

Museum de Fundatie presents three exhibitions exploring a century of visual activism. They are based on the work of German dadaist, photomonteur and engaged artist John Heartfield (1891 – 1968). This is the biggest retrospective of the work of this ‘influencer avant la lettre’ ever staged in the Netherlands. Curated by the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, **Photography plus Dynamite** premiered last year. After its run in Zwolle it will move on to London.

At the same time, teachers and former students of Utrecht art college HKU present their take on activism in **Whose is the World?**, and spoken word artists Sticks and Typhoon slow things down a little and create room for contemplation in their multimedia installation **UNDER WATER**.

These exhibitions are a timely invitation to consider the visualisation of political ideology, and of dream and nightmare societies.

John Heartfield – one of the first members of Berlin’s dada movement – and George Grosz invented photomontage in 1919. During that period Heartfield also became a member of the KPD, the German communist party. The KPD soon recognised the communicative potential of his photographic manipulations, and allowed him to produce the covers for the workers’ magazine *AIZ (Die Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung)*. Heartfield also produced the artwork for the KPD’s election campaigns. He was both praised and feared for his biting criticism of national socialism, including some merciless ridiculing of Adolf Hitler. In 1931 his friend, the art critic Adolf Behne, described his montages as ‘photography plus dynamite’.

Heartfield’s powerful images were known throughout Germany. Unsurprisingly, therefore, he had to flee Germany when Hitler took power in 1933. But he continued his political activities in Prague. After his exile in Britain during the Second World War, Heartfield returned to Germany, choosing to live in the GDR. There, the new powers that be approached him with suspicion and caution, and he was unable to revive his role as a propaganda artist. He devoted himself instead to designing books (something he had been doing since the beginning of his artistic career) and theatre sets. John Heartfield died in 1968, having lived just long enough to witness how the student movement of the 1960s embraced the idiom of his photomontages.

Almost a century on, Heartfield's work has lost none of its explosive power. The exhibition is therefore not only an introduction to the founder of photomontage, but also an invitation to the latest generation of artists to draw inspiration from his work.

And this is precisely the idea behind **Whose is the World?**, an exhibition created in collaboration with art college HKU in Utrecht and ArtEZ, in which 29 activist makers, alumni and lecturers from HKU take a stance on current issues such as climate, racism, gender and identity. Cartoonist TRIK also contributes his own work, as well as new work produced under his guidance by first- and second-year undergraduates at ArtEZ.

Sticks and Typhoon manage to silence the cacophony of opinion to which we are constantly subjected. Their **UNDER WATER** installation creates room for a little peace and reflection, for people to come together and to take a stance. With a combination of projections, live news clips and specially written tracks, these two spoken word artists challenge us to reject polarisation and see the world from different perspectives.

Artists featured in *Whose is the World?*

Tijl Akkermans

Sara Blokland

Herman van Bostelen

Bertrand Burgers

Mingus ten Cate

Circus Andersom

De Designpolitie

Studio Willum Geerts

Christina Della Giustina

Mario Gonsalves

William Knies

Kummer & Herrman

Pam van Manen

Polina Medvedeva & Isaura Sanwirjatmo

Kevin Osepa

Joyce Overheul

Stéfan Schäfer

Anika Schwarzlose & Brian D. McKenna

Erwin Slegers

Fadenka van der Sloot

Studio Airport

Thonik

Hedy Tjin

Jip van den Toorn

Alana van der Valk

Yuri Veerman

TRIK & first- and second-year students at ArtEZ