworks 1965–1984* (Volume 3).

Lux 48

The space is dedicated to preserving and disseminating Thomas Nölle's oeuvre. Other objectives include developing curatorial projects and cultural activities in collaboration with artists, collectives and organisations. This revives the idea that Nölle put into practice when he supported the creation of the independent space L'Angelot in Barcelona in 1993, reflecting his spirit of solidarity and philanthropy.

Lux 48 also houses his library and a sample of the collections gathered over decades by Nölle, living testimonies to his vast interest in the world's cultures and his broad collector's spirit, which *My Time*, one of his last works, perfectly sums up.