



MAK

Press Release

MAK DESIGN LAB

From art to the everyday world and a new quality of life: a totally new interpretation of the MAK Study Collection marks the 150-year anniversary of the MAK

Press Conference	Monday, 12 May 2014, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Monday, 12 May 2014, 6:30 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK DESIGN LAB MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	permanent
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.

On the occasion of its 150th anniversary, the MAK is positioning itself more clearly than ever before as a museum for arts and the everyday world: the MAK DESIGN LAB, which will open precisely on the MAK's 150th birthday on 12 May 2014, focuses the world-famous MAK Collection more clearly on everyday life and defines design as the central driving force to improve quality of life and to solve important issues of our future. Almost 2,000 exhibits arranged by thematic area across 1,900 m² of newly designed exhibition space create inspirational connections between historical arts and crafts and contemporary design creations.

“With the MAK DESIGN LAB, we hope to interest new visitor groups in the applied arts by clearly showing their relation to the everyday world—well off the beaten path of opulence that many museums of applied arts have been aiming at up to now. Our declared objective is to enter into people's everyday lives via artistically designed functional objects,” explains MAK Director Christoph Thun-Hohenstein.

The MAK DESIGN LAB expands our understanding of design—a term that is traditionally grounded in the 20th and 21st centuries—by including previous centuries, thereby enabling a better evaluation of the concept of design today. Thun-Hohenstein: “Design has a duty to improve our lives. In the process it needs to reconcile individuals' pursuit of prosperity with society's long-term interests, such as the conservation of natural resources and sustainability, social cohesion, and lifelong learning. The digitalization of

our lives is opening up additional possibilities for design. The MAK DESIGN LAB focuses on this modified understanding of design's role."

With the MAK DESIGN LAB, the museum has undertaken a radical new positioning of the former MAK Study Collection, and the design concept of the LAB has been consciously chosen as a contrast to the MAK Permanent Collection. Andy Warhol once said: "When you think about it, department stores are kind of like museums." Taking this idea the other way round, the MAK DESIGN LAB is oriented on the dramaturgy of a supermarket. In cooperation with the renowned Austrian design team EOOS and under the curatorial supervision of the IDRV – Institute of Design Research Vienna, a dynamic concept emerged in which collection objects can be contrasted or placed in relation to each other, making it possible to directly experience art historical and interdisciplinary interconnections.

Whereas the MAK Study Collection was arranged in a material-specific manner for more than 20 years, the MAK DESIGN LAB has been designed so that themes and spaces converge. Newly created connecting passages and the conversion of parts of the former hallways result in a new spatial experience. The **MAK FORUM** provides an innovative, multifunctional space that can be used as a place of encounter or as an experimentation area for exhibitions, presentations, and educational program formats. The MAK Gallery has been integrated into this spatial constellation; on 12 May 2014, a solo exhibition by the Viennese architecture team "soma architecture" will open there within the context of the series *APPLIED ARTS. NOW*, developed in cooperation with the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Even the furnishings create proximity to the visitors: table-high pedestals place the objects at eye level or offer the possibility of active investigation at "workplaces." Modular programming of the exhibition spaces facilitates maximum flexibility. The MAK DESIGN LAB can present spontaneous initiatives or be adapted to current developments and themes. Through formats such as carte blanche, crowdsourcing, and participative projects, it will in future undergo continual transformations. The IDRV will contextualize the individual areas with interventions relevant to daily life that propose positive change towards a socially and ecologically sustainable society. Subjects include production, gender democracy, nutrition and biodiversity, the circular economy, the impacts of climate change, globalization, the democratization of knowledge, and lifestyle. In other words, areas that are generated from an open concept of design and that are not only of importance for designers. The MAK DESIGN LAB thus presents itself as a place that embraces themes that are relevant for positive change.

Integrated in this interconnected concept, visitors will find interactive thematic areas devoted to topics such as Cooking, Eating and Drinking, Sitting, Artistic Production, Industrial Production, Alternative Production, Transporting, Communicating, and Ornament, as well as to the generation-spanning, inspirational universal designer Josef Hoffmann and the fashion designer Helmut Lang.

DENSELY DESIGNED THEMATIC DISPLAYS

It is not by coincidence that the sequence of displays in the MAK DESIGN LAB begins with an overview of various production methods. In the thematic area **Industrial Production**, selected everyday objects and technology products honored with the Austrian State Prize for Design, such as Ernst W. Beranek's *Automatic Toastgrill* (1967) or Gerhard Heufler's unmanned helicopter *CAMCOPTER® S-100* (2005), introduce an account of industrial production and market dogmas. The area **Alternative Production** presents new pathways in design that imply changed consumption behavior, new forms of economic activity and resource utilization, and social change. Experiments with materials, such as those of Studio Formafantasma or Dirk Vander Kooij, are included as well as Jesse Howards' 3D printed, prototypical DIY household appliances. In contrast, the thematic area **Artistic Production** presents positions from the MAK Contemporary Art Collection, for example those of Herbert Bayer, Verena Dengler, Birgit Jürgenssen, Gerwald Rockenschaub, or Jenni Tischer, which illuminate a variety of questions relating to aesthetics and the processing value of materials in the contexts of history, cultural patina, gender, or social practices. Test zones have been configured between craftsmanship (human) and industry (machine). The starting point for the display is *Model La Machine Célibataire* (2012) by the Atelier Van Lieshout, a model of a "bachelor machine." The MARS has donated this work to the MAK Collection on the occasion of the MAK's 150th birthday. With this endowment the MARS has set an example and hopes that many others will follow in its footsteps during this anniversary year.

The point of departure for the thematic area **Cooking** is the famous *Frankfurt Kitchen* designed in 1926 by the Viennese architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, which is considered to be the prototype of the modern built-in kitchen. This section runs the gamut from designs by Josef Hoffmann and Edmund Moiret, which mark the beginning of the exploration of the artistic possibilities inherent in kitchens, to standardized models and surprising design solutions, including some from the Southeast Asian region, and to totally utopian objects, for example creations by Ettore Sottsass or Jerszy Seymour.

The area **Eating and Drinking** offers an impressive journey through time to tableware settings in various epochs. Beginning with the Middle Ages, when the dining table was not yet a fixture in the home, through the Renaissance, which saw the first stirrings of interest in dining table decoration, and the Baroque, during which uniform tableware sets were invented, up to the democratization of dining in the second half of the 20th century, this excursion presents all the varieties of table setting in the European region. Sacred vessels and tea bowls used in the Japanese tea ceremony are also to be seen here, as are tablecloths, napkins, and menu cards. A discussion of eating and drinking as a source of inspiration for contemporary art is offered by positions such as those of Nina Levett and Eat Artists Sonja Stummerer and Martin Hablesreiter.

In the LAB area devoted to the dominant posture assumed in everyday life today, **Sitting**, selected chairs and stools provide examples of some of the numerous types of seating furniture and a comparison of various materials, functionalities, and stages of development. This area also presents sitting postures collected and drawn by the American anthropologist Gordon W. Hewes in the 1950s: they call attention to the crouching and squatting positions assumed in societies that up to now have, to a large extent, not used furniture for sitting.

The central room of the MAK DESIGN LAB is devoted to the creative zenith of Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte. The compact exhibition **Hoffmann, Geometric** presents what is known as the geometric phase of Josef Hoffmann, the most influential applied artist in Vienna around 1900, and makes it clear why his geometric designs are considered the most artistically revolutionary and exciting contribution of applied arts in Viennese modernism. Like no other, Hoffmann—who was a founding member of the Secession, the Wiener Werkstätte, and the Österreichischer Werkbund as well as an architect, exhibition designer, furniture designer, and designer of objects in glass, porcelain, ceramics, textiles, and metal—stands for the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk or total work of art, for involvement in a variety of disciplines, and for internationality. By including only objects from his most important creative phase in this area of the exhibition, it is hoped that the significance of Hoffmann and his associates will be communicated to a broad public. In dialog with the Hoffmann exhibition, the adjoining room **Decorating** presents textiles produced by the Wiener Werkstätte, Backhausen & Söhne, and Philipp Haas & Söhne. They include characteristic examples by renowned designers such as Josef Hoffmann, Dagobert Peche, and Koloman Moser, which illustrate the many and various facets of textile production in the Viennese context.

A special area is devoted to the fashion designer Helmut Lang, who had a strong influence on fashion design between the late 1980s and 2005 with his experimental and minimalist style. In the **HELMUT LANG ARCHIVE** there are documents pertaining to store architecture, advertising campaigns, fashion show videos, and look books, as well as corporate identity materials from the years 1986 to 2004, donated in their entirety to the MAK. The museum is the only institution in the world to house such material illustrating the origins of the Helmut Lang brand. Further context is provided by selected designs of clothing and accessories, which also highlight Lang's use of materials. Similarly, they document his conceptual and sculptural design process and are consequently of use for research purposes. In 2005 Lang retired permanently from fashion in order to concentrate fully on his art. Even now, almost a decade later, Lang's work remains a touchstone for a new generation of designers who look to develop and interpret his ideas in the same way that the previous generation looked to the work of Yves Saint Laurent.

Textiles, one of the MAK's core areas, are also the subject of the presentation of the Archive of the Technologisches Gewerbemuseum (TGM – Museum of Industrial Technology, Vienna) in the **Collecting** space. The TGM's unique collection of textile samples, given to the MAK in 1914, almost exhaustively documents the extraordinarily immense textile production (some 20,000 samples) of the Habsburg Empire during the Biedermeier period (about 1820 to 1840). A wide variety of textile samples mounted on cardboard panels illustrate the impressive abundance and innovativeness of this production.

The thematic area **Protecting and Adorning** is devoted to applied arts objects related to the hands and feet. Objects from Europe and Asia dating from the Middle Ages to the present, many of them being exhibited for the first time, revolve around the theme of the body's extremities as an inspiration for jewelry, protective accessories, and other artistic products. The exhibits range from shoes, gloves, jewelry, bags, snuffboxes, and fans to art objects and design objects, including Walter Pichler's famous *Finger Stretcher* (1967).

Artistic containers for objects from various eras and cultures—from wastebaskets through cabinets, boxes, chests, and cases for transporting furniture to (jewelry) cases—are on display in the thematic area **Transporting**. In addition to containers, this area also includes bags from Europe, America, the Islamic world, and China, dating from the late Middle Ages into the 20th century, as well as various forms of packaging. The thematic area **Ornament** places a special focus on the fact that ornaments have

been regarded as an important instrument of communication. It explores the multifacetedness and significance as well as the banalities of ornaments and ornamentation, and invites visitors to contribute their ideas about this subject.

The adjoining thematic area **Communicating** presents the development of lettering, from the tradition of monastic scriptoria for the purpose of making copies of religious scripts through individual new interpretations by scribes and printers such as Aldus Manutius, Johann Neudörffer, Giambattista Bodoni, or François Didot to reform movements such as those initiated by William Morris or Rudolf von Larisch. It also takes a look at the emancipation of script as an artistic medium, as shown in examples by Lawrence Weiner, Jenny Holzer, or Betty Leirner. In this context, posters document the broad field of applied arts that is graphic design. Examples from the digital age such as the *E-Book Reader* round off the subject area typography. Building on the requirements set in the 18th century as a result of the standardization of font sizes, it will be demonstrated how the digital building block “pixel” creates the visual appearance of a letter on a screen.

The Visitors’ Role

The MAK understands design as an open and globally interconnected lab that works towards solutions with the participation of consumers. Accordingly visitors to the MAK DESIGN LAB are invited to actively share their experiences as well as to contribute their own questions and suggestions.

Complementary to the intervention by the IDRVI – Institute of Design Research Vienna, there are questions in some rooms that revolve around the subject area “Positive Change.” Video statements by various people provide a broad spectrum of opinion and immerse the MAK DESIGN LAB in an atmosphere rich with multiple perspectives and a diversity of voices. Visitors can contribute to the debate about the themes and expand the spectrum by suggesting yet more questions.

Two “workplaces” enable visitors to delve deeper into the topics, yet they also encourage participation in current MAK projects. In the area *Ornament* visitors are invited to make suggestions that could lead to a continuous change in the exhibits on display. At www.MAK.at fabric samples from the archive of the Technologisches Gewerbemuseum (TGM) are available to adapt and for free download; as a result of this measure, they have become intercreative common property.



The flexible use **MAK FORUM** plays a key role for the MAK DESIGN LAB. In collaboration with designers and partners from research and business, it investigates current issues in design. It is home to lectures, discussions, and film screenings, but also offers space to test exhibition and educational formats. At regular intervals throughout the year, we offer the opportunity for visitors to communicate directly with designers as well as to design and produce their own functional objects, and then test their suitability for everyday use.

Detailed texts about the individual thematic areas of the MAK DESIGN LAB, as well as press photos, are available for download at MAK.at/press.

Press Fact Sheet

MAK DESIGN LAB

From art to the everyday world and a new quality of life: a totally new interpretation of the MAK Study Collection marks the 150-year anniversary of the MAK

Press Conference	Monday, 12 May 2014, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Monday, 12 May 2014, 6:30 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK DESIGN LAB MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition dates	permanent
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.
Design	EOOS
Curatorial Supervision	IDRV – Institute of Design Research Vienna
MAK Admission	€ 7.90 / reduced € 5.50 / Family card € 11 Free admission for children and teens up to 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Sandra Hell-Ghignone Veronika Träger Lara Steinhäuser T +43 1 711 36-233, 229, 212 presse@MAK.at, www.MAK.at

Vienna, 12 May 2014