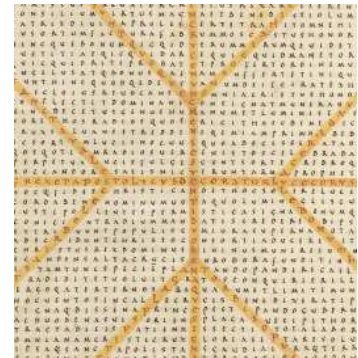


Raban Maur, *La Louange à la sainte croix*,  
BnF, dépt. des Manuscrits



Raban Maur, *La Louange à la sainte croix*,  
BnF, dépt. des Manuscrits



Raban Maur, *La Louange à la sainte croix*,  
BnF, dépt. des Manuscrits

## Make it new. Conversations with medieval art Carte blanche to Jan Dibbets

An unprecedented encounter between medieval art and contemporary art, this exhibition places side by side a selection of illuminated manuscripts from the *Louange à la sainte croix*, an outstanding book by Raban Maur dating back to the 9th century, and some thirty works from minimalist and conceptual trends and land art chosen by Jan Dibbets. A major figure of the contemporary artistic scene, the Dutch artist presents different works of art with a gap of 1000 years between them; he so creates a dialogue between these works and invites visitors to contemplate them.

Ancient art is one of Jan Dibbets' sources of inspiration as shown by this exhibition in which he got involved both as an organizer and an artist. It is thanks to a consultation of medieval manuscripts at the Bibliothèque nationale de France that he showed a specific interest for Raban Maur's illuminated manuscripts; he then decided to present them with his own works and works by artists of his generation: Carl Andre, François Morellet, Sol LeWitt, Niele Toroni, Franz E. Walther and many others.

The exhibition adopts as its own the inescapable slogan of modern art, *Make it new\**, disseminated in 1934 and including numerous references to medieval literature; doing so, it explores the relationships existing between the works of these contemporary artists – photographs, drawings and paintings – and a non-figurative medieval art that found one of its most extraordinary expressions with Raban Maur.

### From Raban Maur to contemporary art

A major figure of Carolingian Renaissance, Raban Maur is essentially famous for the *Louange à la sainte croix*, a work realized between 810 and 814 when he was a simple monk at the Fulda monastery, in Germania. Dedicated to the glory of the divine word, this work impresses because of its formal originality: it consists of a series of 28 figurative poems structured around the matrix of the cross. These illustrations, bordering on abstraction, offer astonishing parallels with a collection of minimalist, conceptual and land art works that occupy the front of the artistic stage in the 1960s-70s and beyond.

These works share a relationship to geometry, colour, proportions, perspective, and in certain cases, to writing. The aims are different since Raban Maur's work was entirely bent towards the exaltation of Christ; however, his abstract aesthetics offer analogies with the one of these artists who explore new possibilities in the way they renegotiate the space.

The exhibition so allows to highlight Dibbets' own artistic approach as well as the approach of artists of his generation through the encounter of various artistic media. It is also the opportunity to show how the formal and aesthetic qualities of medieval art can be reactualized today.

## Jan Dibbets

Born in 1941 in Weert (Netherlands), often associated with conceptual art, Jan Dibbets has been creating photography in a very personal way since the 1960s. Occasionally, he combines photography with painting and drawing. Among other things, he uses it to deconstruct the notion of central perspective we have been familiar with since the Renaissance, representing this perspective thanks to a vast range of viewpoints. The notions of space, geometry and perception play a central part in his work. Jan Dibbets' international fame led him to present his works in the greatest museums of contemporary art. He exhibited many times in France and was commissioned to produce several works among which the stained-glass windows of Saint-Louis cathedral in Blois; doing this work, he showed all the strength of his passion for medieval art. Raban Maur's manuscripts also stimulated his inspiration for the decoration of the stained-glass windows he made in 2016 in the church of Saint-Bavon de Haarlem (Netherlands).

\*Make it new is the title of a collection of literary essays by Ezra Pound published in 1934; in this work, the author starts from his modern point of view to 'reactualize' literary and poetic qualities of medieval

Exhibition

### **Make it new. Conversations with medieval art Carte blanche to Jan Dibbets**

5 November 2018 | 10 February 2019

Gallery 2 BnF | François-Mitterrand  
Quai François Mauriac, Paris XIII<sup>e</sup>

Tuesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. > 7 p.m.

On Sundays, 1 p.m. > 7 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and public holidays

Price: 9 euros, reduced price: 7 euros

FNAC reservations: 0892 684 694 (0,34 euros TTC/min) and [www.fnac.com](http://www.fnac.com)

#### **Curators:**

**Jan Dibbets**

**Charlotte Denoël**, chief Librarian, Manuscripts department (BnF)

**Erik Verhagen**, lecturer in History of Contemporary Art, University of Valenciennes

#### **Catalogue**

**Make it new. Conversations avec l'art médiéval. Carte blanche à Jan Dibbets**

245 x 220 mm, 128 pages, 60 images

#### **Press contact :**

**Hélène Crenon**, communication officer, BnF

[helene.crenon@bnf.fr](mailto:helene.crenon@bnf.fr) - 01 53 79 46 76