

(CON)TEMPORARY FASHION SHOWCASE: Anna-Sophie Berger. The Years

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MAK – Press and Public
Relations

Press Release
Vienna, 12.5.2023

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Press Tour
Friday, 12.5.2023, 10 am

With the exhibition *Anna-Sophie Berger. The Years* (13.5.–20.8.2023), the MAK is commencing the season in the Geymüllerschloß with the fourth iteration of the series *(CON)TEMPORARY FASHION SHOWCASE*. Initiated in 2022, the format offers fashion designers, artists, and those interested in fashion a platform for the examination of contemporary fashion themes through exhibitions, discussions, and collateral events. Anna-Sophie Berger's site-specific exhibition *The Years*, tailored to the Biedermeier ensemble, addresses the relationship between fashion and time and is characterized by a continuous transgression of genre boundaries. This is manifested through an oscillation of the exhibited objects between the poles of art and design.

Anna-Sophie Berger studied fashion design and transmedia art at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Her artistic practice is distinguished by the eclectic combination of sculptural dimensions, cinematic, photographic, and found footage techniques, as well as her curatorial staging of historic objects or the work of artist peers.

For *The Years*, she presents garment pieces, including silhouettes from her diploma collection *Fashion is Fast* (2013), as well as selected artworks from the collections of the MAK and the Theatrumuseum within the historical interior of the Geymüllerschloß. Her fashion practice can be read within the semantics of both design and art. Four sofas presented in *The Years*, which were commissioned in 2018 by the couture house Balenciaga, and for which the artist used archival fabrics of the French fashion label, can be seen to represent one such alleged breach of genre boundaries: grouped together in a cubic formation, the couches, designed for use by customers in Balenciaga shops, are derived from an earlier artwork of Berger's titled *4 Sofas* (2018), which combined various dead stock fabrics.

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Historic objects selected by Berger include Biedermeier greeting cards and fashion photographs of the Wiener Werkstätte from the MAK Collection as well as role portraits from Nestroy productions from the Theatermuseum's collection. These objects share a connection with the historic setting of the Geymüllerschloss and the titular aspect of temporality.

In *The Years*, the artist draws from Walter Benjamin's concept of history, which is founded on his observations of contemporary fashion and finds expression in the unfinished *Arcades Project*. Equally crucial for Berger's engagement with fashion theory were Elizabeth Wilson's *Adorned in Dreams* (1985), an analysis of the relationship of fashion and modernity, and Roland Barthes' classic *The Language of Fashion*, which appeared in the mid-twentieth century. In her work, Berger continuously investigates the basic human desire to semantically decipher clothing or to impute readability. This is palpable in, among other things, the no-smoking symbols embroidered on fabric for her sculpture *Don't Smoke* (2023) or the shoe sizes that completely cover the slippers of her collection *Fashion is Fast* (2013).

Finally, a distinctly personal approach is present in the exhibition: vestiges from the artist's family business for costume jewelry, which went bankrupt in 2004 - retrieved from her grandmother's basement, or a Moschino suit from her mother's wardrobe with the provocative caption *Waist of Money* embroidered in gold at waist height link intimate poetic spheres with rational analysis. Berger dedicated an entire catalog essay to this Moschino suit on the occasion of the *life and limbs* exhibition, which she curated at the Swiss Institute New York in 2019.

Berger borrows the title of the exhibition *The Years* from Virginia Woolf's publication of the same name (The Hogarth Press, London 1937). In it, Woolf combines sociocritical essays with fiction while tracking the history of one family over a half a century.

Anna-Sophie Berger (* 1989 in Vienna) lives and works in New York and Vienna. Her works have been shown at the MACRO Museum in Rome (2021), at the Bonner Kunstverein (2020), at Cell Project Space in London (2019), and at the mumok in Vienna (2016), among other institutions. She is the recipient of the 2017 *ars viva* Prize of Visual Arts and the 2016 Kapsch Contemporary Art Prize. In the fall of 2023, Anna-Sophie Berger will start her MAK Schindler Scholarship at its Los Angeles branch.

The exhibition (CON)TEMPORARY FASHION SHOWCASE. *Anna-Sophie Berger. The Years* will open with a performance conceived by the artist and a conversation on the subject of "Fashion and Time."

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



Overview of the program for the opening weekend

Sat, 13 May 2023

3.30 pm

Talk *Fashion and Time*

In the talk with the artist Anna-Sophie Berger, the author of *Benjamin on Fashion*, Philipp Ekardt (employee of the NOMIS research project *Traveling Forms*, University of Constance), and Stefanie Kitzberger (Senior Scientist at Collection and Archive, Director of Collection Fashion and Textiles, University of Applied Arts Vienna), we look at the boundaries of fashion and art, discuss the moment at which fashion becomes unmodern, and question its revolutionary potential.

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5 pm

Opening performance

Don't Smoke in the garden of the Geymüllerschloß
"Die Welt steht auf kein' Fall mehr lang" (The world will certainly not last much longer), one of the most well-known couplets of the Alt-Wiener Volkstheater (old-Viennese popular theater) could already attest as a comment on the situation of the time in 1833. On the occasion of the opening of the exhibition *The Years*, in which, in addition to the overarching theme of *Fashion and Time*, stones also play a central (not unimportant) role, a contemporary interpretation of the well-known *Kometenlied* [Comet Song] from Johann Nestroy's *Lumpacivagabundus* will be performed.

Idea: Anna-Sophie Berger

Vocals: Elisabeth Schwarz

Scenic assistant: Philipp Lossau

Sun, 14 May 2023

2 pm **Dialogue Tour** through the exhibition with Anna-Sophie Berger and curator Lara Steinhäußer

Continually updated details on the program at:
<https://www.mak.at/en/fashionshowcase23>



Press Tour

Friday, 12.5.2023, 10 am

Opening Performance

Saturday, 13.5.2023, 5 pm

Exhibition Venue

MAK Geymüllerschloß,
Pötzleinsdorfer Straße 102, 1180 Vienna

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Exhibition Dates

13.5.–20.8.2023

Opening Hours

In the 2023 season, the Geymüllerschloß is open from 13.5.–3.12.2023,
Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm.

Open until 8 pm on the opening day (until 9 pm in the park)

Curator

Lara Steinhäuser, Curator, MAK Textiles and Carpets Collection

Admission

€ 7

Free admission for children and teens under 19

Free admission with MAK Annual Ticket

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