

mumok Museum moderner Kunst
Stiftung Ludwig Wien
Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien

Exhibition dates
September 10, 2015 – April 24, 2016

Press tour
Wednesday, September 9, 10 am



Tim Richard
First Aid at the Gate, 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 61 x 71 cm
Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig
Wien, acquired in 1975
Photo: mumok

Prosperous Poison On the Feminist Appropriation of the Austrian Unconscious

Carte blanche for students and teachers in the Master in Critical Studies at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. From September 10, 2015, they will be showing their own view of the mumok collection, in an exhibition entitled *Prosperous Poison*. Five overlapping and intersecting exhibitions will be presented on two levels of the museum: *Schlachten Material Prothesen, Imitating the Imitations of the Imitators, Taking Pictures of the Boys, Love and Taking Care: Capitalistic Yoga and Anger Issues*. Most of the works shown are from the collection of post-1945 art, presenting motifs, gestures and movements in five chapters that together make up a puzzling whole. In preparing and curating this exhibition, the contradictory diversity of the mumok collection was not sacrificed in favor of one overarching theme. Instead impulses and emotions that the material inspires were named and clustered, so as to articulate the gaps and repetitions besides the works selected, and also their function within the mumok collection design.

The Poison of Art and Its Institutions

“The relationship of art to its institutions remains ambivalent. As in the case of luxury goods or pharmaceutical products, it is not easy to take a clear stance toward this poison,” the curators reflect. For these curators from the Master’s in Critical Studies, a critique of bourgeois, heteronormative, and Eurocentric art is taken as given, as is a desire for all the formulations, surfaces, implications, ascribed roles, escape routes, misdemeanors, and corrections. “But neither asceticism nor the hackneyed recipes of criticism can provide countermeasures with which art in an institutional setting can be addressed.”

So as not to fall victim to the standard clichés of criticism, the exhibition subjects existing discourses to a test of their conventions and automatisms. This exhibition encounters and avoids these by offering ambivalent dosages and mixes of themes, forms, and appertaining ideologies, and thus resisting all-too clear and simplifying attempts to create contours and recipes.

One example for the curators’ ambivalent approach is Larry Rivers’s pencil drawing *Frank O’Hara* (1956). This homage to the dearly beloved poet tells of an attempt at subversive break-out within convention.

Historical Documents and Witnesses of the Present

In the curators’ intervention in the collection, and its structure and history, and also in their selection of works for the exhibition, two forms of feminist appropriation come into play. The selected works can be read in terms of their historical and documentary functions as responses, comments, or attacks on the predominant conditions of their own time. The lines and conceptual areas that emerge have led to the title of the exhibition, *Prosperous Poison. On the Feminist Appropriation of the Austrian Unconscious*. Works such as those by Margherita Spiluttini, Zoe Leonard,

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Nancy Graves, Yto Barrada, and Madame d'Ora are not only references to artistic practices in the light of economic realities and social movements, but also become comments on the lacunae and exclusions in a male-dominated art world.

Contemporary interpretation and conscious appropriation by the curators also work to reveal historical appropriations and their causes. "The selection process is not based on the alleged clarity of the criteria of classical quality or historical relevance (nor are these completely ignored). "Instead," as the curators say of their reading of the collection, "the exhibition includes works that are just exciting. Other works seem to clarify something. Others again show things that cannot be grasped, and are worth talking about just because they exist."

Through processes of focus and reinforcement, accompanied by historical distance, this selection and its thematic presentation highlights gaps and absences, moments of intensity, recurrence, and ambivalent traces within both the mumok collection and art history since modernism. Concepts and movements in the discussion of art since 1945—from the postwar experience to capitalist realism—will be reassessed.

Curated by Mirela Baciak, Maren Blume, Diedrich Diederichsen, Marius Ertelt, Jannik Franzen, Leander Gussmann, Ipek Hamzaoglu, Ruth Lang, Sarah Lehnerer, Dominik Mayer, Linnéa Meiners, Inka Meissner, Natalie Ofenböck, Matteo Patti, Florian Pochlatko, Constanze Ruhm, Juliane Saupe, Flora Schausberger, Angela Strohberger, Alain Volpe, Sara Wahl, Michael Wonnerth-Magnusson.

In cooperation with the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Program

Curators' tours

Thursday, December 3, 2015, 7 pm

Taking Pictures of the Boys

Thursday, December 17, 2015, 7 pm

Love

Thursday, January 28, 2016, 7 pm

Taking Care: Capitalistic Yoga and Anger Issues

Thursday, February 4, 2016, 7 pm

Imitating the Imitations of the Imitators

Thursday, March 17, 2016, 7 pm

Schlachten Material Prothesen

mumok cinema

You've Seen Me Before. Between Appropriation and Déjà-vu

Wednesday, November 4 and 11, 2015, 7 pm

Projections and performances by students of the Class for Art and Media, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

In connection with the exhibition and in cooperation with students in Constanze Ruhm's class in Art and Media at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, a number of film and performance works that refer to the works from the mumok collection have been created. The works produced during this project will be shown at mumok cinema on two consecutive evenings.

With contributions by Cana Bilir-Meier, Dmytro Fedorenko, Noël M. G. Gaar, Johannes Gierlinger, Ipek Hamzaoglu, Jessyca R. Hauser, Philipp Hauss, Elisabeth Kihlström, Lisa Lampl, Sanja Lasic, Sarah Lehnerer, Marlene Maier / Michael Simku, Ulrich Reiterer, Daniel Partke, Christiana Perschon, Lilly Pfalzer / Sergio Valenzuela, Liz M. Stuckey, Katharina Swoboda, Lorenz Tröbinger, Julija Zaharijević, ZAVOLOKA und Julia Znoj

Presented by Barbara Kapusta, Axel Stockburger & Constanze Ruhm

Fact Sheet

Posperous Poison

On the Feminist Appropriation of the Austrian Unconscious

Exhibition dates	September 10, 2015 to April 24, 2016
Press conference	September 9, 2015, 10 am
Exhibition location	mumok, MuseumsQuartier, Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien, levels –1, –3
Curators	Students and teachers in the Master in Critical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
Exhibition production	Claudia Dohr, Sohie Haaser, Ulrike Todoroff
Opening hours	Mondays: 2 – 7 pm Tuesdays to Sundays: 10 am – 7 pm Thursday: 10 am – 9 pm
Entrance	Normal € 10 Concessions € 8 or € 7
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