

Press Release

BRUNO.

Bruno Kreisky as portrayed by Konrad Rufus Müller

Press Preview	Thursday, 20 January 2011, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Saturday, 22 January 2011, 11 a.m. Following the opening, Konrad Rufus Müller will guide visitors through the exhibition
Exhibition Venue	MAK Works on Paper Room MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	22 January–29 July 2011
Opening Hours	Tues MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed

To mark the 100th birthday of former Austrian Federal Chancellor Bruno Kreisky (22 January 1911–29 July 1990), the MAK will be presenting black-and-white photographic portraits by Konrad Rufus Müller, one of the most important postwar Germany photographers and “photographer of chancellors,” at the MAK Works on Paper Room. The 49 photos to be exhibited, which were taken between 1980 and 1989, document Kreisky’s life from political activities to private moments.

Although it was only for a relatively short period of time that Kreisky was accompanied by Müller, the artist’s photographs decisively influenced this politician’s public image. Müller portrayed Kreisky as a strategist, politician, diplomat, speaker, thinker and dreamer, as the father of a family and as a medical patient. Müller always captured the various facets of Kreisky’s personality at the perfect moment. He never wielded his camera in an aggressive manner; Müller took his time, waiting for those fleeting, unique moments which he then immortalized without using a flash or artificial light. He lit his motif in accordance with his surroundings, thereby defining what he really wanted to express: authenticity and intimacy. In this way, Müller managed to create a large number of exciting portraits of postwar political personalities, whom he portrayed independently of their images as statesmen. He penetrated deep into the private spheres of the top-ranking politicians he photographed, perceiving them as familiar individuals and providing them, through his pictures, with unshakable images of lasting value.

Müller and Kreisky got to know each other via the former’s acquaintance with Willy Brandt. Müller proceeded to accompany Kreisky for several years, from the zenith of his career as federal chancellor (during which he was nicknamed “The Sun King”) to his departure from office and on to retirement, including documenting of his final years.

A photo from 1980 shows Kreisky's arrival at the airport in Belgrade; the plane had already missed the red carpet and been forced to taxi up once again, after which the gangway that had been ordered for the charter jet turned out to be far too large. When a hurriedly fetched aluminum ladder also proved useless, the befuddled Kreisky was brought a wooden box via which to finally disembark and climb down to meet his hosts. It is this moment that is depicted on the photo. Kreisky stands in the opened doorway of the airplane and regards the box below with an air of extreme skepticism. Between him and the box, there remains the not inconsiderable gap of over half a meter—an uneasy situation which is impressively captured by this one photo. Above and beyond Konrad Müller's deeply personal art of portraiture, this picture attests to his qualities as a photo journalist.

An intense example of the personal relationship between the photographer and Kreisky is provided by the pictures taken in 1989 on the isle of Mallorca. One sees Kreisky, a year prior to his death, sitting in the shade of an old tree enjoying the sun. Kreisky appears more approachable and familiar; he seems to be looking back upon his life. The rugged, centuries-old and oft-pruned olive tree stands here like something of a coincidental metaphor for the highs and lows of Kreisky's life. In this picture, Müller penetrates deep into Kreisky's private sphere. That same year, Müller photographed Kreisky among those closest to him in the kitchen of his residence on Armbrustergasse in Vienna's 19th district. Unlike in a candid snapshot, the actors here seem to be posed around their chieftain. It is a staged photo like one from a family album, a photo which presents Kreisky as a person among people.

Konrad Rufus Müller, born on 22 March 1940 in Berlin, lives and works in Königswinter, North Rhine-Westphalia. It was following studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin that Müller turned to photography. He sought out the proximity of influential individuals in order to obtain glimpses behind the curtains of power. In addition to Bruno Kreisky, he has also accompanied personalities including Konrad Adenauer, Willy Brandt, Helmut Kohl, Gerhard Schröder, Vladimir Putin, François Mitterand and Anwar El Sadat as a freelance photographer. His portraits and photo reportages have been published in media including the magazines *Time*, *Stern* and *DIE ZEIT* and the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, as well as in numerous exhibitions and books (*TERRA COGNITA*, *LICHT GESTALTEN*).

All press material on the exhibition is available for download at www.MAK.at/presse.

Press Data Sheet

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Curator	Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel, head of the MAK Library and Works on Paper Collection
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50 Free admission every Saturday [®]
MAK Press Office	Monika Meryn (head of press office) Olivia Harrer Christiane Vogl Tel. (+43-1) 711 36-229 Fax (+43-1) 711 36-227 presse@MAK.at www.MAK.at

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