

Francis Alÿs's *Children's Games* in the MAK

The MAK Columned Main Hall will be the stage for a presentation of this powerful short film series and a concert inspired by it, performed as part of Wien Modern

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MAK – Press and PR
presse@MAK.at

Press Release

Vienna, 21.10.2025

Since 1999 Belgian-Mexican artist Francis Alÿs has been portraying children at play all over the world in his powerful short film series *Children's Games*. These internationally acclaimed films demonstrate that children play their games everywhere—even under the most adverse conditions. From 30 October to 6 November, the MAK Columned Main Hall will be the stage for a presentation of these poignant scenes, forming a link to this year's cooperation between the MAK and Wien Modern. For in a unique dialogue between image and sound, on 3 November the Norwegian ensemble CIKADA will be performing new compositions by Angélica Castelló, Aleksandra Gryka, Kim Myhr, and Pierre Slinckx, directly inspired by selected films in the series—transforming their rhythm, passion, and poetry into music.

These memorable scenes were presented in the Belgian pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022 and are being shown for the first time in Austria at the MAK. Soundtracks by the French sound artist Félix Blume accompany some of them, capturing the spontaneous noises of play and underscoring the immediacy of each scene.

"There comes a time when you want to hand over to the next generation," says artist Francis Alÿs (* 1959 Antwerp, lives in Mexico City) of his *Children's Games*. In over 20 years he has captured the universality of children's play, independent of political or social contexts, in to date 39 short documentary films: a bottle is patiently pushed up a mountain in Mexico City; a car tire races wildly downhill in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; a singing mosquito hunt in a malaria-infested land is transformed into a melodic ritual; a game of hopscotch takes place in Hong Kong during the pandemic; kites are flown in Afghanistan; and passports are checked in play in the Ukraine—children's fantasy knows no limits.

The eponymous concert production *Children's Games*, presented as part of Wien Modern, creates a contemplative musical space that captures both the games' childish levity and naivety and their essential seriousness. The

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compositions underscore Francis Alÿs's and Félix Blume's often poetic interpretations of real situations. Sometimes they complement the films' soundtracks during screenings; sometimes they are performed before or after screenings.

Project partners CIKADA and Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival, Wien Modern, Warszawska Jesień, Concertgebouw Brugge and Musea Brugge – BRUSK each chose a composer from Norway, Vienna, Poland, and Belgium for *Children's Games*. Their compositions blend to create a playful and at the same time intense tonal language—flowing, many-layered, and texturally wide-ranging.

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A cooperation between Wien Modern and the MAK



Film Presentation

Francis Alÿs: *Children's Games*. Video series (1999–)

MAK Columned Main Hall, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
30.10.–6.11.2025

Opening Hours

Tue 10 am–9 pm, Wed to Sun 10 am–6 pm

MAK Admission

€ 16.50/15.50*; reduced € 13.50/12.50*; every Tuesday 6–9 pm:
admission € 8/7.50*

Admission free for children and teens under 19

* Online ticket price

Holders of a Wien Modern Festival Pass receive a 20% reduction on admission to the MAK during the period of the film presentation.

Children's Games—Concert with Videos

MAK Columned Main Hall, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
3.11.2025, 5.30 pm

Program:

Francis Alÿs: *Children's Games*. Video series (1999–)

Angélica Castelló: *Juglariceando* (2025 EA)

Aleksandra Gryka: *Imbu* (2025 EA)

Jump Rope (2025 EA)

Step on a Crack (2025 EA)

Papalote (2025 EA)

Pierre Slinckx: *CG#29* (2025 EA)

Kim Myhr: *New Work* (2025 EA)



Participants:
CIKADA Ensemble
Conductor: Christian Eggen
Technical Manager: Trond Kjelsås:

Production and Composition Commission:
CIKADA, Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival, Wien Modern,
Warszawska Jesień, Concertgebouw Brugge, Musea Brugge – BRUSK
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Concert Tickets
€ 10–20 advance sales: wienmodern.at
€ 5 with Wien Modern Festival Pass

Coordination: Kira David (Wien Modern), Max Appel-Palma (MAK)

MAK Press and PR

Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head)
T +43 1 71136-213, judith.schwarz-jungmann@MAK.at

Sandra Hell-Ghignone
T +43 1 71136-212, sandra.hell-ghignone@MAK.at

