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From Biedermeier to the Present Permanent Exhibition in the Neue Galerie, Graz

Neue Galerie, Graz, Joanneumsviertel, 8010 Graz

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An overview of two centuries of fine art: the permanent exhibition of the Neue Galerie Graz shows selected works from the collection begins in 1800. Art from the Romantic Period and Early Modernism is on show on the ground floor, continuing on the upper floor with Austrian and international works from 1945 to the present day.

A rich range of works are on display, which recall the developments and trends in fine art from Biedermeier to the present. The arc stretches from the systematic capturing of reality in the 19th century, through engagement with artistic ways of approaching problems around the *fin-de-siècle* and in the early 20th century, through to phenomena such as Op Art and Conceptual Art. Thus we clearly see how man's involvement with his fellow beings and the world around him represents a continuous source of art.

The first part of the permanent exhibition offers an overview of art in the 19th century up to the interwar period, with an emphasis on works by Austrian and in particular Styrian artists. In the process, lines of development are presented in loose chronology, as are trends and outstanding individual positions. The exhibition spans essential movements of Austrian art history such as Biedermeier, Historicism, Atmospheric Realism, regional forms of *Jugendstil* and positions of Classical Modernism such as Expressionism and New Objectivity [*Neue Sachlichkeit*]. The exhibition thus outlines on the one hand the contours of a home-grown art topography, the finest exponents of which were aligned with international art events of the period, while reflecting the many-faceted profile of the collection on the other.

The second part of the permanent exhibition on the upper floor begins with positions which, linking up to Classical Modernism and engaging with contemporary trends, set out to find a direction for art after 1945. With the *trigon* Biennales, which gathered the most advanced trends from Austria and its neighbouring countries, Graz developed into a centre of the avant-garde from the 1960s onwards. An essential part of the exhibition is taken up by painting, which was a key determining factor in Austrian art in the 1980s – though also in early years, and up to the present day. In addition works of art of both local and international relevance from photography and sculpture complement this collection-specific survey of contemporary art.