

REINSTALLATION

VIENNA 1900—Everyday. A Total Work of Art

1

MAK – Press and PR

presse@MAK.at

Press Release

Vienna, 24.2.2026

Press Conference

Tuesday, 24.2.2026, 10 am

Opening Talk

Daniel Kehlmann on Vienna 1900 and Markus Schinwald's view on it
Tuesday, 24.2.2026, 6.30 pm

With this reinstallation of the Vienna 1900 rooms, the MAK has created atmospheric spaces where visitors can immerse themselves in one of the world's most important collections on this famous chapter of art history. At the invitation of General Director Lilli Hollein and in close communication with the heads of the MAK Collection, the contemporary artist Markus Schinwald developed a new concept for the permanent presentation on this highly influential period. His intention was to create new connections and bridges to the present and broaden our perspective on an era that continues to set standards in design to this day: with a topic-oriented narrative, systematic shifts in perspective, and precise artistic interventions that both re-isolate and contextualize the exhibits. This has resulted in a permanent collection that gives a spectacular stage to the MAK's outstanding holdings of Viennese Modernism and repeatedly leads viewers into settings that make a unique and immediate experience possible.

With Markus Schinwald the MAK has taken the next step in its globally admired practice of collaborating with artists on its permanent collections. In recent years Schinwald has concentrated on the ever-changing conditions of historiography, authorship, and the culture of remembrance. His approach is less committed to specific media than to speculative historiographical methods. Whether in his painting, work for the stage, or curation, Schinwald's work aims at the acquisition of insights, with him understanding insights as the interplay of knowledge and experience.

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MAK General Director Lilli Hollein: “I thank Markus Schinwald for his intensive study of our collection and his work on this project, which we have found so enriching. In communication with the MAK’s team of experts, an exceptional permanent collection has emerged over the past year and a half. Maintaining a modern-day perspective, important questions are asked, experiences enabled, and connections made that let our visitors immerse themselves in this vitally important collection to the MAK as if it were a film.”

Over 700 objects in the new permanent collection of Viennese Modernism provide a cross section of this golden age of applied art in a way that the MAK is in a unique position to offer: Design and decorative arts from Vienna in the period around 1900 constitute one of the most important areas of the MAK Collection and one of the museum’s core competencies. Closely connected with the Secession since 1900, the MAK—founded in 1863 as the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry—and the School of Arts and Crafts (today’s University of Applied Arts Vienna) that grew out of it were where the foundations were laid for reform movements like the Wiener Werkstätte (whose archive is held at the MAK), the German and the Austrian Werkbund, and the Bauhaus. In line with the guiding principle of the Gesamtkunstwerk—or total work of art—there was an intensive dialogue in Vienna between architecture, painting, and applied art that formed the basis of a new aesthetic.

Jointly developed with Markus Schinwald, the new narrative on Viennese Modernism breaks with the previously linear and chronological presentation. Instead, it follows topics and associative connections between objects, ideas, and context into the present.

Intentional and recurrent shifts in perspective and distance are integral creative tools in the new presentation: historians, artists, restorers, dealers, photographers, and visitors all have a different relationship to the objects and ideas of the past. With cinematic methods and variations between wide shots and close-ups, the reinstallation follows a narrative around an “architecture of things” and a re-isolation of singular objects.

“Conventional art histories manufacture a specific, mostly chronological order. Some people call that depth. But that depth is often lacking in breadth. Translated to cinematic methods, I would like to use the tool of different focal lengths. If you want details, you use macro; if you also want to include the surrounding, then you use a wide angle. This exhibition creates a montage of such different perspectives and focal lengths. I think it’s only possible to approach the Viennese idiom if you keep changing and varying the distance to the objects, to spatial art, and to the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk,” according to Markus Schinwald.

Furthermore, while studying Vienna around 1900, Schinwald identified key components and influences that shaped the “hybrid Vienna” of this time: Historicism; Richard Wagner; the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk; Japanese culture, which had mesmerized European creatives; the absence of linear



perspective; the empty space as a key stylistic device; separation of form from size; the lightbulb and electricity; science fiction; silhouettes and transparency; work culture; strict parenting and infantile escapism—all these factors provided the framework for a museum narrative that shows how the movement formed, how it developed, and with what influences it merged.

In the new permanent collection, individual objects no longer stand alone but are given a stage that illustrates how furniture, glasses, dinnerware, or fabric patterns were made to match each other. “The idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk is based on flat correspondence, not on a center and on a single component,” says Schinwald.

In 20 main topics spread across three rooms, visitors will find detailed, almost intimate chapters: they contain miniature worlds of lace doilies and integrated films, the reconstructed facade of Hoffmann’s pavilion for the Paris World’s Fair of 1925 that resembles a large set piece for the stage, or the new presentation of Gustav Klimt’s nine-part working drawing for the execution of the mosaic frieze in Stoclet House in Brussels (1908–1911), for example.

Otto Wagner and the work culture of Modernism are impressively contextualized: double mirroring in a diorama creates an impression of endlessness that anticipates the reorganization of open-plan offices.

Individual stations on topics like ceiling lights, electricity, and music invite visitors to linger. In select places the reinstallation focuses on the tiniest details: such as on Wiener Werkstätte postcards—the “Instagram of the fin de siècle”—or on an interactive map of Vienna in the area opposite that visualizes geographical and temporal connections.

Cross-references revive the unique atmosphere of the early 20th century: the enthusiasm for dioramas, stereoscopy, lenticular technology, and cinema had an influence on many people in the Western world, far beyond the Wiener Werkstätte and the Secession.

This constant immersion—the reconfiguration of the relationship between object and viewer and the intentional inclusion of subjective perception—together with the enormous breadth of the exhibited media and objects afford moments in the reinstallation of Vienna 1900 that could only emerge in such a dialogue between past and present.

Markus Schinwald (* 1973 in Salzburg) studied art and culture in Linz and Berlin. He represented Austria at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011) and has had solo shows around the world, including at the SF MoMA (San Francisco), Kunsthau Bregenz, Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Migros Museum (Zurich), the Milan Triennial, Aspen Art Museum, and the Musée d’art contemporain (Bordeaux). His works can be found in international collections, including at the Tate Modern (London), MoMA (New York), Musée d’Art Moderne (Paris), and the Kunsthau Zürich. Schinwald has taught at Yale University and the



State Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe, among other places; he lives and works in Vienna.

Opening Talk with Daniel Kehlmann

To celebrate the opening of the redesigned permanent collection *VIENNA 1900—Everyday. A Total Work of Art*, the MAK invites you to a special kick-off event: the famous author **Daniel Kehlmann**, author of the novel *The Director* about a film director in the Third Reich whose cinematic direction is reflected in the book, will talk about the exceptional period in Vienna around 1900 and Markus Schinwald's almost filmic view on the MAK Collection, as well as the resulting narrative about this outstanding chapter of art history.

4

Special thanks go to the MAK Art Society, IFMAK, and everyone else who has supported this project.

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



Press Conference

Tuesday, 24.2.2026, 10 am

Opening

Tuesday, 24.2.2026, 7 pm

Free admission to the opening of the exhibition

Opening Talk

Daniel Kehlmann on Vienna 1900 and Markus Schinwald's view on it

Tuesday, 24.2.2026, 6.30 pm

5

Exhibition Venue

MAK Permanent Collection Vienna 1900

MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna

Exhibition Dates

from 25.2.2026

Opening Hours

Tue 10 am–9 pm, Wed to Sun 10 am–6 pm

Artistic Concept

Markus Schinwald

General Director

Lilli Hollein

Team of Experts/MAK Curators

Rainald Franz, Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel, Anne-Katrin Rossberg, Lara Steinhäuser, Mio Wakita-Elis

Head of Conservation and Workshops

Anne Biber

Exhibition Management

Mario Kojetinsky

Assistant: Leonie Kringinger

Coordination

Max Appel-Palma

Texts

Janina Falkner and Julia Krah (Education and Outreach) with contributions by the MAK Curators

Exhibition Architecture

Michael Wallraff



Graphic Design
Christoph Steinegger

Supporting Program
Details at MAK.at/en

MAK Admission
€ 19/18*
reduced € 15.50/14.50*
every Tuesday 6–9 pm: admission € 9.50/8.50*
Free admission for children and teenagers under 19
* Online ticket price

6

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

