

Kunsthhaus Graz

Press

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2025 Annual Programme

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The Kunsthhaus Graz looks back on a successful year: some 75,000 visits were recorded by the museum in the last 12 months. Around 10,000 people have taken part in some 700 educational formats. The Kunsthhaus Graz' annual program is constantly evolving as a living organism or Living Alien, in the sense of sustainability and continuity. This applies both to the way themes and content are treated and to its actions and working methods. The Kunsthhaus Graz sees itself as an exhibition and production house, a laboratory and experimental art gallery, an educational institution, an evolving archive and site-specific collection. The 2025 annual program has developed from that of 2024 and will be continued in 2026, because thinking sustainably also means thinking in the long-term: thinking about, with and from the time in which we live.

A new mission statement: designing sustainably, opening up and sharing

In 2024, the Kunsthhaus team adopted a new mission statement. The focus was on establishing the museum internationally, while at the same time continuing to foster intensive dialogue with and integration into the local and regional art scene.

The annual programme is derived from three key phrases or categories – 'designing sustainably, opening up, sharing' – taking as its theme how power is handled – from oppression and empowerment to radical hope. As an introduction to this theme, the current exhibition Poetics of Power addresses the ambivalence of power.

Long-term research topics and the development of a programme-based narrative have already been adopted as a strategy in 2024, with 'work' adopted as the main theme. This strategy is combined with the idea of sustainability to enable a precise programmatic profile for the museum to be developed.

2025 Programme: questions around asymmetries of power, resistance, solidarity

The structural, political and ethical conditions we live in will be explored in 2025, with the emphasis on questioning power structures and supporting systems. The main exhibitions will cover issues of asymmetries of power, resistance and solidarity. They also address both the responsibility that goes with power and the responsibility of each individual that lies, for example, in how we view the consequences of our way of life. Alongside this, an

all-year educational program is being developed that engages with concepts of oppression – and emancipation, too.

SUSTAINABLE THINKING means pursuing long-term content-based concepts – but also, in practice, setting up a sustainable archive, and above all an immaterial collection specific to the location. To design sustainably means not only to think sustainably, but also to act in that way.

Rossella Biscotti **Circulations**

The installation shows steel pipes that spread out in space like the tentacles of a multi-limbed organism, combining elements of archaeology, industry and science fiction. The project reflects Biscotti's interest in ecological, political and feminist themes and explores the intersections of history, memory and culture.

Circulations is based on the artist's research in the historical archive of Tenaris Dalmine in Bergamo – a company that holds various patents in steel production, in particular for seamless steel tubes used in the automotive and oil industries, in power plant and pipeline construction. The installation traces the company's history in specific contexts. Following political and social changes in Italy, it also traces the various uses of the patented product – from wartime production to its integration into oxygen cylinders during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Circulations is a reflection across various disciplines: she talks about mining, landscape development or the cycle of resources and also picks up on eco-feminist ideas from thinkers such as Donna Haraway and Octavia Butler. Rossella Biscotti weaves the various traces – of people, objects and ideas – into a new visual narrative. By examining the relevance of the material from a contemporary perspective, Biscotti creates connections and networks to the present.

Rossella Biscotti expands and composes *Circulations* in a site-specific way: after the presentation in her solo exhibition at Castello di Rivoli (2024) and the Sharjah Biennial 16 in spring 2025, the work will grow into an immersive and expansive installation at Kunsthaus Graz in winter 2025.

Rossella Biscotti works across different media, primarily with film, performance and sculpture. In her practice, she explores and reconstructs social and political moments through the subjective experiences of individuals. She uses associative montages to examine socio-political themes such as power structures, memory and identity. She uses montage as a gesture to uncover individual narratives and their relationship to society, while at the same time revealing the often institutionalised systems that create collective narratives. Through her work, she gives marginalised and overheard narratives and experiences an updated and discursive platform.

Rossella Biscotti graduated from the Accademia di Belle Arti in Naples (2002) and later from the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam (2010/2011). Her work has been shown in major international institutions and at prestigious exhibitions, including: Biennale di Venezia (2013), documenta 13 in Kassel, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2018/2019), Gropius Bau, Berlin (2023) and Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2024). She lives and works in Brussels and Rotterdam.

Unseen Futures to Come. Fall

How to live in times like these, in which we are daily confronted by apocalyptic scenarios that range from the ecological crisis to the threat from weapons of mass destruction? How can we make sense of all this? The exhibition *Unseen Futures to Come* is dedicated to the question of how we as humans can deal with growing uncertainty and fear, which is reflected in a political shift towards conservatism, too. The philosopher Federico Campagna talks about the different ways in which we understand the world around us, depending on the time and historical epoch in which we live. Using the concept of a library based on the cyclical seasons, he explains how we develop our understanding of the world; the seasons symbolise the way we think and perceive the reality around us, which likewise changes over time.

To mark the exhibition, Federico Campagna will create a library for the Kunsthaus Graz, which is dedicated to the concept of autumn and which will engage in dialogue with selected artistic positions. According to Campagna, autumn is a time of the year in which our convictions and certainties begin to fall apart. As a result, we are confronted with fear and collapse and begin to realise that everything can be called into question. We react to this with rebellion and fear. The works in the exhibition address these feelings, but with an understanding of the cyclical concept in which we develop our reality and reflect on reality. Thus, they offer possibilities and ideas of how things can change as well. Paradigmatically, the exhibition refers to the concept of hope, essential and necessary for human existence, and to faith in humanity as such.

Neue Corporate Identity

In the spirit of sustainable design, the Kunsthaus Graz corporate identity lives on sustainably, too. Constantly adapted and renewed since 2003, a clear visual identity will be revealed in 2025, conceived together with Büro grafprom. Starting from its origins – the three spatial dimensions that the logo showed in 2003 – it will be expanded to include the dimension of time.

OPENING refers to international and local cooperations, though also to connections made to different areas and publics. This means programs and projects that operate inclusively to enable all people to participate in art and culture. Yet Opening Up also means working in an interdisciplinary way and networking with other players in order to offer a broad platform and contribute to cross-disciplinary knowledge gathering. Last but

not least, Opening Up is also a commitment to experimenting with and reacting to programme design.

DIAGONALE ' 25 SIMONA OBHOLZER

Long-standing partnerships, such as that with the Diagonale Festival of Austrian Film, enable the continuous promotion of local artists and strengthen cultural networking throughout the region.

In 2025, for example, the winner of the 'Innovative Cinema' award is once again preparing the trailer for the Diagonale ' 25 as well as an exhibition at Kunsthaus Graz.

Simona Obholzer's works challenge visitors to perceive themselves as viewers and to challenge the conditioning of their own gaze. In this way, the artist examines how image, body, space and gaze relate to each other. The human body is both the starting point and target of the viewing. Constructed nature is a central motif of her installations, in which Obholzer playfully and reflexively calls into question familiar ways of seeing. Through reduction and abstraction, she reveals invisible structures of perception, raising questions about the way images are recognised and experienced in context. From gently swaying works on paper in space to video projections of moving lawns, movement as an abstract principle runs through her works. These she executes using various media, formats and techniques.

Simona Obholzer is planning an immersive spatial installation for the Kunsthaus Graz, in which she explores the theme of the ground as a fundamental subsurface. It thus ties in with her Diagonale award-winning film *DIN 18035*. The installation contains an interface to virtual space that opens up new perspectives on the physical dimensions of the ground. A sound layer intensifies the sensory experience and appeals to the visitors' awareness of their bodies, enabling them to experience the installation standing, sitting or lying down.

FOYER exhibitions

The format of the 'foyer exhibitions' embodies the principle of 'opening up', signalling a commitment to spontaneous design and experimentation in the programme. The rounding in the entrance area is used as a flexible exhibition space that offers greater scope for reacting to current themes at short notice and for giving the local art scene a stage. As a low-threshold location, the foyer invites visitors to experience the exhibitions free of charge. This makes it easier to access art and appeals to a broad target group.

Famakan Magassa

Riez et faites rire car trop sérieux n'est pas très sérieux

In his large-format, intensely coloured acrylic works, Famakan Magassa combines everyday life with current socio-political issues. His works tell of the need for individual

development and emotional connection, the universal desire for freedom, but also of violence, oppression and expulsion. His grotesque, somewhat gender-neutral figures are an allusion to the Kôrêdugaw, a ritual community in Mali.

Magassa's expressive figurations are developed through texts and sketches, which he then transfers to canvases on the floor in a final step. Through the targeted use of humour and irony, he succeeds in pithily illuminating the contradictions and complexity of social structures. Personal experiences and conflicts are also reflected in his art.

Under the motto 'Laugh and make others laugh, because too serious is not very serious', the Kunsthaus Graz invites you to take part in a project with the artist Famakan Magassa. The project will take place over the holidays, with Magassa temporarily moving his studio to the Kunsthaus Needle. The large-format work created in this context will then be exhibited in the Kunsthaus foyer from January 22 to March 2, 2025.

Magassa currently lives and works as Artist-in-Exile in the Cerrini Schloßl at the Schloßberg in Graz, organised and promoted through the Cultural Mediation Department and the Cultural Department of the City of Graz.

Maruša Sagadin

Speak More Truth, Eat More Fruit

Vienna-based artist Maruša Sagadin, known for her quirky sculptural interventions, was asked by the Kunsthaus Graz to design a site-specific intervention for the forecourt of the building. The design for a multi-part, expansive sculpture was created as a response to the surroundings and the building. Consisting of granite stones with wooden seats, it offers space and humour and is invitingly painted in bright colours. For the urban space, the project, conceived as temporary, combines sculptural elements that represent markers for the museum and its contents on the one hand, and invite passers-by and people waiting to sit down and engage with the place, on the other.

The centre of the work is a sculptural, tubular hanging device with an oversized, yellow-painted pear about one metre high. *Speak more truth, eat more fruit* quotes a song by rapper Speech Debelle and is both a demand and a reference to the artist's roots. These combine elements of street art, pop, comic and hip-hop culture. Sagadin's work delights in breaking established codes, thereby sensitively revealing social mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in urban space.

SHARING is a key aspect of the mission statement. One focus lies on the sharing and communication of knowledge through the exhibition programme itself. Of central importance is the strengthening of the Kunsthaus' role as a place of education, where research takes place both artistically and collaboratively, and is regularly integrated into the programme through various forms of cooperation with educational institutions such as schools, vocational colleges and universities.

Freeing the Voices

The group exhibition begins with one voice: Marina Abramović's scream. Throughout the exhibition, a polyphony of voices develops, merging into the sound of a mosquito in the work of Tao G. Vrhovec Sambolec.

Why is an exhibition about the voice so important today? The world we live in is out of balance. The many crises and genocidal wars, and the loss of the common space in which bodies resonate with each other, have created a sense of suffocation and panic. A culture of silence has spread around us; the space allowing for free expression is shrinking; the call for a 'cancel culture' is growing louder. However, control is not only exerted through silence and censorship. We are exposed to a level of information noise that overwhelms us even more. This noise muffles the feeling that holds us together as a social body. The time has come to take action, even if it only results in an inarticulate shout or murmur.

Although there is no such thing as our own authentic voice, the liberation of our individual and collective voice is the common framework linking the artistic works on display. Liberating our voices does not mean finding a self that matches our voice perfectly. What we really liberate with the voice is our relationship to the world. The works attempt to decolonise the various voices of certain traditions, nations and their communities and landscapes, the voices of women, people of colour, people from the margins of Europe and the voices of our individual bodies. Liberating voices means breathing, shouting, writing poetry, singing, speaking and murmuring.

The artists also draw attention to the crisis of modernity and its rational constructs. Their language goes beyond universal concepts, embodying particular experiences and knowledge. A voice is always specific. And there is no voice that cannot be heard, thus the liberated voices are only those that are heard. Intensive listening thereby has the power to heal, connect and resist.

Milica Tomić

On Love Afterwards

The survey exhibition offers insight into the practice of artist Milica Tomić. Born in Belgrade, Tomić has been Chairwoman of the Institute for Contemporary Art at Graz University of Technology since 2014. In her work, she repeatedly revisits questions of absence, memory, political violence and social asymmetries. Her practice is research-based and includes work in the media of photography, video, installation art, discursive, pedagogical art, performance and socio-political engagement.

The exhibition *On Love Afterwards* is an attempt to open up and address issues of responsibility, visibility and injustice through art. Together with her practice, she considers exhibiting as a verb rather than a subject. Her complex artistic practice revolves around the object, but the focus is not on the object itself, rather on the negative space that

surrounds it, the space that enables it. For this reason, Milica Tomić' work reveals complex layers that unfold in front of the viewer. When she directs the gaze to an image or portrait of a woman, it is never the mere representation of female identity; rather the artist lays bare political and social nuances that construct that very identity. Similarly, Tomić deals with the specificity of images of war by recognising that an image of war and its brutality goes far beyond its descriptive representation. For this reason, she attempts in her works to fill in the empty space around the missing image. She invites viewers to reflect on the conditions of production and construction of such an image.

Her projects have led her to develop from the individual to the collective artistic practice, to explore and try out new forms of collectivity. Tomić is a founding member of the Yugoslav art/theory group *Grupa Spomenik* (or *Monument Group*) and is involved in the interdisciplinary project and working group *Four Faces of Omarska*.

The exhibition provides insight into her work and concentrates on projects such as *Ungelöst XY* (1997), *I am Milica Tomić* (1998), *The Portrait of My Mother* (1999), *Alone* (2001), *Reading Capital* (2004), *One day, Instead of One Night, a Burst of Machine-Gun Fire will Flash, if Light Cannot Come Otherwise* (2009), *Last Letter* (2010), *Container, Reconstruction of a Crime* (2004–2011) and others. In the whole exhibition, each of the works exhibited is contextualised by means of the archive, which is interwoven with the pieces on show.

BIX projects

Power of Urban Interfaces

Cooperation with the FH Joanneum supported by Energie Graz

Designed in 2003 by Realities United as an artistic media space, the media façade has had a new programme player since last year. Equipped with lamps from a pre-digital era, the programmable and dimmable 911 pixels mediate between time and the interior and exterior worlds.

In 2025, the new technology will be put to the test by two prominent projects. In the summer semester, Birgit Bachler's Master's course in Information Design will launch a series entitled *The Power of Urban Interfaces*. This is a joint course offered by Kunsthau Graz and FH Joanneum that will push the communication tool in the city centre to the limits of its technical possibilities from the students' perspective.

Power of AI BIX Competition

The insights gained will be used from the summer to launch the competition on the topic of 'Energy in the age of AI' and 'Power of AI'. This will form a focus of the educational programme mainly in the second half of the year as an aspect of dealing with power. The

competition invites students to submit projects for the media façade. The total prize money of 10,000 euros covers a fee and the implementation of the winning project.

Art education

From dealing with power to radical hope

In art education, the Kunsthaus Graz is prioritising its annual theme 'From dealing with power to radical hope', its aim being to create dialogue with visitors to the museum. The starting point and focus is the notion of 'radical hope' as formulated by American philosopher Jonathan Lear, and the associated conviction that 'something good will come to pass, even if we don't have a concept for it yet'. Moments that describe possible exits and alternatives are therefore mapped out in a range of interactive formats, tours and discussions around the exhibitions.

Many formats, broad inclusion

Time and again, in the exhibition tours, an essential element in the educational information requested is the Kunsthaus itself with its architecture. For this reason, in 2025 the information on this will be pooled on site, but also in the digital space; it will be made clearly visible and easily accessible to as many people as possible on many levels in a way that is both low-threshold and uncomplicated. For this purpose, audio guides are available in different languages and for various target groups, as well as a media guide in sign language, tactile tours, workshops for young visitors, and much more besides. Translations in simple language are also on offer. The format *Chat! And chat! – Kunsthaus as a language lab* has been specially set up for those with German as a foreign or second language.

A new workshop series titled *MaterialLab – Stories the Material Tells* begins from 2025. Together with artists, the focus is on the creative exploration of material and the inventive power of the hands.

A conference titled *Entanglements III How to flourish in Kin?* takes place in the autumn of 2025. Held jointly with the Institute of Art History and various departments of the Universalmuseum Joanneum, it combines botanical evolutions such as the decline in biodiversity and the accompanying process of turning nature into a museum, with artistic practices of critical cross-disciplinary research. The question to be explored concerns how thinking can be generated within the network of disciplines in way that shows greater depth and solidarity.

KunsthausCommunity

The KunsthausCommunity will be launched as a new Friends' Club of the Kunsthaus Graz from year-end 2024. Members' perks include: invitations to see exhibitions in previews, together or alone, for just 20 euros per annum; an annual excursion to artists' studios and special exhibition venues as a group; the use of guided tours and audio guides free of charge; discussions about exhibitions in the Club; editions, gifts and books received at special conditions – and more besides.