


Press Release

Becoming Otto

Film première and presentation of
Apokalypse / Keinen Keks Heute
upon the 85th birthday of Otto Muehl

World première	<i>Becoming Otto</i> (film in German) A cooperation of MAK / Selenium Films  Tuesday, June 1, 2010, 7 p.m. MAK Lecture Hall Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna
followed by	Public panel discussion with Sean Cullen, Vincent Juillerat, Peter Noever, Danièle Roussel and Prof. Dr. Philip Ursprung
Opening	<i>Apokalypse / Keinen Keks Heute</i> by Otto Muehl (1998) MAK Exhibition Hall, 8 p.m.
MAK Opening Hours	Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun, 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed

On June 16, 2010, Otto Muehl—artist and co-originator of Viennese Actionism—will turn 85. To mark this occasion, the MAK will be hosting the world première of the film *Becoming Otto* (France, 2010) by Vincent Juillerat. The Swiss art historian and film director met and conducted an extensive interview with Muehl in Faro, Portugal, in 2008. This talk gave rise to a 30-minute documentary film which also contains hitherto unreleased archival material on the artist's life and works.

Becoming Otto examines one of the most controversial and challenging artistic experiments of the 20th century—from Viennese Actionism to the events and experiences within the Muehl Commune. From the early 1960s onward, Muehl engaged in artistic research and strove for the unification of art and life. Muehl, who was inspired particularly by the works of Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Reich, is viewed as the pioneer of a multitude of methods which are still used within the contemporary art's scene today.



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In the film, Otto Muehl now subjects his own life and work to an initial, exacting, and not uncritical self-evaluation, also speaking of experiences he had during childhood and during the Second World War. Above all, however, he refers to the decisions which he made over the course of his life which served to make him one of the most interesting and controversial artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. The painful breaks in his biography, such as the trial and prison term associated with the Muehl Commune, as well as the massive criticism of Muehl as an individual, are also themes. *Becoming Otto* places special emphasis on how an artistic project became the project of a life, a life which Muehl continues to live in Portugal to this very day.

Using documents from the artist's private archive, as well as from media and institutional archives, *Becoming Otto* attempts to show how the radical Action Art of the 1960s broke out and broke through as an artistic imperative, a late consequence of the both intellectually and economically narrow Austrian postwar period and the generational conflicts and class warfare that ensued. Statements by various personalities underline the innovative contribution made by Muehl's artistic work to the progressive formulation and maturation of contemporary art practices: comment is given by Spanish art historian Pilar Parcerisas and Prof. Dr. Philip Ursprung, professor of modern and contemporary art at the University of Zurich.

The film will be followed by an audience discussion with Sean Cullen, Vincent Juillerat, Peter Noever, Danièle Roussel and Prof. Dr. Philip Ursprung. The evening will continue with the presentation of the work *Apokalypse / Keinen Keks Heute* (Otto Muehl, 1998) in the central MAK Exhibition Hall. After the paint attack carried out on the socially and politically critical, nine-canvas collage, which occurred in June 1998 during the exhibition *Wiener Secession 1898–1998. Das Jahrhundert der künstlerischen Freiheit*, a court prohibited the work from being exhibited again in Austria. In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights declared this decision to be "impermissible in light of the democratic freedom of opinion," thereby lifting the ban. This controversial work—adapted for the MAK—will now be shown here until August 1, 2010.

A longstanding relationship exists between Otto Muehl, born in 1925 in Grodnau, Burgenland, and the MAK. In 2004, the exhibition *OTTO MUEHL. LIFE/ART/WORK. Action Utopia Painting 1960–2004* was shown here. It offered the very first complete overall survey of Muehl's artistic output: from his early paintings of 1953 and on to Actionism, the establishment of the communes and his renewed painting activities beginning in the mid-1970s, and up to the "electric paintings" which he has been creating since 2001. This exhibition made the lion's share of his works created after Muehl's Actionist period accessible to the general public for the first time.



The production company *Selenium Films* was established in 2008 by Swiss native Vincent Juillerat in Paris; *Selenium* aims to create unconventional, original and innovative cinema, particularly in connection with art. It is its goal to encourage creativity and to support those artists and directors who view the world from such a perspective.

All press materials are available on our homepage at www.MAK.at/press.

Press Data Sheet

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MAK Lecture Hall

followed by

Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna
Public panel discussion with
Sean Cullen, *Editing, Paris*
Vincent Juillerat, *Selenium Films, Paris*
Peter Noever, *Director MAK Vienna*
Danièle Roussel, *Archives Otto Muehl, Faro*
Prof. Dr. Philip Ursprung, *Professor of modern and
contemporary art, University of Zurich*

**Opening of the
presentation**

Apokalypse / Keinen Keks Heute
by Otto Muehl (1998)

MAK Exhibition Hall, 8 p.m.

Exhibited at the MAK

June 2 – August 1, 2010

Director

Vincent Juillerat

Interviews

Vincent Juillerat and Danièle Roussel

Production

Selenium Films

Editing

Sean Cullen

Camera

Eduardo Montero / Nathanaël Deniau

Project coordination, MAK

Sabrina Handler

MAK Admission

Advance ticket sales are on June 1, 2010, starting
at 5 p.m. (at the Weiskirchnerstraße cash desk)
€ 9.90 with MAK Guide / € 7.90 / reduced € 5.50
Free admission on Saturdays®

Opening Hours

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