

SONSBEEK (1971, 1986)



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A NEW STANDARD FOR OUTDOOR EXHIBITIONS

Expanding its mapping of landmark exhibitions and curatorial history from the 1960s to today, the "Archives" series dedicates its fifth DVD to Sonsbeek, an art manifestation held in 1971 and 1986 in and around Arnhem (Netherlands). Mainly showcasing large installations and sculptures in natural surroundings, these two events are crucial to the history of outdoor exhibitions, shifting the boundaries of traditional sculpture. Held six years before the first Sculpture Projects Münster (1977), "Sonsbeek 1971," curated by Wim Beeren, questioned the traditional concept of sculpture and exhibition, introducing film and video, and environmental art—notably through the now canonical examples of Robert Smithson, Panamarenko, and Claes Oldenburg. Fifteen years later, "Sonsbeek 1986," curated by Saskia Bos, proposed another rethinking of the exhibition by offering the visitor a "scattered experience." The artworks were exhibited in specially designed glass pavilions throughout Sonsbeek park. Presenting the actuality of "new sculpture," the show brought together works by Katharina Fritsch, Michael Asher, Luciano Fabro, Ettore Spalletti, Thomas Schütte, Jan Vercruyssen, Reinhard Mucha, Mario Merz, Hidetoshi, and James Casebere.

Filmed by Jef Cornelis with his habitually acute sense of dramaturgy and his provocative mise-en-scène of theoretical conflicts, "Sonsbeek Buiten de Perken" (1971) and "Spaziergaenger mit Hund–Sonsbeek" (1986) constitute a unique moving image documentation of those pioneering art events that renewed the exhibition format.

Jef Cornelis mainly worked for VRT, the Flemish Belgian national television. He realized more than 200 films,

especially on architecture, literature, and the arts.

Yves Aupetitallot is an art historian, curator, and art critic. His illustrated essay in the booklet offers essential reference points that elucidate the context and debates of these pivotal outdoor exhibitions.

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