

Press Release

ENVISIONING BUILDINGS: Reflecting Architecture in Contemporary Art Photography

Press Preview	Tue, 6 Dec 2011, 10.30 a.m.
Opening	Tue, 6 Dec 2011, 7 p.m.
Venue	MAK Exhibition Hall Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	7 Dec 2011 – 22 Apr 2012
Opening Hours	Tue MAK NITE [®] 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed From 1 Jan 2012: Tue MAK NITE [®] 10 a.m.–10 p.m. and Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.

Envisioning Buildings: Reflecting Architecture in Contemporary Art Photography surveys the work of several international contemporary artists whose art work engages with aspects of architecture and building. The exhibition focuses on contemporary art photography as artists produce views of architecture not present in ‘architectural photography’ and denied everyday perception—and effectively provide a backstage glimpse behind architecture’s façades. It also hopes to gauge the influence of contemporary art upon architecture and the ways that each of the disciplines speak to each other.

According to MAK Director Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, “Barely any domain affects our lives in such an enduring way as do architecture, urbanity and urban planning, as we live within a built-environment and a built-reality. For the sake of living, architecture must be more than urban planning-meets-sculpture; it must possess a quotidian functionality. When contemporary art turns its gaze to the built-environment, categorical architectural imperatives are suspended and supplanted by artistic visions and alternative readings of those buildings are engaged.”

Principally, *Envisioning Buildings* reviews major conceptual, theoretical, and visual concerns of photography as a specific contemporary art medium. The exhibition presents the work of several of the most influential artists working with camera-based art making, who have changed discourses about the production and reception of photography since in recent decades. The exhibition is structured into eight thematic chapters—Restoration, Reanimation, Dwelling, Utopian Visions, Deconstruction, Refraction, Critique and Systems Analysis—that reflect concerns present in the artist’s work as a whole. Both the artists and the exhibition itself focus on iconic 20th and 21st century buildings, among them works by leading exponents of Modernism such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Erich Mendelsohn, Berthold Lubetkin and the

Tecton Group, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Philip Johnson and Ernst Plischke as well as by contemporary architects like Frank O. Gehry, Herzog & de Meuron, Kenzo Tange, and Peter Zumthor.

Distributed among several of the thematic areas, *Envisioning Buildings* presents, as a ninth chapter, artists' works that explore Rudolph M. Schindler's architecture; as a reflection of the museum's stewardship, through the MAK Center of Art and Architecture in Los Angeles, of the legacy of the Austrian-American architect one of the founders of modernist building in the United States. The Schindler program also includes the MAK Schindler Artists and Architects-in-Residence Program with its home base at the Mackey Apartments.

Exhibition curator Simon Rees draws attention to the fact that artists are often given privileged access to buildings that are otherwise not open to the public; and their works can reveal socio-economic processes or even counteract the effects of time. According to Rees, "Time is a major actor upon architecture, as its depredations (remember that buildings suffer the elements) alter the appearance and functionality of a building, so that the building visited might be a ghost of the picture that exists in a viewer's imagination—formed from photographs taken of the building in *the afterglow of completion*".

Envisioning Buildings brings together works by artists and photographers from all over the world, several of them from the "Düsseldorf School of Photography" and gives an international survey of architecture seen through the lens of art photography.

The participating artists are: Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber (AT), Mladen Bizumić (NZ/AT), José Davila (MX), Werner Feiersinger (AT), Andreas Fogarasi (AT/HU), Cyprien Gaillard (FR), Andreas Gursky (DE), Gavin Hipkins (NZ), Candida Höfer (DE), Geoff Kleem (AU), Joachim Koester (DK), Luisa Lambri (IT/ US), Thomas Locher (DE), Marko Lulić (AT), Dorit Margreiter (AT), John Massey (CA), Maix Mayer (DE), Sarah Morris (UK/US), Warren Neidich (US/DE), Sandra Peters (DE), Pia Rönicke (DK), Thomas Ruff (DE), Allan Sekula (US), Thomas Struth (DE), Hiroshi Sugimoto (JP/US), James Welling (US), Jane & Louise Wilson (UK), and Tobias Zielony (DE).

Reaching out across disciplines, *Envisioning Buildings* is also an expression of the MAK's central concern of addressing and connecting in an interdisciplinary approach art, architecture, and design as well as interface areas between them, exploring if, and how, they can or need to be transformed. Christoph Thun-Hohenstein explicates: "Envisioning Buildings is understood as a foundation for this new enduring dialogue between art and architectural culture. The exhibition presents a significant array of art works and artist's thinking about crucial questions about architecture. We are also arranging a process for architects and the motivated public to respond to in text and video that will be conveyed to the artists (for a reply). And so a conversational cycle will be produced."

This discourse-oriented approach is manifested in an extensive program of supporting events for visitors of all ages. One focus in this is on discussions between architects and the participating artists. In parallel, an interactive dialogue platform (for detail information go MAK.at/eb) will provide opportunities for visitors and invited experts to debate the significance of the exhibition in respect to contemporary art and architecture. Their currently updated contributions will be made visible and audible as part of the presentation and collected as archival material for future exhibitions.

Envisioning Buildings also marks the start of the first project of the new MAK LEARNING LAB, a MAK initiative that explores potentials of museum education as an applied art of its own. Until the end of 2012, the MAK museum education and management teams will be working out together with section.a and trafo.K experimental approaches in three pilot projects as well as a criteria catalogue for future educational work at the museum. The *Envisioning Buildings* exhibition launches a prototype information desk/display, which provides visitors with additional textual information on the eight thematic chapters. Moreover, it will offer picture postcards of art-works in the exhibition with questions on the back that suggest divergent views of the artists' contributions. Visitors may fill these in and leave them on a message board as 'postcards' to the curator.

On the occasion of the exhibition, the MAK is launching, in cooperation with Volltext Verlag, Vienna, a bilingual (German/English) half-yearly periodical named *MAK/zine*. The first issue is dedicated to the *Envisioning Buildings* exhibition and contains a number of essays on the relationship of art, architecture, and photography.

Press photos about the exhibition are available for download at MAK.at/presse.

Press Fact Sheet

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Curator	Simon Rees
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 incl. MAK Guide / € 7.90 / reduced € 5.90
Guided Tours	Sat, Sun 4 p.m. Information desk and taster tours: Sat 2–4 p.m. Special guided tours by appointment: Gabriele Fabiankowitsch Head of MAK Educational Programs and Guided Tours Phone: (+43 1) 711 36 298, E-mail: education@MAK.at
Supporting Program	In preparation Scheduled events: Wed, 7 Dec 2011, 4 p.m. MAK Lecture Hall Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna “The Edges of Modernity” Artists Geoff Kleem (AUS), Gavin Hipkins (NZ) and Mladen Bizumić (NZ/A) will discuss the built legacy of Modernism in their home countries and its influence on art production. Host: Simon Rees

Tue, 13 Dec 2011, 7 p.m.

MAK Lounge

Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna

Book Release:

Paul Ott, *Photography about Architecture /
Fotografie über Architektur*

In cooperation with SpringerWienNewYork

Publication

MAK/zine

Editor: Christoph Thun:Hohenstein,

Editing: Simon Rees

With contributions by Annette Emde, Hal Foster,
Simon Rees, Laurence A. Rickels, and Barry
Schwabsky, with texts of the artists and book
reviews by Paul Foss, Frank Hartmann and Ernst
Strouhal, and with numerous color illustrations.

MAK/zine is available at the MAK Design Shop and
selected newsstands and bookshops throughout
Europe. (Price: EUR 9.90 / CHF 12.90 / GBP 9.90 /
JPY 1390 / USD 13.90 / CNY 89)

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Vienna, 6 Dec 2011