

Press Release

## Change Through Applied Art

### Christoph Thun-Hohenstein Presents New MAK Program: Exhibitions – Projects – Strategies

**Date** Thursday, 24 November 2011, 10.30 a.m.  
**Place** MAK Lecture Hall  
Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna

“Change through applied art” is new MAK’s guiding theme as defined by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, who thus rings in the repositioning of the tradition-honored institution on Vienna’s Stubenring. “Applied art needs to be filled with new life. Utilizing its potential as a motor of positive change in our society—socially, ecologically and culturally—is the main mission of an active museum of applied arts. Particularly the MAK, which that covers a broad range of art disciplines, ought to be a driving force here,” Thun-Hohenstein, who took office as new MAK Director on 1 September 2011, explained at his first program presentation on 24 November 2011.

One guiding idea of the future artistic strategy is “intercreativity”. “The issue here is not just advancing achievements in the applied arts, but even more promoting the exchange and interplay between disciplines. Essential in doing so is the engagement with contemporary art, which we primarily address as an important impetus to applied art. Incidentally, the significance of Viennese Modernism also had its roots in an exchange between arts,” Thun-Hohenstein says. In respect to art’s social role Thun-Hohenstein supplements the famous motto of the Viennese Secessionists, “To Time Its Art, To Art Its Freedom”, against the background of rapid change in society, with “To Freedom Its Responsibility, To Responsibility Its Creativity.”

This commitment to positive change through applied art will become evident in the 2012 exhibition program particularly in the exhibition *MADE4YOU. Design for Change* (MAK Exhibition Hall, 6 Jun – 7 Oct 2012), which will explore seminal design examples for mobility, public health and education, the working world and recreational activity.

The potential of “intercreativity” is demonstrated in the exhibition *ENVISIONING BUILDINGS. Reflecting Architecture in Contemporary Art Photography* (MAK Exhibition Hall, 7 Dec 2011 – 22 Apr 2012), which examines art photography’s take on architecture and, in a comprehensive supporting program, encourages a structured dialog between the two fields.

### **European Triennial for Change**

The strategic focusing on “Change” will reach a first height in 2014: as a central contribution to the MAK’s 150-year anniversary, Thun Hohenstein has initiated the *European Triennial for Change* (4 Jun – 5 Oct 2014) and has already entered into talks with Austrian and international partners. Almost 5,000 sq. m. of exhibition floor space will be made available for the event at the MAK and the Arenbergpark Flak Tower; preparatory events are scheduled to start as soon as fall 2012. Chaired by Thun-Hohenstein, an international team of curators will be commissioned to bring together in Vienna significant contemporary positions on the subject of “Change”, both from applied art, particularly design and architecture, and from contemporary art.

### **Activation of the collection**

“Change” as a guiding idea is also understood by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein as a mandate for a more intensive engagement with the MAK collection. Accordingly, “the unique MAK collections deserve more public attention and need to be brought to greater visibility through more prominent presentations and special exhibitions. Especially in the field of *Vienna around 1900*, the MAK with its invaluable holdings from the period will be positioned as a genre-crossing center of competence.” This goal will not only inform the exhibition strategy in the coming years—which includes as another anniversary project for 150 years of MAK a major show on *JOSEF HOFFMANN / ADOLF LOOS* (MAK Exhibition Halls, 11 Dec 2013 – 20 Apr 2014)—but also the collecting strategy: “I will do everything in my power to push, within budgetary limits, the expansion of the collections, which has come to a halt in the past years. This will be necessary in particular for the collections related to Viennese Modernism.”

Another concern of Christoph Thun-Hohenstein is the deepening of the museum’s competence in fashion as an important aspect of the MAK Collection Textiles and Carpets. The director explains that “the MAK must be able to illustrate the many different links between fashion and other fields in terms of outstanding individual positions, above all Helmut Lang, and also play a stronger role in presenting intelligent, ecological fashion.”

### **Exhibition strategy**

The future MAK exhibition strategy will be preceded by a reorganization of the usable exhibition floor space. As of 2012, the study collections will only show occasional exhibitions; for the most part, the program will be moved to the exhibitions halls in the Weiskirchnerstraße wing. The 1,700 sq. m. lower-floor exhibition hall will explore potentials for change in thematic shows and feature important individual positions.

The upper-floor exhibition hall will concentrate on exhibitions from the MAK collections and on single exhibitions of contemporary art, architecture and design. As a rule, three exhibitions will be shown in parallel, for which the total floor space will be divided in three areas with a system of reusable flexible partition walls.

Thun-Hohenstein: "The flexible partitioning system will provide the collections with much more exhibition space than they had before. Besides, this facilitates a more extensive use of the MAK Exhibition Halls which simply are unique in their size and aesthetics." The new partition-wall system will be first used in June 2012 for three parallel collection exhibitions entitled *THINGS: Plain and Simple* (13 Jun – 30 Sep 2012) which examine the ideal of simplicity in Asian and European art history and in the area of furniture. This will be followed by a presentation shown in cooperation with the Vienna Design Week, *WERKSTADT VIENNA. Design Engaging the City* (12 Dec 2012 – 17 Mar 2013), which focuses on the revival that traditional manufacturing workshops have seen through their collaboration with Austrian and international designers.

Other highlights of the 2012 MAK exhibition program are the presentation *GUSTAV KLIMT: EXPECTATION AND FULFILLMENT. Cartoons for the Mosaic Frieze at Stoclet House* (MAK Contemporary Art Collection, 20 Mar – 15 Jul 2012) which is shown for the 150th anniversary of Gustav Klimt's birthday, or ... *FURNITURE OF ALL KINDS. Design drawings from the Danhauser Furniture Factory* (MAK Works on Paper Room, 18 Apr – 1 Jul 2012).

### **Permanent Presentation**

On the premise of opening the museum for artistic research and production, the rooms of the MAK Permanent and Study Collection will be redesigned in several stages by artists, architects and designers. One conceptual innovation will be flexible exhibition areas that allow a steady rotation of objects and design drawings which are unfit for permanent display for conservatorial reasons. The thematic area of *Vienna Around 1900* will be given considerably more space than before. As a pilot project, a permanent exhibition on *Viennese Modernism* will be conceptually reorganized from scratch in a generous layout extending through three collection showrooms (*Wiener Werkstätte Jugendstil Jugendstil/Art Nouveau Art Déco, 20th/21st Century Architecture*) and opened in fall 2012 during the Vienna Art Week. Christian Witt-Döring could be won for the project as curator and will develop the new concept together with in-house collection curators.

The permanent exhibition of *20th/21st Century Architecture* will be moved to and rearranged at the former MAK Gallery, the intention being to develop a space-specific concept that meets the requirements of communicating architecture and its social significance in the 21st century.

As of November 2012, the MAK Contemporary Art Collection, which featured the *Artists in Focus* exhibition series in the past years, will be showing contemporary individual positions related to Viennese Modernism. In the coming years, the Contemporary Art Collection will undergo successive reorganization into a comprehensive new presentation shown at the MAK Depot of Contemporary Art inside the Arenbergpark Flak Tower.

Also planned are the overhaul and adaptation of the MAK DESIGN SPACE (2012/13), the redesigning of the MAK Permanent Collection *Carpets* (2013), and the conversion of the MAK Study Collection Textiles into a permanent exhibition (2013) with flexible areas.

### **MAK Branches**

With its four branch museums—the Geymüllerschloß, the MAK Depot of Contemporary Art Gefechtsturm Arenbergpark, the Josef Hoffmann Museum, Brtnice, and the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles—the MAK is the hub of a unique cultural network. One goal of Christoph Thun-Hohenstein is to open the Viennese branches to a wider public and to sharpen the institutional profile of the MAK Center Los Angeles.

The MAK Depot of Contemporary Art at the Arenbergpark Flak Tower will be renamed into MAK Tower as of 2012; the CAT – Contemporary Art Tower project will not be pursued any longer. As part of the thematic and structural reorganization of the museum's contemporary art section, the Flak Tower will house a comprehensive presentation of the Contemporary Art Collection and a new permanent design exhibition and will be used as a platform for single and theme exhibitions. Till then, basic constructional and refurbishment and measures will be conducted.

The intent at the Geymüllerschloß is to work out the significance of the Biedermeier epoch as an early field of experimentation for Modernism. As home of the new "MAK Design Salon"—dedicated in 2012 to the subject of time and showing an intervention entitled *TIME AND AGAIN* by London-based designer Michael Anastassiades—, it will also be opened to more contemporary positions.

At the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, the dialog between art and architecture will be further advanced through a new "Schindler Award for Art and Architecture" given 2013 for the first time—and from then on, every two years—to experimental architects of outstanding significance for contemporary art. The Garage Top of the Mackey Apartments will be positioned as a novel art and architecture venue featuring Austrian and Los Angeles-based art positions.

Showing an exhibition entitled *JOSEF HOFFMANN / STANISLAV KOLÍBAL. Planes – Lines– Spaces* (5 Jun – 28 Oct 2012), the Josef Hoffmann Museum, Brtnice, a joint branch of the Moravian Gallery in Brno and the MAK Vienna, will address individual differences in the approach to dimensionality in the work of Josef Hoffmann and Stanislav Kolíbal. The MAK and the Moravian Gallery, Brno, have received financial support from the EU Program "European Territorial Co-operation Austria–Czech Republic 2007–2013" for the implementation of exhibition and tourist programs.

### **Cooperation projects**

The MAK and the University of Applied Arts are seeking intensive cooperation. Under it, a new series of exhibitions will be launched in the former space of the MAK Study Collection *Furniture*, presenting works by graduates from the university in a museum setting. This will be paralleled by a projected new discussion series with guests from politics and business. As Thun-Hohenstein points out: "The MAK and the University of Applied Arts were one institution until 1909. A museum and a university have highly different tasks, but there are many fields in which synergies should be used."

*design* new strategies, a cooperation with *departure*, the Creative Agency of the City of Vienna, which has been successful since 2009 with a combination of international guest contributions and presentations of domestic creative professionals, is continued in 2012 with specific intercreative programs relating to design exhibitions *MADE4YOU. Design for Change* and *WERKSTADT VIENNA: Design Engaging the City*. The joint effort seeks to further promote effective connections between design and industry.

Audiovisual art will be presented by the MAK as a segment of applied art for the first time ever under a cooperation project with the *sound:frame* festival. The exhibition *SUBSTRUCTIONS* (13–29 Apr 2012) examines conditions of present-day audiovisual production.

### **MAK NITE<sup>®</sup> Lab**

A fundamentally new concept was developed for the events of the *MAK NITE<sup>®</sup>* series, which over more than ten years has developed into a recognized applied experimentation zone of the contemporary scene for architects, designers, performance and media artists as well as experimental musicians and fashion-makers. Under its new name *MAK NITE<sup>®</sup> Lab*, the event series will also address the genre-crossing subject of "Change". In the context of MAK exhibitions and, from fall 2012, in preparation of the 2014 Triennial, Austrian and European artists from different fields will be invited once a month to present essential approaches of their work in a lab situation.

### **Budget**

Under its new direction, the MAK will be assigned an investment budget of at least 2.5 million Euros in the next three years by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. "With this, a number of urgent investments can be made," explains Thun-Hohenstein, who also sees canvassing for sponsors as a priority task. Cooperation with the MAK ART SOCIETY (MARS), which plays a central role in making purchases for the MAK collection, will be intensified. Important basic structures will be provided with the new position "Rentals/Sponsoring" and with the establishing of a staff position that will be responsible, aside from fundamental curatorial issues, for the optimization of the museum management and the development of new fundraising concepts.

### **The MAK As Public Space**

Not least, it is a crucial concern of Thun-Hohenstein's to position the MAK as an open museum. As he points out: "One of my first initiatives here at the MAK was launching a project named *MAP – Memory and Progress*, in which the museum's cultural memory is reconsidered in a number of public discussion events and the proposals presented by the MAK for the coming years are up for debate. As of mid-February 2012, the resultant exhibition *MAGIC OF THE FUTURE: The MAK as Public Space* will combine the future-oriented new positioning of the museum ('Change') with greater visibility of the collection in that it presents the *MAP* results, explores issues of the future of the museum as an institution, and showcases important collection items from the museum storages that will be central to the MAK's exhibition activities in the future. Moreover, we will make an effort to open the MAK even more, through social media initiatives, but also with simple measures such as the lifting of the ban on photography for private purposes, and we want to set a new standard in museum education." From 2012, new annual season-tickets will be offered which will be available in different categories also for students/young people, senior citizens, and families and will afford holders a number of extra benefits aside from admission to the MAK and its branches.

### **The Art of Learning**

For Thun Hohenstein, museum education is "a core issue of applied art—in the sense of joint learning between the museum and its visitors." Innovative museum education offerings and other novel ways of visitor communication are scheduled to be developed under a project named MAK LEARNING SPACE which will be launched in December 2011. What Thun-Hohenstein has in mind for the MAK in general is to convey new optimism through art and culture—both through critical recognition of the cultural achievements of the past and forward-looking contributions of applied and contemporary art.

***Please find enclosed the complete 2012 MAK Exhibition Program.***

This press release, the 2012 MAK Exhibition Program, as well as photo material is also available for download at [MAK.at/press](http://MAK.at/press).

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