MAK Annual Press Conference 2017
From Throw-Away Society to Culture of Quality

Press Release

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Venue  MAK Director’s Office,
Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna

A departure from the “throw-away society” and a “new culture of sustainable quality growth and human resonance as the key to the regeneration of Europe” are demanded by MAK General Director Christoph Thun-Hohenstein on the occasion of the Annual Press Conference 2017. This sociopolitical aspiration by the MAK is the obvious common theme running through this year’s annual program—from handicraft and glass exhibitions to the second VIENNA BIENNALE and a wide-ranging show by the artist Thomas Bayrle to the large-scale exhibition cooperation with the University of Applied Arts Vienna for its 150th anniversary. “Promoting a new culture of affordable quality is a substantial mission for the MAK. We expect major inspiration and innovations from the applied arts—especially from design and architecture—as well as from contemporary fine art, so that we can design Digital Modernity responsibly. In 2017, our first complete year with a dual leadership, we want to position the MAK more visibly as the first museum to turn to for socially relevant topics,” say Thun-Hohenstein and Teresa Mitterlehner-Marchesani, Chief Financial Officer of the MAK.

Focus on glass and handicraft

With the exhibition handiCRAFT: Traditional Skills in the Digital Age—open in December 2016 and on until 9 April 2017—the MAK is urging a new appreciation of handicraft. Handicraft reinforces the relationship between people and products and is hence an ideal model for the sustainable continued development of our increasingly digitalized society. With this in mind, two high-quality exhibitions on the subject of glass have been chosen to launch the program for 2017. THE GLASS OF THE ARCHITECTS: Vienna 1900–1937 (MAK Exhibition Hall, 18 January – 17 April 2017) reveals a fascinating chapter of Austrian arts and crafts: designs by young architects exerted an epochal influence on the development of art glass in Viennese Modernism. Having proved successful in Venice in 2016, the exhibition—curated by the MAK and jointly realized with LE STANZE DEL VETRO—has now moved to Vienna,
where it is the first show to offer a comprehensive presentation of over 300 glasses from the final decades of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to the end of the First Republic.

Almost simultaneously, the exhibition **GLASSES FROM THE EMPIRE AND BIEDERMEIER PERIOD: From the MAK Collection and the Glass Collection of Christian Kuhn** (MAK Exhibition Hall, 1 February – 17 April 2017) brings together 180 select objects from the MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection as well as some 180 objects belonging to the collector Christian Kuhn, thereby returning Biedermeier glass to the center stage of a MAK exhibition after almost a century's absence. Thematically, the show focuses on every area of glass art in the Empire and Biedermeier period, from cut glass to Lithyalin glass as well as masterpieces of transparent glass painting.

**VIENNA BIENNALE 2017: Robots. Work. Our Future**
The tone of this summer and early fall will be set by the **VIENNA BIENNALE** (21 June – 1 October 2017), whose motto **Robots. Work. Our Future** draws visitors’ attention to the vision of a digital humanism. Initiated by Thun-Hohenstein, the 2017 VIENNA BIENNALE will once again—as at its premiere in 2015—be realized by the MAK in partnership with the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the Kunsthalle Wien, the Architekturzentrum Wien, as well as the Vienna Business Agency with its creative center departure, and with the support of the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology as a non-university research partner. In the context of the VIENNA BIENNALE 2017, the MAK will be host to the following projects (the complete program can be found at viennabiennale.org/en):

**Hello, Robot. Design between Human and Machine** (an exhibition by the MAK; co-production of the Vitra Design Museum with the MAK and the Design Museum Gent) explores how robotics is entering our everyday lives and demonstrates the crucial role played by design. Numerous exhibits illustrate the areas where we already encounter robots today and where we are likely to encounter them in the near future: in industry, the military, our daily lives; in children’s bedrooms and in nursing homes; in our bodies and in the cloud; while shopping and having sex; in computer games and, of course, in film and literature. The exhibition shines a light on our—often ambivalent—relationship to new technologies and discusses the resulting opportunities and challenges we face both as individuals and a society.

Artistic works revolving around the uncertain state between progress and archaism are at the heart of the group exhibition **ARTIFICIAL TEARS: Singularity & Humanness—A Speculation** (an exhibition by the MAK), which intentionally
draws a comparison between quotations from science fiction and reality. The extension or rather “optimization” of the human organism through the addition of portable or implanted computer technology, nanotechnology, mind-enhancing drugs (nootropics), and life-prolonging measures is wholly redefining established notions and life plans—from business models to human life cycles, including the concept of dying.

The StadtFabrik (City factory, a project by the Vienna Business Agency, Creative Center departure, and the MAK for the VIENNA BIENNALE 2017) is a “real-time” research laboratory for new professional fields with a focus on creative disciplines, which aims to discover and highlight future potentials of a city in a state of flux. During the VIENNA BIENNALE the StadtFabrik will place six demonstrators at various locations in Vienna. In prototypical experimental arrangements, the demonstrators will deal with the topics of digitalization, new work culture, and urban production processes. At the MAK, the IDRV – Institute of Design Research Vienna will curate an exhibition for the StadtFabrik on three fields of work of Digital Modernity and their transforming potential for sociopolitical and socioeconomic processes: creative work and multi-disciplinary co-creativity, social work including work for the commons (“commoning”), and sustainable work in terms of circular economy and innovative use of urban resources.

The MAK Future Lab is an informal open-source network, which will develop parts of the MAK DESIGN LAB to mark the VIENNA BIENNALE 2017. An introduction is provided by an overview of the main issues of digitalization and an outline of a holistic approach to finding long-term solutions. At the forefront of the initiative are (new) values relevant to the future of work as well as consumption, such as fairness and diversity; sharing, caring, and appreciating; repairing, “slow consumption,” and “prosuming”—and their suitability for market economies.

The Vienna Biennale Circle, a flexible platform of Vienna-based personalities from various disciplines, will consolidate the cornerstones of a new humanism in an exhibition manifesto at the MAK.

Contemporary art as a source of inspiration
A major contemporary artist will suffuse the MAK in fall 2017: Thomas Bayrle combines traditional craft techniques with the computer-generated art of the information age in his exhibition that reflects the MAK Collection, If It’s Too Long—Make It Longer (MAK Permanent Collection Contemporary Art, MAK Columned Main Hall, MAK DESIGN LAB, MAK GALLERY, 25 October 2017 – 2 April 2018), with the title of his exhibition based on a quotation by Eero Saarinen. As an artist Bayrle also takes on the role of communications, textile, or product designer in an avant-garde manner.
Graphic patterns encounter the model of the machine and principles of seriality, of repetition. Bayrle finds his subjects in our osmotically networked civil society, which he encourages to take a critical look in the mirror. Metaphors of dyeing, weaving, and programming explore the ambivalence of production chains and give rise to complementary forms, Mass Ornaments.

Various angles on applied arts
To celebrate the 150th year since its founding, a large show filling both exhibition halls is being dedicated to the University of Applied Arts Vienna; entitled AESTHETICS OF CHANGE: 150 Years of the University of Applied Arts Vienna (15 December 2017 – 22 April 2018), it is a cooperation between the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the MAK. The history of the university is integral to our country’s art history. The exhibition will include a historical summary of the highlights of the 150-year history of the University of Applied Arts Vienna as well as a glimpse into the future of art and education in a world of social and technological flux.

The timeless beauty and relevance of the Wiener Werkstätte is demonstrated once again in the exhibition BOOK COVERS OF THE WIENER WERKSTÄTTE (MAK Works on Paper Room, 8 March – 28 May 2017). Book covers were an integral part of the (leather) production of the Wiener Werkstätte, being commissioned by customers as well as arising spontaneously from artists’ designs. The exhibition is predominantly based on works on loan from the collections of Ernst Ploil and Richard Grubman and is supplemented by holdings from the MAK Collection, which also houses the Wiener Werkstätte Archive.

MAK in cooperation
Working together with other institutions and initiatives in the cultural sector is encouraged once again in 2017. In addition to the aforementioned cooperations, in 2017 the MAK will again present the results of the competition 100 BEST POSTERS 16: Germany Austria Switzerland in cooperation with the association 100 Beste Plakate e. V. (MAK Works on Paper Room, 18 October 2017 – 25 February 2018).

Once more, the MAK provides the stage for photo:vienna (MAK Exhibition Hall, 11–15 October 2017), which displays photographic works from the fields of art, architecture, and portraiture, as well as commercial and editorial photography and photojournalism—united under the term “applied photography.”

In cooperation with the AG Gesellschaftsdesign of the HFKB University of Fine Arts Hamburg, the LIBRARY FOR SOCIAL DESIGN, a mobile institution, will be presented for the first time at the MAK (MAK FORUM, 26 April – 14 May 2017). It
explores the question of whether and how design changes society and it is intended that it will subsequently pop up in various places. Sixty designers and social theorists have been asked to name a book that provides important inspiration on the topic.

In appreciation of an icon of Austrian arts and crafts, the MAK, the Department of Art History at the University of Vienna, and the University of Applied Arts Vienna invite you to the symposium RUDOLF VON EITELBERGER: Conference on the Occasion of his 200th Birthday (MAK Lecture Hall, 27–29 April 2017). A highlight of the MAK event program, the conference is intended to contribute to a reappraisal of the work of Eitelberger (1817–1885), the first professor of art history at the University of Vienna (1852), founding director of the first arts and crafts museum outside of England (1863, today’s MAK) and the formerly affiliated School of Arts and Crafts (1867).

To celebrate the 650th year of goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewelers, the Federal Guild is holding two competitions: Die Jungen Wilden 2016 [The young and wild ones 2016] as well as 650 Jahre Gold-, Silberschmiede und Juweliere [650 years of goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewelers]. The award-winning submissions will be displayed at the MAK under the title 650 YEARS OF GOLD- AND SILVERSMITHS: The Competitions, a cooperation between the Landesinnung Wien der Kunsthandwerke and the MAK (MAK DESIGN LAB, 15 March – 17 April 2017).

**MAK Branches**

The Josef Hoffmann Museum, Brtnice, a joint branch of the Moravian Gallery in Brno and the MAK, Vienna, has dedicated the exhibition JOSEF HOFFMANN—OTTO WAGNER: On the Use and Effect of Architecture (24 May – 29 October 2017) to the relationship between Josef Hoffmann and his teacher Otto Wagner. His training under Wagner at the Specialschule für Architektur [special school for architecture] at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, working together in Wagner’s studio and at the Secession, as well as Wagner’s support for Hoffmann being appointed as a professor at the School of Arts and Crafts, were all crucial for Hoffmann’s career.

The MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles (MAKcenter.org) is reinforcing the experimental focus of its programming. Conceived especially for the MAK Center, the exhibition Mandla Reuter: WASSER (Schindler House, 10 March – 4 June 2017, installation at the Fitzpatrick-Leland House) will launch the program for 2017. Lush: R. M. Schindler’s Fitzpatrick-Leland House and the Re-Imagined Yard at the Fitzpatrick-Leland House (July 2017) and at the Schindler House (July 2017) heralds a charrette for urban development in Los Angeles with leading landscape architects. In the exhibition Anarchism Without Adjectives: On the Work of Christopher D’Arcangelo (Mackey Garage Top, March 2017), select artists explore
the concept artist’s oeuvre. *How to Read El Pato Pascual: Disney’s Latin America and Latin America’s Disney* (Schindler House, 10 September 2017 – 15 January 2018, additional presentation at the Luckman Gallery at California State University Los Angeles) discusses the genesis of cultural identities as the consequence of cultural exchange, dialogue, misunderstandings, and (unlawful) appropriation.

In the context of the series *[GARAGE EXCHANGE VIENNA – LOS ANGELES]*, former Schindler scholarship students from Austria stage two exhibitions per year in collaboration with Los Angeles-based artists and architects on the garage roof of the Mackey Apartments, which has been converted into an exhibition space. This year, the approaches of Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber & N. N. (April 2017) as well as Johann Lurf & N. N. (November 2017) will be on display. This exhibition series is made possible by the Austrian Federal Chancellery.

Press photos on the MAK Program for 2017 are available for download at MAK.at/en/press.

Information about the MAK Program for 2017 is continuously updated at MAK.at.

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