



## **Christian Boltanski** **Deaths of Laughter**

*The donation to the Valentin-Karlstadt-Museum*

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Christian Boltanski's collection, which he bequeathed to the Valentin-Karlstadt-Museum in Munich, is surprising. Long kept in secret, this unsuspected gift is now presented in a new form and takes a different look at the work of one of Europe's most important photographic and installation artists.

In 1993, Christian Boltanski donated his entire early oeuvre from 1974/1975 to the Valentin Karlstadt Museum in Munich. Boltanski felt a strong connection to Karl Valentin in his work and adopted the idea of the tragic clown. For the first and only time, Boltanski's art is comic. When he saw Karl Valentin's films in Paris, he discovered the ridiculous, the imperfect, the failure, the work that destroyed itself, the restart. "The consequence was that I wanted to destroy my own style, saying to myself, I am not who you think you know, the stories you think are true are false," Boltanski later reported.

Christian Boltanski died on July 14, 2021, the anniversary of the French Revolution. Born in Paris in 1944 to a Jewish-Ukrainian father and a mother with a Corsican family, the memory of the Holocaust defined his work. His themes were time, transience and death, the fragility and fragility of life plans and the falsification of memory.

The Boltanski donation, consisting of about 80 objects, photographs behind glass, posters, props, painted stage sets and records, has not been shown in its entirety before. The first anniversary of his death is the occasion for the Valentin-Karlstadt-Museum to present it. This comprehensive catalog with accompanying essays was published along with the donation's presentation at the first anniversary of Boltanski's death in 2022.



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## **Christian Boltanski**

Christian Boltanski (1944-2021) was a French artist best known for his installations. Time, transience and death were his major themes. As an artist, Boltanski worked with a wide variety of media such as photography or sound installation. Numerous international exhibitions, including documenta 5, 6 and 8, the Venice Biennale 2011 and the German Bundestag.