

## **The History of the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art**

The MAK is a museum and space of experimentation for applied arts at the interface of design, architecture, and contemporary art. Its core competence lies in a contemporary exploration of these fields aimed at revealing new perspectives and elucidating discourse at the edges of the institution's traditions. The MAK focuses its efforts on securing an adequate recognition and positioning of applied arts. It pursues new approaches to its extensive collection, which encompasses various epochs, materials, and artistic disciplines, and develops these approaches to compelling views.

The MAK is a museum for arts and the everyday world. In accordance with a modern understanding of applied arts, it strives to yield concrete benefits for everyday life. The MAK addresses our future by confronting relevant sociopolitical issues from the perspective and approach of contemporary art, applied arts, design, and architecture and, as a driving force, advocates for positive change of our society in social, ecological, and cultural terms. The interaction between applied arts and two of its special fields, design and architecture, on the one hand, and contemporary art on the other, promises a particularly powerful potential.

Founded as the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry in 1863, the MAK is committed to a sustainable improvement of cooperation between art and the economic sphere. It supports collaborations and networks, especially in design and architecture, which facilitate the effective realization of the creative sector's innovative ideas and offers companies new perspectives for positioning themselves on the market. The MAK develops novel ways of collaborating with corporate sponsors particularly in the context of design and architecture labs.

The MAK is a place of encounter, interaction, and intercreativity. It is an international forum of cultural and artistic exchange and dialog with designers, artists, and architects on both an artistic and a scholarly level. In order to fulfill its tasks, it also uses its branch facilities in Vienna (the MAK Tower Gefechtsturm Arenbergpark (closed) and the MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß), as well as in Los Angeles (the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, L.A.) and Brno (the Josef Hoffmann Museum – a joint branch of the Moravian Gallery in Brno and the MAK Vienna). The MAK supports the combination of different creative fields and thus breaks up the self-referential trends of some segments of the art world, providing valuable insights that contribute to a better

mutual understanding. It seeks the exchange with the academic and research fields in various areas of relevance for the MAK as a museum for arts and the everyday world and, specifically, collaborates with the adjacent University of Applied Arts Vienna. The MAK encourages visitors to get actively involved in achievements of the past and the present and also sees itself as a platform for observing how artists deal with critical developments to create pioneering solutions.

The MAK is a place of innovative learning that develops new ways for better understanding applied arts, design, architecture, and contemporary art. Since creative learning constitutes an essential part of applied arts, the MAK faces a two-fold challenge. The MAK increases the political and economic effectiveness of art through new perspectives of applied arts and its special areas of design and architecture, as well as contemporary art. In an age dominated by the digital, the MAK promotes outstanding inventiveness and artistic production and insists upon their relevance, and provides them a creative space, for shaping a sustainable future.

**Christoph Thun-Hohenstein**, General Director and Artistic Director of the MAK