



Media information
Berlin

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Deutsche Bank honors its “Artists of the Year” 2021, Maxwell Alexandre, Conny Maier, and Zhang Xu Zhan, with a joint exhibition at Berlin’s PalaisPopulaire

Deutsche Bank will honor its three “Artists of the Year” for 2021—Maxwell Alexandre, Conny Maier, and Zhang Xu Zhan—and devote a joint exhibition to them at the PalaisPopulaire from September 15, 2021, to February 7, 2022.

Exactly ten years ago, Deutsche Bank launched its “Artist of the Year” series. On the occasion of this anniversary, and on the recommendation of the advisory curators Victoria Noorthoorn, Hou Hanru, and Udo Kittelmann, the bank is now honoring three artists simultaneously for the first time: Maxwell Alexandre (Brazil), Conny Maier (Germany), and Zhang Xu Zhan (Taiwan). “What all three have in common is that they came to contemporary art via unusual paths and bring very specific life experiences, worldviews, and cultural influences with them,” says **Britta Färber**, Chief Curator of Deutsche Bank’s art program and also responsible for the current exhibition of the three artists at the PalaisPopulaire.

Maxwell Alexandre was born in 1990 in Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro's largest favela, where he still lives today. The paintings and installations by the artist, who is of African descent, revolve around community and violence, hip-hop and spirituality. His multi-part series *Forbes Under 30* from the *500 Year Party* cycle explores Brazilian media imagery. Alexandre repeatedly repaints the cover motif of the 2019 Brazilian edition of *Forbes* magazine, which named him one of the 90 most



successful Brazilians under thirty, changing the shades of the protagonists' skin colors. It is a serial meditation on systemic racism, the Brazilian elite, and class.

Conny Maier is the first German artist that Deutsche Bank has honored as "Artist of the Year" in the ten years the award has been presented. The Berlin-born artist is one of the most important discoveries in the current German painting scene. Maier's figurative, colorfully luminous paintings draw on very different influences: the expressionism of the "Brücke," Picasso and Gauguin, as well as the current discourses on painting that have been held since the "new figuration" of the 1980s. Maier's art reflects a world shaped by representation and materialism, in which people seem to lose control. A central motif of her work is the relationship between culture and nature. Maier humorously and subtly exposes the romantic and heroic transfiguration of this struggle for dominance and submission.

Zhang Xu Zhan was born in Taiwan in 1988 into a family that has been making and trading traditional paper figurines for over a century. These figures, used in religious ceremonies and funeral rituals in Taiwan, are made of papier-mâché and elaborately decorated. His stop-motion films, staged in immersive installations, take us into the realm of nature spirits and demons. In doing so, they touch on such universal themes as death, transience, and the quest for community. Zhang Xu, who has a keen interest in spirituality, folklore, and anthropology, transfers his family's traditional handicrafts into the global art world of the twenty-first century. His work addresses the idea of a universal art of the realm between cultures, traditions, and new technologies.

Three publications on the exhibition will be published by Kerber Verlag in January. In the talk series "Deutsche Bank Collection Live: Meet the Artist," the curator will introduce the three artists digitally and analogously.



We would be happy to inform you about our digital offer on our Instagram account or on our website under #PalaisPopulaireForYou.

The opening of the exhibition will take place within the framework of Berlin Art Week. It is possible to visit the exhibition without prior registration or with a time-slot ticket. A free ticket can be booked at the PalaisPopulaire's online ticket shop: <https://www.ticketstopulaire.de/#/tickets/time?group=timeSlot>. Information on the current coronavirus measures and the PalaisPopulaire program can be found at www.db-palaispopulaire.de.

Press photos can be found at: www.photo-files.de/db-palaispopulaire.

PalaisPopulaire
Unter den Linden 5
10117 Berlin
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About Deutsche Bank's art activities

With its commitment to contemporary art, Deutsche Bank has set standards worldwide—whether with its art holdings, one of the world's most important collections of contemporary works on paper and photographs, with its international exhibition program, or with the PalaisPopulaire in the heart of Berlin. For many years the bank has been Global Lead Partner of Frieze with its art fairs in London, New York, Los Angeles, and as of 2022 in Seoul.