

October 8, 2022 to January 29, 2023

Changes

museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien

mumok

Changes

“A sense of the importance of process, of change, of the importance of difference itself, a freedom to take command and work from one’s own ideas,” is how Sam Gilliam once described his artistic practice. Gilliam, one of the great innovators in postwar painting in the USA, passed away in 2022. His work owed a great deal to the Washington Color School in the orbit of Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Alma Thomas, and he was the first Black artist to represent the USA at the Venice Biennale—in the group exhibition organized in the US pavilion in 1972 by the influential curator Walter Hopps.

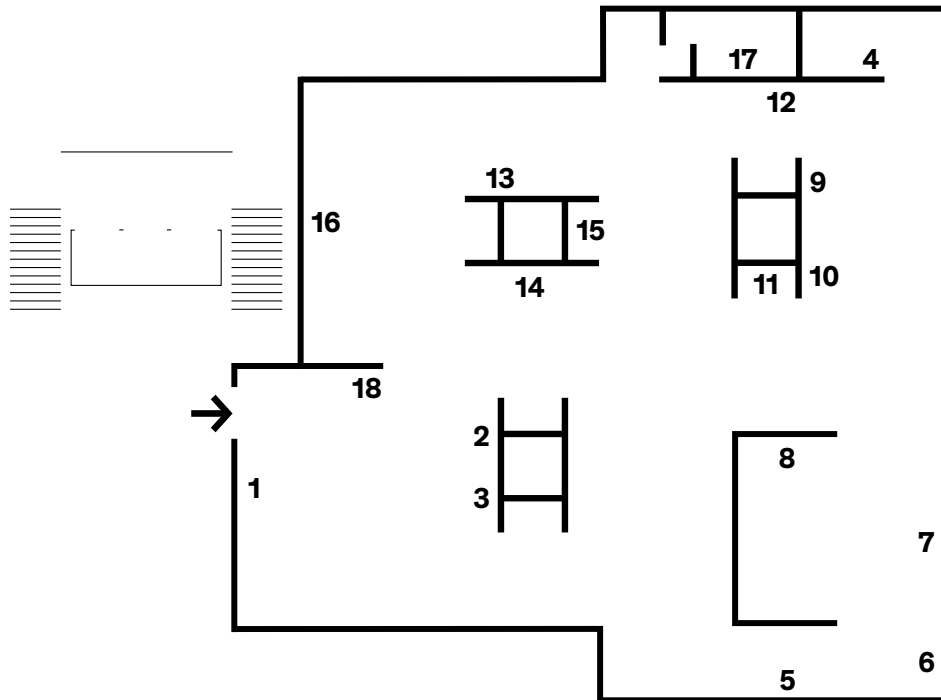
Gilliam’s 1970 work *Change (1)* was originally owned by the Cologne-based conservator and collector Wolfgang Hahn. The canvas, literally soaked in paint, hangs freely in the room without a stretcher frame, resulting in folds and creases that turn it into a three-dimensional object. The title *Change* alludes in part to how Gilliam’s “drape paintings” unfold different effects depending on the space and how they are displayed. Change is thus centrally inscribed in the work.

The exhibition *Changes* not only echoes the title of Gilliam’s piece but takes up the aspect of change by juxtaposing acquisitions from recent years with works that have long been part of the collection—some of them never shown at mumok before—in order to establish new approaches. In this way, *Changes* establishes thematic and formal links and correspondences while putting canonical narratives into perspective by unfurling a variety of narrative modes. For Vienna-based artist Nadim Vardag, questions of presentation are fundamental, both in relation to his own artistic practice and with respect to his understanding of display, which he translates into tangible form in this exhibition. His exhibition architecture is distinguished by a very deliberate and specific approach to spatial conditions and historical contexts.

In September 2022, mumok—Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien celebrates its 60th anniversary. The MuseumsQuartier is the museum’s third location since its first incarnation, the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts (Museum of the 20th Century), opened in 1962 in the Schweizergarten, reactivating the Austrian Pavilion built by Karl Schwanzer for the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels. In 1979 the museum moved to the Baroque premises of the Palais Liechtenstein in Vienna’s Ninth District. The historically and aesthetically very different architectures of these locations naturally left their mark on the exhibition design as postwar modernism, Baroque palace, and white cube entered into varied dialogues with the artworks.

Artists: Monika Baer, Peter Baum, Ștefan Bertalan, Christo, Leidy Churchman, Hanne Darboven, Marcel Duchamp, Don Eddy, János Fajó, Werner Feiersinger, Philipp Fleischmann, Isa Genzken, Sam Gilliam, Domenico Gnoli, Sayre Gomez, Birke Gorm, Julian Göthe, Dan Graham, Renée Green, Jojo Gronostay, Hans Haacke, Maria Hahnenkamp, Candida Höfer, Tess Jaray, Valerie Jaudon, Hildegard Joos, Annette Kelm, Julije Knifer, Jutta Koether, Willi Kopf, Jiří Kovanda, Tetsumi Kudo, Louise Lawler, Carolyn Lazard, Dorit Margreiter, Dóra Maurer, Ulrike Müller, Oswald Oberhuber, Claes Oldenburg, Henrik Olesen, Yoko Ono, Frida Orupabo, Alicia Penalba, Barbara Pflaum, Walter Pichler, Charlotte Posenenske, Josephine Pryde, Florian Pumhösl, Eileen Quinlan, Robert Rauschenberg, Mieko Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Rosemarie Trockel, Doru Tulcan, Josip Vaništa, Emily Wardill, Lois Weinberger, Lawrence Weiner, Ray Yoshida

Exhibition Display: Nadim Vardag

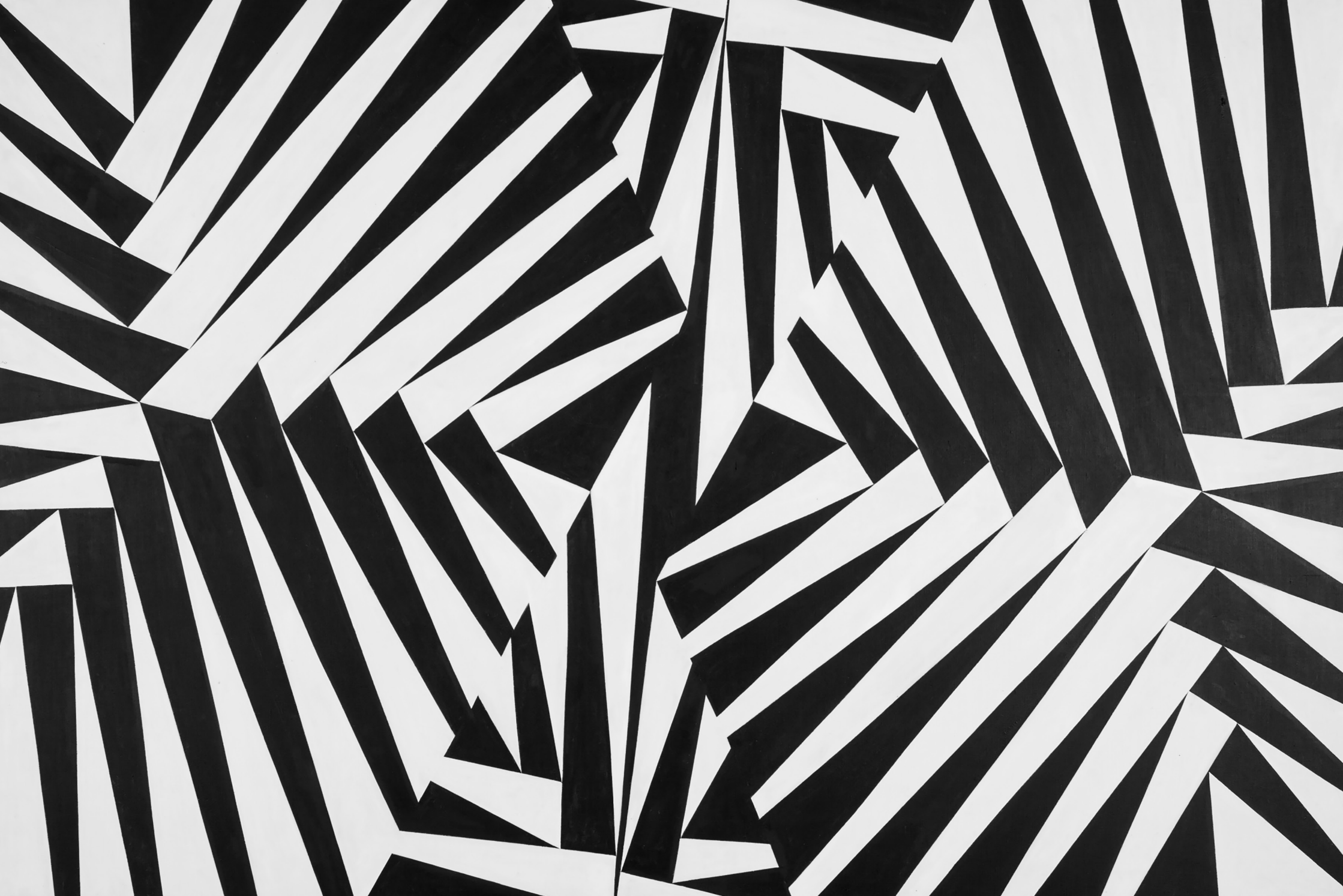


Abstractions

The exhibition begins with the formal vocabulary and myriad variants of abstract art, whose historical, thematic, and even ideological underpinnings and implications can be far more diverse than first meets the eye. Hildegard Joos was one of the pioneers of geometric abstraction in Austria. In 1958, she was the first woman to have a solo exhibition at the Secession. One year later, she moved to Paris, where she joined the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, an association for geometric abstraction and constructivism. Together with her partner, the Swiss philosopher Harold Joos (from 1980 on, they signed their works “H+H Joos”), she developed concepts such as “Equivocal Evolutions” and “Narrative Geometries.” The corresponding emphasis on ambiguity and divergence is exemplified by *Balance 86* (1973) **(2)**, in which a geometric black-and-white contrast is made more dynamic by variations in arrangement and dimension.

In *The Nothing* (2013) **(3)** by Eileen Quinlan, various materialities and aggregate states seem to collide and intertwine. Here, too, we are dealing with an abstract composition in black and white, but in contrast to Joos’s clear, linear forms, Quinlan works with spatial effects that are quite diffuse in some passages, hinting at the—analogue—photographic development process. Valerie Jaudon was part of the Pattern and Decoration movement that emerged in the mid-seventies in reaction to the Pop and Post-Minimal art that dominated the scene at the time. The Pattern and Decoration artists lavished interest on marginalized areas of artistic design, many of which had traditionally been associated with women: applied arts and crafts, for example, including those from other cultural contexts. Jaudon was particularly fascinated by the ornamentation in Islamic art. The movement thus took on a political dimension by deliberately blurring the boundaries between traditional genres, gender roles, and national attributions.

Philipp Fleischmann for his part has focused in recent years on how specific spatial conditions relate to the presentation or analogue projection of film. He has for example used the Secession, the Austrian Film Museum, and even the mumok cinema as settings for specially developed apparatuses in an effort to translate these spaces cinematically. His new complex of works can be described as installation: *Film Sculptures* **(4)** consist of a construction that allows viewers to see both a projected film and the film strip at the same time, visualizing a variation of abstract-geometric forms in different colors—thus offering several alternatives at once to a singular (or even conventional) approach: “I now want to find out what abstraction could be about, and what, in particular, queer abstraction might mean” (Fleischmann).



Textures

The section “Textures” brings together works whose physical qualities and materialities play an important role, along with others featuring text as a writing process, or even the (re)writing of history. Birke Gorm’s multi-part series *common crazies* (2020) **(5)** incorporates passages from *The Common Woman Poems* (1969) by US author and activist Judy Grahn, as well as alluding in its title to “crazy quilting,” in which motley scraps of fabric are pieced together in an obvious patchwork. The idea of collecting and compiling diverse material becomes emblematic here of community, solidarity, and plurality. Gorm’s decision to form the individual letters in her work from old, yellowed necktie lining brings in a feminist undertone.

A feminist exhibition and publication project is what formed the starting point for Jutta Koether’s work *Ohne Titel* (1988) **(6)**. The *Eau de Cologne* project, initiated by the Cologne art dealer Monika Sprüth in the late eighties, involved exclusively women artists and was accompanied by a journal featuring texts by prominent female theorists (and a few of their male colleagues). The third issue, which came out in 1989, included contributions by Koether (who was also an editor and involved in the magazine’s design), Hanne Darboven, Candida Höfer, Louise Lawler, Rosalind Krauss, and Lucy R. Lippard. There was also an article by the art historian Linda Nochlin on the much-discussed painting *L’origine du monde* (1866) by Gustave Courbet. Nochlin’s text describes how the work was received via reproductions that deviated from the original—which Koether in turn incorporated into her own work. She refers not only to Courbet’s explicit and radically fragmented rendering of a naked female body but also to an important voice in feminist art history: Nochlin was after all the author of the influential essay *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (1971).

Henrik Olesen likewise proposes in his work *Some gay-lesbian artists (and/or artists relevant to homo-social culture) born in between 1717–1898* (2006) **(7)** a critical reading of art history. On a black display panel he presents a collection of images and texts, including certain works and biographies that reveal the tragic fates of artists whose sexual orientation stymied their careers or who were only able to achieve fame in certain contexts. Olesen draws attention here to gaps in the dominant narratives. Leidy Churchman refers to a debate that is just as relevant today in the image *The New Yorker* (2017) **(8)**, which shows the cover of a February 2017 issue of the eponymous magazine. We see the bust of the famous Oscar film award trophy, but it has been manipulated: the eyes, cheeks, and nose of the figure are altered, and the red lips are unmistakably feminine. The obviously schematic facial features allude to the criticism vehemently voiced in recent years in many quarters that both the selection of nominees and award winners as well as the composition of the jury in no way represent the reality and diversity of society.



Environments

Another pressing theme today that was already addressed by the historical works on display is our handling of nature and our environment, an issue that has taken on increasing urgency in view of the latest developments in the worsening, human-instigated climate crisis. Architecture, landscape design, and even the way we live our daily lives reveal disparate life realities that affect us all more or less directly. Decades ago, Lois Weinberger already occupied himself with the potential for resistance and resilience of ruderal plants, the kind of vegetation that grows especially on soil contaminated by humans. He made the photograph *Brennen und Gehen* (1997) **(9)** as part of his contribution to documenta X, showing a section of the train station area he had occupied with his installation, its broken asphalt attesting to the literally explosive power of the inconspicuous plants that were to proliferate there. This new value ascribed to wild vegetation stands in stark contrast to the uniform and faceless architecture of single-family US suburban homes that Dan Graham investigates in *Top Housing Development* (1966) **(10)**. Graham shows how the so-called middle class lives, choosing to shoot his images using conventional photographic techniques. The combination of multiple images with text captions harks back to the original concept for a magazine feature that appeared in various versions, including *Homes for America* (1966).

Advertising media that have become dysfunctional are highlighted as the main attraction in Dorit Margreiter's work *Boulevard* (2019) **(11)**, which shows scrapped neon signage at the Neon Museum in Las Vegas. Instead of beguiling onlookers with their bright flashing lights in the darkness, the now battered advertising signs and burnt-out light bulbs are laid bare in the merciless sunlight, creating an impression just as melancholic as the faded coats of paint. Margreiter's archeological approach succeeds at exposing the entertainment industry's highly creative and effective means of simulation.

Jojo Gronostay's photographs for their part ingeniously question ostensibly clear attributions. Titles such as *Big Man*, *Concrete Louvre*, *Totem II*, and *Zaha Zaha* (all 2021) **(12)** allude to architecture, gender roles, or museum or ritual contexts. But what we are actually looking at in these large-format photographs—motifs that have been alienated through fragmentation and color reduction—can be deduced with one look at the label Gronostay founded in 2017, DWMC (Dead White Men's Clothes): "When the first big waves of second-hand clothes from the West came to Ghana in the seventies, locals could not believe that such high-quality clothing would be given away for free, and they assumed that the previous owners must have died" (Gronostay). The label brings the textiles back to the West, where it however serves other, more specific fashion (or art) markets, thus addressing the theme of commercial and cultural transfer as well as the circulation logic in the fashion industry from a postcolonial perspective.

In/Visibilities

The tension between rendering something visible and obscuring it—between visualization and illustration versus concealment—is essential not least to the museum itself. The eventful sixty-year history of mumok (the abbreviated name the museum has been using since 2001) has produced a variety of forms of presentation and exhibition settings. Photographs **(13)** by Peter Baum, Barbara Pflaum, and Candida Höfer show the museum's various locations: the Museum of the 20th Century (better known as the 20er Haus), the Palais Liechtenstein, and the current museum building in the MuseumsQuartier, which opened in 2001.

In addition to ephemera **(14)** on—unorthodox—exhibitions by Claes Oldenburg or Daniel Spoerri, for example, which are not illustrations *per se* but still give an idea of these presentations, as well as works **(15)** by Marcel Duchamp and Tetsumi Kudo that deliberately qualify the possibilities of representation offered by the format of the box, a work by Maria Hahnenkamp is shown, concerned with radically challenging social conventions in how women are represented. Her early, large-scale work *O.T.* (1993) **(16)** is made up of 195 analogue color photographs in which it is impossible to discern the original subject: a woman performing her beauty regime. Hahnenkamp eliminated this clichéd motif by abrading the surface of the prints, the gelatin layer—thus elevating the image-generating chemical components of photography to her subject. What remains is paper as substrate.

Frida Orupabo is a self-taught artist and social worker who has risen to prominence on the art scene through her activities on Instagram (@nemiepeba). Today, she still uses this platform to assemble and display diverse representations of Black people from various current and historical sources—showing images that have long been marginalized by the mainstream **(17)**. Addressing the denial or exclusion of representation in this manner raises not only aesthetic considerations but also issues of social justice and diversity.

Carolyn Lazard's works engage not only with norms in healthcare but also with normative notions of bodily integrity and functionality—with far-reaching ideological implications for our life in society. One effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been to throw into sharp contrast the global inequities and injustices that determine access to medical care. Lazard's publication *Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice* (2019) **(18)** explains and looks at ways to achieve accessibility in the arts context. She strives to create the kind of awareness that makes change possible: "These guidelines are meant to facilitate actual infrastructural change while proposing solutions" (Lazard).

Imprint

mumok
Museum moderner Kunst
Stiftung Ludwig Wien

MuseumsQuartier
Museumsplatz 1
A-1070 Wien
www.mumok.at

General Director: Karola Kraus
Managing Director:
Cornelia Lamprechter

Exhibition

Changes
October 8, 2022 to January 29, 2023

Curator: Naoko Kaltschmidt
Exhibition Display: Nadim Vardag
Exhibition Management:
Barbara Schneider
Collection: Franklin Castanien,
Claudia Freiberger, Sophie Haaser,
Marie-Therese Hochwartner, Nora Linser,
Simone Moser, Holger Reetz,
Astrid Robin, Lisa Sträter, Suska Tunks
Exhibition Installation: Tina Fabijanic,
Wolfgang Moser, Gregor Neuwirth,
Andreas Petz, Helmut Raidl, Sylwester
Syndoman, must. museum standards
Conservation: Christina Hierl,
Andrea Kappes, Paulina Potel,
Andreas Schweger, Karin Steiner,
Susanne Winkler
Audiovisual Technicians:
Wolfgang Konrad, Michael Krupica,
museum standards
Press: Katharina Kober,
Katharina Murschetz
Marketing and Digital: Elisabeth Dopsch,
Katharina Grünbichler, Martina Kuso,
Isabella Pedevilla, Lisa Sycha
Board and Fundraising: Karin Kirste,
Cornelia Stellwag-Carion
Art Education: Lena Arends, Astrid
Frieser, Benedikt Hochwartner,
Marie-Therese Hochwartner,
Maria Huber, Julia Hürner, Ivan Jurica,
Mikki Muhr, Stefan Müller, Selina
Neuhauser, Michaela Pilat, Patrick Puls,
Jörg Wolfert, Sofie Wunsch

Exhibition Booklet

Edited by Jörg Wolfert
Text: Naoko Kaltschmidt
Translation: Jennifer Taylor
Grafic Design: Olaf Osten
Paper: Offset
Print: Gugler Druck

Cover: Sam Gilliam, *Changes*, 1970
© Bildrecht Wien, 2022

© mumok 2022

