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Kunsthaus Graz A 'Friendly Alien'

Kunsthaus Graz, Lendkai 1, 8020 Graz, Austria

Up into the unknown! Looking back, looking forward
'Up into the unknown!' can be read on one of the first drafts for the design of the Kunsthaus Graz. After more than fifteen years of running exhibitions, the 'Friendly Alien' has certainly landed, and more besides – having long since established itself as an internationally recognised centre for contemporary art.

Architecture as stimulus. On the dialogue between space, exhibition and city
Time and again the architecture of the Kunsthaus Graz is faced with challenges both artistic and curatorial. The exhibition rooms are unusual, with no right angles and no white walls, only hanging points into which displays can be affixed. Yet precisely these circumstances allow for out-of-the-ordinary exhibition stagings, something that has been repeatedly and impressively demonstrated over the years by a series of artists.

BIX media façade or: high level of interest in low resolution
The BIX media façade is a unique medium of urban communication. Their inventors realities:united received the Deutsche Telekom 'Inspire Award' for this in 2005.

Max Neuhaus. Time Piece Graz. A moment for the Kunsthaus Graz
The acoustic sculpture by American sound artist Max Neuhaus is a fixed element of the Kunsthaus Graz – a similar work can be found at Dia:Beacon in Upstate New York in the USA.

Programme 2019

The Kunsthaus Graz is showing recent and the latest works of contemporary art. The opening show is that of artist *Jun Yang. The artist, the work and the exhibition* (14.02.–19.05.2019). In this show, authorship, identity assignments and expectations levelled at artists are made the subject of artistic reflection. In cooperation with the Diagonale festival, the exhibition *Johann Lurf. Earth Series (with Laura Wagner) and Cavalcade* (12.03.–22.04.2019) shows works by Lurf, the recipient of a Diagonale Prize in 2018. The show *Connected. Peter Kogler with ... George Antheil with Friedrich Kiesler with Hedy Lamarr with Fernand Léger with museum in progress with Otto Neurath with Charlotte Perriand with Franz Pomassl with Winfried Ritsch with Franz West ...* (28.06.–20.10.2019) flows into an installation with works by the above-mentioned artists, which visitors can plunge into, their senses fully engaged. At year-end 2019, the exhibition *Arts Crafts* explores the interest of contemporary artists in handcraft, material and materiality.

Up into the unknown!

Looking back, looking forward

Graz, September 27th/28th, 2003: the opening of the Kunsthaus Graz was timed to be the architectural conclusion to the 'European Capital of Culture Graz 2003'. Ten years later, the 'Friendly Alien' is an indispensable feature of the city's appearance, a drawing-point for art and cultural devotees from around the world. 90 exhibitions – including such much talked-about group shows as *HyperAmerika*, *China Welcomes You*, *Geknetetes Wissen*, *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung*, *Congo Stars* and solo shows like *Sol Le Witt*, *Romuald Hazoumè*, *Katharina Grosse*, *Ai Weiwei*, *Berlinde de Bruyckere*, *Erwin Wurm*, *Koki Tanaka*, *Haegue Yang* – were visited by around 1,192,678 people (as of 31.12.2018), impressive evidence of the vibrant interest shown in engaging at a deep and intense level with contemporary art.

The international appeal of the Kunsthaus Graz is evidenced not only in its exposed architecture, but also in how much its 'contents', meaning the exhibitions, take off and travel: besides the project *Bewegliche Teile. Formen des Kinetischen*, which was also on show in the Museum Tinguely in Basel (Switzerland), the solo show of the artist Michel Majerus, who passed away early, was exhibited in Luxembourg in 2007 to mark the opening of the European Capital of Culture for that year, too; previously, the show had toured in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Hannover and Hamburg (Germany). Moreover, following its presentation in the Kunsthaus Graz, the internationally acclaimed exhibition *Chikaku. Zeit und Erinnerung in Japan* was also to be seen in the MARCO (Museo de Arte Contemporánea) in Vigo (Spain) and in the Taro Okamoto Museum of Art in Kawasaki (Japan). The exhibition *Taumei*, an artistic research project in cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, travelled to the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw (Poland). *Graz Architektur* and *Auf ins Ungewisse* could be seen in modified form in the MSU (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Zagreb (Croatia) and *Congo Stars* was recently showing at the Kunsthalle Tübingen (Germany) (09.03.–30.06.2019).

Architecture as stimulus Dialogue between space, exhibition and city

With its blue, organically formed shell, the Kunsthaus possesses not only a unique exterior, but also differs from typical exhibition rooms inside. Peter Cook and Colin Fournier developed a spatial system which integrates the spatial and functional changeability of the building for the production of the most varied exhibition scenarios from the outset. Space01 and Space02 in the Kunsthaus were designed by the architects as platforms and correspondingly have no solid walls. Their interior is kept in dark grey. The rooms, or better said, spatial zones, are accessed via movement, whereby shifting, unpredictable views and connections open up to the eye. The spaces are not only designed for a highly specific function; they also already contain the possibility of their permanent reinterpretation.

The Kunsthaus directors and curators feel particularly indebted to the architectural heritage. In the programme and exhibitions, ever-new, specific artistic and curatorial solutions to these unique rooms and to the BIX façade are worked out – not unlike conditions in a laboratory. Thus, the architecture becomes, so to say, the 'sparring partner' of artists, curators and exhibition designers, not least for the visitors, too.

Since the Kunsthaus opened in 2003, the BIX façade by realities:united has served artists, and curators, too, as a means of communicating and interacting with the surrounding city. On account of the deliberately created design-related limitations (coarse pixel grid, fluorescent tubes, low frame refresh rate), the BIX façade is not suited to commercial purposes. However, it does lend itself to unusual, art-design projects.

The ground floor is accessible from several sides; here, too, a range of possibilities to access the building present themselves. Views from the room-high windows on to the street and the neighbourhood embed the architecture in the urban setting, entering into dialogue with it. Conversely, passers-by are granted glimpses into the building and its operations. The café, presentations of art and design, free WIFI, and the shop: all are on view to all.

The urban planning aspects and functions of the Kunsthaus Graz have developed more powerfully than originally expected. The building's surroundings have experienced a great upturn since 2003. Thus, the architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier succeeded in setting a tone in urban planning that has had a positive impact on daily life in this district of the city, thereby not only connecting with the historical building stock of Graz, but also sending a clear signal for the city's great architectural tradition.

BIX media facade or: High level of interest in low resolution

The BIX media façade of the Kunsthaus Graz represents a unique fusion of architecture and media technology and since its completion in 2003 has been regarded as one of the most important reference projects in media architecture. The installation is based on a concept of the Berlin architects realities:united (Jan and Tim Edler). Since November 2010 the BIX media façade is represented in the MoMA collection through an early prototype of a 'pixel', which served realities:united in the planning process as a study object for investigating the effect of light and the controllability of the installation.

On an outer shell of 900 m², 946 standard, ring-shaped 40-watt fluorescent tubes are integrated, with which light values between 0 % and 100 % can be continuously controlled. Every light ring functions as a pixel, which can be operated via a central computer. In this way coarsely gridded signs, texts and film sequences can be developed, which radiate far out into the city space, thus turning the 'blue bubble' of the Kunsthaus Graz into a 'low-resolution screen' of urban scale.

The BIX media façade thus represents an over-sized urban screen, which serves as an instrument for artistic productions. Like Max Neuhaus' acoustic sound installation, the BIX media façade represents a special kind of communication, which not only brings Kunsthaus Graz programmes from the hermetic exhibition situation into public space, but which also defines and shapes the immediate surroundings. Moreover, the 'communicating shell' offers a possible platform for art projects, too, which take as their theme the dialogue between media and the (public) space. The BIX media façade is expressly not used for commercial purposes, but rather serves for realising artistic projects. These are either directly connected to current exhibitions, such as Monika Bonvicini's *Guilt* or Fiston Mwanza Mujila's *Einsamkeit*, or are specifically developed for the media façade, such as Tristan Schulze's *Ghost* or Katharina Diem's *Lieblingsmakel*.

Max Neuhaus

Time Piece Graz. A moment for the Kunsthaus

For the opening of the 'Friendly Alien', the American sound artist Max Neuhaus (09.08.1939–03.02.2009) devised an acoustic installation titled *Time Piece Graz*, which has remained intact for the Kunsthaus Graz and its surroundings as a fixed element of this urban space.

The acoustic sculpture *Time Piece Graz* is a unique sound composition: a barely audible, slowly swelling sound spreads out in and around the Kunsthaus Graz, when, at its peak, it abruptly stops, thereby creating a moment of silence. Related works can be found at Dia:Beacon, Upstate New York, at Time Square in Manhattan (US) and in the synagogue in Pulheim-Stommeln (Germany).

In its abrupt breaking-off of the gradually swelling sound, *Time Piece Graz* represents an 'alarm clock of silence' – enabling a pause to take place in the hectic hubbub of the city, and thus a moment for the Kunsthaus.

Daily from 9 am to 9 pm, 10 minutes to every full hour

Programme 2019

Jun Yang. The artist, the work and the exhibition

Opening: 14.02.2018, 7.30 pm

Duration: 15.02.-19.05.2019



Jun Yang addresses not only cultural clichés and stereotypes, when the subject is China and Austria, for example; he also tackles the art industry itself. At the Graz show, the format of the solo exhibition as such is treated, both artistically and curatorially. In the exhibition Jun Yang. The artist, the work and the exhibition, the unique importance of the artist is challenged on various levels: through the title of the show, the visual communication, and the participation of other authors.

With Erwin Bauer, Mike Kelley/Paul McCarthy, siren eun youn jung, Lee Kit, Oliver Klimpel, Michikazu Matsune, Yuuki Nishimura, Yuki Okumura, Koki Tanaka, Maja Vukoje, Jun Yang and Bruce Yonemoto.

Further information at: www.museum-joanneum.at/presse/JunYang

Johann Lurf. Earth Series (with Laura Wagner) and Cavalcade

Opening: 12.03.2019, 7 pm

Duration: 13.03.-22.04.2019

In 2019, the Kunsthaus Graz is once again collaborating with the Diagonale, showing a Johann Lurf exhibition in Space03. In the previous year he was awarded the Diagonale Prize for Innovative Cinema of the City of Graz and has designed the trailer for Diagonale '19. Lurf's works always signify some form of filmic exploration – a process set to continue at the Diagonale '19, too. The exhibition in the Kunsthaus is created in cooperation with the artist Laura Wagner.



*... slowly returned to our world and so it has remained
for thousands of years with man.*

Further information at: www.museum-joanneum.at/presse/Lurf

Connected. Peter Kogler with ... George Antheil with Friedrich Kiesler with Hedy Lamarr with Fernand Léger with museum in progress with Otto Neurath with Charlotte Perriand with Franz Pomassl with Winfried Ritsch with Franz West ...

Opening: 27.06.2019, 7 pm

Duration: 28.06.–20.10.2019



The exhibition brings together works of social upheaval from the 20th century with contemporary works. In an immersive installation by Peter Kogler, iconic loans and archival materials by Fernand Léger and Charlotte Perriand, as well as compositions by George Antheil and Franz Pomassl, create a tangible cosmos of a reproducible, programmed and mysteriously connected architectural and medial space. At the centre of the exhibition is a reflection on the pioneering, revolutionary *Ballet mécanique* by Fernand Léger and George Antheil. The effect of the piece is hypnotic: highly rapid, mechanically precise rhythms alternate with assaults on the keys of the instrument, and scary silence.

Further information at: www.museum-joanneum.at/presse/Connected

Arts Crafts

Opening: 14.11.2019, 7 pm

Duration: 15.11.2019–16.02.2020

In the last few years, interest on the part of contemporary artists in crafting processes, in experimenting with material and techniques has grown. Moreover, materials and materiality are examined as carriers of cultural and ideological meaning, as well as concerning their identity and function in creating community. The way the artists handle pre-modern, traditional and local knowledge using diverse materials and process, does not isolate, rather it opens up – to other cultures, to modern and contemporary art, to current discourses and digital developments.



Further information at: www.museum-joanneum.at/presse/KunstHandwerk

Local

Various dates and durations

In January 2018 the *Local* was born as an extended exhibition format. With varying lengths and boundary-breaking concepts, the *Local* turns local networking, in the city, into the subject of its own practice. The *Local* defines itself as broadly local; thus, it is not exclusively bound to the museum, but rather grows out of it or into it. It absorbs local conditions and energies and expands projects through one's own actions, existence and potentiality, turning them into a cooperative web of various partners.

Further information at www.kunsthhausgraz.at