



MAK

Press Release

FRANZ JOSEF ALTENBURG
Block, House, Tower, Scaffold, Frame

Opening	Tuesday, 16 March 2021, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK FORUM MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	17 March 2021 – 25 April 2021
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (until further notice) Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

On the occasion of his 80th birthday, the MAK is dedicating an exhibition in the MAK FORUM to the Austrian ceramist Franz Josef Altenburg (* 15 March 1941, Bad Ischl). In *FRANZ JOSEF ALTENBURG: Block, House, Tower, Scaffold, Frame*, objects chosen by Altenburg himself, both personally owned by him and from private collections, provide an overview of his creative oeuvre spanning 60 years. The exhibition includes the work groups *Blocks, Houses, Stage Sets, Towers, Scaffolds, and Frames*. Film documentation of the work of this important ceramics artist complement the presentation. Exactly twenty years after *ELEMENTS, OBJECTS: Ceramics by Franz Josef Altenburg*, the MAK is thus presenting a second exhibition of his work.

Franz Josef Altenburg's oeuvre stands in the great tradition of Modernist Viennese ceramics. He developed his unique stylistic idiom during his training at the Graz School of Arts and Crafts under Hans Adametz, during his time working with Gudrun Wittke-Baudisch for Hallstatt Ceramics, and subsequently as a freelance artist in the studio of Gmunden Ceramics—inspired by the innovative approaches of such pioneers as Kurt Ohnsorg. At the same time Altenburg's solid practical training—leading to his being awarded the title of Master Potter (stove fitter and crocker)—laid the foundation for his work in his own studio in Breitenschützing (Upper Austria), where he has been active as a freelance ceramics artist since 1976.

Manifesting his radical approach to his material, clay, the sculptures of Franz Josef Altenburg are characterized by vessel-shaped forms and architectonic elements, by more or less regular pared-down constructions. As his artistic precursors, he likes to cite Minimalists such as Donald Judd, as well as his former studio partner at Gmunden Ceramics Anton Raidel.

Through his decades-long engagement in the Stoob (Burgenland) and Gmunden ceramics symposia, he has influenced whole generations of young ceramists in Austria, who today cite him as an important inspiration in the development of their own diverse approaches to ceramics.

Following the MAK exhibition *FRANZ JOSEF ALTENBURG: Block, House, Tower, Scaffold, Frame*, in a cooperation between the MAK and the Oberösterreichische Landes-Kultur GmbH a comprehensive catalog and a further exhibition in Bad Ischl (21 July – 22 August 2021) in the stables of the Imperial Villa are planned. Within the framework of this exhibition, the artist will be awarded the Gold Medal of Honor for services to the Austrian Republic.

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

Press Data

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Curator Rainald Franz, Curator, MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection
MAK Admission € 14 / reduced € 11 / family ticket € 15
Free admission for children and teens under 19
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