



MAK

Press Release

ANDREAS DUSCHA: SKY GLOW

Opening Tuesday, 9 February 2021, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Exhibition Venue CREATIVE CLIMATE CARE GALLERY
 MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates 10 February – 28 March 2021

In his solo exhibition *SKY GLOW*, visual artist Andreas Duscha presents a series of new, analogue photographs and mirror works addressing the disappearance of the night sky as a consequence of increasing light pollution. Supposedly a natural given, nocturnal darkness in some regions is increasingly even regarded a natural or cultural asset worth protecting and is preserved by the UNESCO by means of so-called “Starlight Reserves.” In a visually striking way, Duscha stages the timeless beauty and mysterious complexity of nocturnal darkness and its impressive ecological dimensions in the MAK CREATIVE CLIMATE CARE GALLERY.

The absence of total darkness interferes with biodiversity and the circadian rhythms of living beings. The night also holds great significance for cultural productions: The starlit sky at night emphasizes the endlessness of the universe. It blurs dimensions and visual reality, perception and emotional experience are challenged. Since Romanticism, art and literature have contemplated the night, while astronomy and meteorology have scientifically measured the planets and their impact on us.

In rural, less illuminated regions several thousand celestial bodies can be seen with the naked eye. In contrast, in densely populated cities nowadays merely a few dozen remain visible. Dark sky preserves that, according to measurements, count as the darkest regions in Austria (like, for example, Gesäuse National Park in Styria) are becoming ever more important for the preservation of the night.

Andreas Duscha captures this absolute darkness with a pinhole camera on analogue monochrome film. The pinhole camera functions as a darkroom (“Camera obscura”); light only enters through a tiny opening, a “pinhole.” All light emitting points of the recorded scene are captured on the film through long exposure and create the final image.

The title of the exhibition refers to the “sky glow,” the bright glowing of the night sky over large cities that increasingly interferes with the darkness. According to a study on behalf

of the Viennese Department for Environmental Protection (MA 22), the Viennese “light dome” disturbs the natural night in an area of more than 15 000 square kilometers. But there is also good news: Measurements over several years are indicating a trend towards a reduction of the light pollution, among other things, as a consequence of the conversion to LED technology.

A mural at the front wall of the CREATIVE CLIMATE CARE GALLERY shows fictitious views of the Viennese starlit sky calculated without the light dome and provides the background for a series of framed cyanotypes that capture Vienna’s “sky glow” and were exposed all night long. The characteristic blue color of the works turns them into a symbolic expression of the transition from day to night—the so called “blue hour.”

“Industrial melanism” refers to a special phenomenon of successive biological adaptation to the changing conditions of light and dark as a consequence of increasing industrialization and urbanization. Duscha dedicates two photograms to the peppered moth: At the end of the 19th century, this special moth changed its color from speckled white to uniform black to be able to better blend in with the polluted ecosystem and camouflage. The macro images Duscha created with the help of the Natural History Museum show the impressive texture of the light-sensitive, nocturnal insect.

We especially also connect darkness and night to sleep, which is essential for most species to maintain vital body functions. Too much light disrupts the formation of important sleep hormones. The artist etches the chemical compounds of the hormones responsible for sleep at night, i.e. serotonin, melatonin, adenosine, and tryptophan, into handmade mirrors with different levels of transparency.

The tools the artist uses are also part of the exhibition *ANDREAS DUSCHA: SKY GLOW*: One showcase presents contemporary pinhole cameras („Hi-Tech“), a mobile developing tank, an analogue reflex camera with a macro lens, as well as an analogue light meter (“Kaufmann’s Posograph”) the size of a smartphone, which facilitates the calculation of the correct exposure time through combinatorial settings.

Andreas Duscha (* 1976 in Heidenheim an der Brenz, Germany, lives and works in Vienna) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. From 2002 to 2010, he was a member of the artist collective Mahony. Duscha has received several awards including the Birgit Jürgenssen prize (2006), the Austrian state scholarship for artistic photography (2007), and the state scholarship for fine arts (2009). He participated in several international artist-in-residence programs including the renowned studio scholarship for photographers by the BMKÖS at the ISCP in New York.

CREATIVE CLIMATE CARE GALLERY

In the context of the newly named CREATIVE CLIMATE CARE GALLERY, exhibitions take place at the MAK that address climate, environment, and sustainability and thereby highlight the essential contribution of design, architecture, and art to a positive change of our society. The MAK encourages artists and creatives to contribute to overcoming the climate and overall ecological crisis and to participate in shaping eco-social living conditions in the Digital Age.

Cooperation with FOTO WIEN

The exhibition *SKY GLOW* was produced as the MAK's contribution to FOTO WIEN 2021: "Rethinking Nature / Rethinking Landscape" which, however, was postponed to 2022. The MAK exhibition will take place as planned, there will be a new contribution for 2022.

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

Press Data

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Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (until further notice) Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Curator	Marlies Wirth, Curator, Digital Culture and MAK Design Collection
MAK Admission	€ 14 / Reduced € 11 / Family Ticket € 15 Free admission for children and teens under 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Cäcilia Barani Sandra Hell-Ghignone T +43 1 711 36-233, -229, -212 presse@MAK.at www.MAK.at

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