

Press Release

BOLD AND FREE! The Invasion of Hidden Objects

Opening Tuesday, 8 December 2020, 10 a.m.–7 p.m.
Free admission
Exhibition Venue MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates 8 December 2020 – 6 June 2021

At the end of this exceptionally difficult year 2020, the MAK's impromptu exhibition *BOLD AND FREE! The Invasion of Hidden Objects* invites you to embark on an unusual voyage of discovery through the MAK Collection. Museum highlights and other special items—some of which have never or seldom been shown in public before—are leaving our depot for a short time to invade the Permanent Collection Rooms and the MAK DESIGN LAB, resulting in some surprising scenarios. In this exhibition staged by design studio mischer'traxler and Janina Falkner, more than 100 hidden masterpieces temporarily hijack locations previously reserved for other works, giving rise to some unexpected associations, playful constellations, and paradoxical situations.

Factors such as lighting conditions, restoration guidelines, size, or lack of a suitable context often preclude our permanently showing highlights from the MAK Collection. And temporary exhibitions are not always fitting places for such works. But the state of emergency imposed on all cultural institutions by COVID-19 has inspired the MAK to undertake this unconventional project. Closures and program postponements have created not only a cultural vacuum but also the opportunity to embark on new initiatives and take a fresh look at our own archives. These exceptional items have been selected by MAK staff members who have worked with the collection for years: curators, collection staff, restorers, art educators—and the museum's management.

The selection of objects includes, for instance, Egon Schiele's drawing *Bauernkrüge* [Peasants' Jugs] from 1918—in which the artist focuses not on the human form—his usual subject—but on still-life, on objects of everyday use. There's also a 16th century carpet from eastern Persia, sewn together from innumerable fragments, as well as the 20th century *Delphos* dress, famous for its timeless design, created by the Spanish all-round talent Mariano Fortuny. Outstanding design drawings from the Wiener Werkstätte, a unique art book, and magnificent 16th century garment jewelry from Hall in the Tyrol also temporarily take center stage in the MAK Permanent Collection Rooms.

This "invasion of hidden objects" brings a certain amount of chaos to the usual orderliness of the MAK Permanent Collection and MAK DESIGN LAB. A number of playful and intellectually stimulating confrontations arise from this temporary dialogue between works of applied art and exhibits in the MAK Contemporary Art Collection. "Under the influence of these numerous small-scale invasions, quasi-parasitic or quasi-symbiotic

relationships arise, creating something entirely new and different. The museum's orderly structure is disrupted; its *status quo* becomes the exhibition's plaything, "according to the curatorial team. Freshly created patterns of discourse thus invite you to explore new and unusual perspectives at your leisure.

Loudly proclaiming its presence, the bridal dress of Baroness Caroline von Holzhausen, made in Vienna in 1793, elbows its way into a showcase embellished with elaborate Renaissance glasses, ruining the discreet atmosphere created by the room's filigree inventory. Elsewhere, in the Carpet Room, the curators have removed a piece of visitors' furniture from the Permanent Collection—articulating, as it were, a gestural recommendation—while in the Biedermeier Room two pieces of furniture start to engage in gossip. The scenario highlights the subjectivity of Heinz Frank's designs: his furniture piece *SITZ DOCH SEELE* [JUST SIT SOUL] from 1990 always has a drawer open—ready to speak its mind.

A great many chairs and shelves in the Vienna 1900 Room have been pushed aside by Anna-Lülja Praun's 1959 settee designed for Herbert von Karajan. By way of exception, space has been made here among her male colleagues for a female architect. Postcolonial counternarratives have also been included. The curator team does indeed understand itself as a matchmaking agency for museum exhibits, bringing together artistic allusions with their original objects of reference. Exhibits also often get paired off based on ostensibly formal similarities. The Baroque Room plays games involving redoubling and reduplication: there a Chiavari armchair has made it onto the roof of Donald Judd's minimalist *Room in Room*. "Bold and free!" it seems to be shouting.

Visually structured leitmotifs created by mischer'traxler link these creative invasions as they sweep through the museum's rooms, highlighting and complementing narratives arising between object and display, hinting gently at underlying themes, and inspiring visitors to create their own novel associations. Theresa Hattinger's striking graphic design forcefully underscores these intrusive presentations. Families, children, and the young at heart are invited to explore the exhibition using a treasure map to hunt for hidden masterpieces.

With *BOLD AND FREE! The Invasion of Hidden Objects*, the MAK continues its collaboration with the internationally renowned design studio mischer'traxler. In 2019 the studio reconceptualized and networked the MAK Collection within the framework of the MAK DESIGN LAB's reconfiguration in line with contemporary design perspectives. In this incredibly difficult year 2020, a creatively unconventional, imaginative approach is once more being used to communicate the diversity of the MAK Collection.

Press photos are available for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://www.mak.at/en/press).

Press Data

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Exhibition Dates	8 December 2020 – 6 June 2021
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (until further notice), Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Curator	Janina Falkner, New Concepts for Learning, MAK
Guest Curators	mischer'traxler studio (Katharina Mischer, Thomas Traxler)
MAK Admission	€ 14 / reduced € 11 / family ticket € 15 Every Tuesday from 6 to 9 p.m.: admission € 6 Free admission for children and teens under 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Cécilia Barani Sandra Hell-Ghignone T +43 1 711 36-233, -212, -229 presse@MAK.at www.MAK.at

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