Kunsthaus Graz
Universalmuseum Joanneum

Mission Statement

Short statement
The Kunsthaus Graz, a joint undertaking of the Province of Styria and the City of Graz as part of the Universalmuseum Joanneum, is committed to a vibrant engagement with art. It is an exhibition centre of international contemporary art that shows international trends in regular, changing exhibitions, placing these in both a national and regional context. The Kunsthaus Graz is dedicated to the freedom of art. In its programme it is independent, discursive and open to everyone in a diverse and transforming society.

Programming
Since 2003 the programmatic focus of the Kunsthaus Graz has been directed at an art that is concerned with questions of society and with the future of art in the 21st century. The basis of this engagement is the history of art since the 1960s. Since this period the cultural city of Graz has been actively involved in international art events. Activities within the framework of the trigon Biennials, the Neue Galerie Graz, the Forum Stadtpark, the Grazer Kunstverein or the Camera Austria all bear this out, laying the foundations of a continuity to which the team at the Kunsthaus Graz clearly feels committed.

In this context the Kunsthaus Graz sees itself as a primary location of discourse in a diverse cultural landscape in Graz, and reworks current themes using artistic fields of exploration. For this reason, yearly themes are established for the years to come – these projects can be planned with a certain distance and over a longer period of time, allowing many forms of cooperation to take place within the Universalmuseum Joanneum. In this way wide-ranging possibilities open up in terms of devising and conveying such themes.

Positioning and Unique Selling Point

Internationality in the cultural city of Graz – forms of cooperation
The Kunsthaus Graz is committed to the local context and bears particular responsibility towards the cultural city of Graz. In accordance with this, its activities range over a wide range of artistic approaches and endeavours. Special emphasis is placed on the international and global focus of the Kunsthaus Graz, which is linked to a variety of further contexts: local artistic activities are at play here; likewise, education – of both the local public and interested visitors to the city – and involvement of the national and European art scene. The resulting activities are also shown in the special interaction with the cultural city of Graz, too. The strong links to local cooperation partners are continually expanded. Plans for the years to come include the ongoing nurturing of existing forms of cooperation, coupled with an openness towards new partnerships.
Scientific expertise of the Universalmuseum Joanneum is an integral factor

The Kunsthaus Graz should be seen in particular with regard to its close involvement with the Universalmuseum Joanneum. Within the remit of the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, wide-ranging coordination takes place with the Neue Galerie Graz. Furthermore, thematically overlapping projects are realised as part of the programme of the Universalmuseum Joanneum, intensifying the relations between the Kunsthaus Graz and other museum departments. These connections are embedded in many different forms of cooperation both in Graz and beyond.

Architecture – utopian, open and without boundaries

The special architecture of the Kunsthaus has implications for some aspects of the artistic programme. The two large exhibition spaces (Space01 and Space02) possess very different characteristics with regards to their specific suitability for particular forms of art and typologies of exhibitions. The internationally outstanding and open Space01 is particularly well suited for large-scale sculptural or architectural interventions. The Kunsthaus Graz owes the particular attention it receives on the part of its public and artist to this striking space. Its quality as a wide, open exhibition surface is to be increasingly utilised and communicated in the coming years. The dark space Space02 lying underneath allows an especially fitting presentation of media works and photography. In line with the characteristics of the building, the logic of more recent art and the history of the latter in Graz, special focus is placed at the Kunsthaus Graz on interaction with New Media in general, and media art in particular.

Room to grow for young, dynamic projects: Space05

The Kunsthaus Graz is well equipped for future challenges: a new exhibition and education space (Space05) in the foyer area, animated by the café and bookshop, enables new, more dynamic exhibition and event formats. Adopting shorter time-spans and an open attitude towards socially relevant themes linked to current art – whether local, supra-regional or international – the Space05 is to become a location which can be both activated and tried out, and which promotes active participation (see ‘Cooperations’).

Communication – the path to a unique identity as part of our Unique Selling Points

Communicating the programme as well as the further activities and functions of the Kunsthaus is an ongoing process that accompanies the programme in an integral way. In this regard, attention is drawn to a corresponding differentiation in the language used to ensure that a wide public fully understands the topic in hand, yet that also credibility is maintained within the artistic and scientific community. Moreover, certain special elements of the Kunsthaus are to be increasingly emphasised as part of the Universalmuseum Joanneum: the goal here is to sharpen the identity and inimitable style of the Kunsthaus. In this regard the presence of the museum within the Graz city area must be a special theme in itself. In this context, too, our concern is continually to re-interpret, in an unconventional way too, what makes the Kunsthaus Graz special as a ‘landmark’, something it has indeed become in the meantime.
**Education**

Education begins in the programme and ends in the language communicated (see ‘Communication’). The transmitting of art and architecture places its focus on the exhibitions shown and the architecture of the building. Its activity starts with the exhibition themes, and defines methods in terms of personnel and media, and a range of possible approaches, whether artistic, art-historical, social, historical, pedagogical and so on, such as meets the needs of a heterogeneous public (ranging from local to foreign tourists, from suitable for children to highly specialised).

Offers tailored to specific target groups are based on particular themes in order to carry out the educational mission of the Kunsthaus Graz, and to gather varied subject matter into one discourse that promotes a critical and reflective engagement with contemporary art, and thus with a social-minded present. Factual knowledge, experiential spaces that have been created, and social values flow into each other at this juncture. Transmitting art assumes here the role of moderator, opening doors to possible approaches to contemporary art, yet also to social and historical phenomena. New fields of activity are continually created through the architecture of the building and museological themes. Various forms of cooperation with different Graz institutions are also a significant element in the educational work undertaken by the Kunsthaus Graz.

**Conclusion: Kunsthaus Graz as an open platform for current art events**

The Kunsthaus Graz functions as a platform in the exciting zone between international art events and various local activities, as well as in terms of regional reception and global pulling power. For all concerned that means taking the Kunsthaus Graz seriously as an interactive and shifting platform, and to consistently engage in the debates concerned. This ambition benefits and promotes the quality and creative output of artists. But it also requires intense participation, both on the part of a curious public and of decision-makers in the political, economic and intellectual spheres.