

## MISFITTING TOGETHER.

### Serial Formations of Pop Art, Minimal Art and Conceptual Art

#### MISFITTING TOGETHER

July 1, 2020 to May 24, 2021

"I was reflecting that most people thought the Factory was a place where everybody had the same attitudes about everything; the truth was, we were all odds-and-ends misfits, somehow misfitting together." (Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties*, London 2007/1980, p. 276)

Andy Warhol's titular words serve as the starting point for the first exhibition of mumok's thematic Warhol focus, which is conceived as a trilogy. The two other parts—*ANDY WARHOL EXHIBITS a glittering alternative* and *DEFROSTING THE ICEBOX. Guesting at mumok: The Hidden Collections of the Antiques Collection of Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien and Weltmuseum Wien*—will open on September 25, 2020.



Larry Poons

*Nixe's Mate*, 1961

Photo: mumok – Museum  
moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien  
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Andy Warhol's last exhibition at mumok was in 1981, when he was still alive. Some forty years later, it seems long overdue to present his oeuvre in a comprehensive art-historical context. The collection exhibition, *MISFITTING TOGETHER. Serial Formations of Pop Art, Minimal Art and Conceptual Art* faces the challenge not only of situating Warhol in the field of Pop Art but also of painting a more nuanced picture of the times by including works of Minimal and Conceptual Art—both collection emphases of Peter and Irene Ludwig. Juxtaposing these movements will show how strongly they have influenced each other and how hard it is to pigeonhole them art-historically. Warhol's work can thus be experienced in a contemporary historical context.

Referencing Mel Bochner's article "*The Serial Attitude*," published in *Artforum* in 1967, the collection show explores the serial order as a link of all three art movements: Pop Art, Minimal Art, and Conceptual Art. As Bochner stated in his article, serial arrangement is a method, not a style. Seriality should be understood not as formalized playfulness but as artistic strategy with clearly defined underlying processes, often from the fields of mathematics and language. Individual decisions are overcome by way of objective processes. Here, Bochner distinguishes between modular and serial ideas: Modular works are based on the repetition of one standardized unit that doesn't change its basic form and therefore depict a temporal moment (e.g., Robert Indiana, *Love Rising / Black and White Love (For Martin Luther King)*, 1968), while serial works follow a logical sequence and therefore depict a temporal progression (e.g., Sol LeWitt, *Form Derived from a Cube*, 1986). Both approaches can be found in all three movements and are confronted with each other in the exhibition.

That the notion of the seriality became the subject of a heated debate as far back as the 1960s is also illustrated by the fact that, in 1967, not one but two exhibitions about the topic were presented in university institutions, one in Europe and one in

#### Press contact

Katharina Murschetz  
T +43 1 52500-1400  
katharina.murschetz@mumok.at

Katja Kulidzhanova  
T +43 1 52500-1450  
katja.kulidzhanova@mumok.at

Fax +43 1 52500-1300  
press@mumok.at  
www.mumok.at

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

the United States. *Serial Formations*—as referenced in our exhibition's subtitle—was a show organized by dealer Paul Maenz and artist Peter Roehr in the studio gallery of Goethe University Frankfurt. It was the first thematic exhibition of international minimalist tendencies in Germany. It focused on the multifaceted manifestations of serial work, even if they seemed radically different conceptually. Attempts at style-oriented categorization and the boundaries of genres were thus called into question.

Half a year later, Mel Bochner and Elayne Varian organized the exhibition *Art in Series* at Finch College in New York. It, too, presented many different works focusing on serial methods that today are attributed to different art movements. It is interesting to observe that a similar interest seemed to be bubbling up in both Central Europe and the United States. The selection of works in *MISFITTING TOGETHER* should exemplify this, as it presents protagonists of the Central and Eastern European scenes along with several well-known American positions.

It is hardly a secret that the concept of seriality also played a crucial role in Warhol's work. Nonetheless, the exhibition aims to introduce a process-based serial concept that ought not to be understood in the sense of dully repeating the same subject over and over again but rather as a fascination with diversity and difference within a series. Instead of one definitive final result, it was the steadily changing process that was at the heart of Warhol's serial concept. A similar method can be seen with contemporaries like Hanne Darboven, On Kawara, or Charlotte Posenenske.

A present-day addition is *FIREARMS*, a work by the recently deceased artist Lutz Bacher that became part of the mumok Collection through an acquisition by the Ludwig Foundation in 2019. In her serial work, Bacher draws a portrait of firearms as commodities of international trade as well as historical, much-sought-after collector's objects.

*Mouse Museum* (1965/77) and *Ray Gun Wing* (1961/77) by Claes Oldenburg are among the major works of Pop Art and, because they are walk-in installations, can be regarded as miniature museums. A similar interest in the intersection between work and exhibition will crystallize in the other two Warhol exhibitions that will open in autumn and will be dedicated to other aspects of the phenomenon that is Andy Warhol: Warhol the exhibition artist, installation artist, and curator.

Artists: Lutz Bacher, Alighiero Boetti, Daniel Buren, Hanne Darboven, Jan Dibbets, Heinz Gappmayr, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, On Kawara, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Roy Lichtenstein, Dóra Maurer, Claes Oldenburg, Friederike Pezold, Larry Poons, Charlotte Posenenske, Peter Roehr, Robert Smithson, Daniel Spoerri, Andy Warhol

Curated by Marianne Dobner and Naoko Kaltschmidt

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### Art Education Area in the Exhibition

In the 1960s artists emancipated themselves from traditional forms of exhibition and presentation with projects in which they themselves selected and presented their works as curators. Their elaborately staged multimedia productions were geared to the viewers' experience and participation. Andy Warhol, for example, transformed exhibitions into sites of experience for visitors, with reflective *Silver Clouds* (1966) floating in the air or, as in the show *Andy Warhol: Paintings for Children* (1983), with pictures hung at children's eye level (both on view at mumok from September 25). Visitors' roles also underwent some revision in the established museum context. Since the early 1970s, educational programs for children and adults have turned passive observers into equal actors in dialog with the artworks.

Claes Oldenburg's *Mouse Museum* serves as an example that exhibiting means selecting, arranging, and contextualizing objects and thus giving them meaning. At mumok, the visitors will encounter interactive situations in several settings throughout the gallery space that make this process tangible. Whether analog or digital, and with technologies both cutting-edge and historical, visitors are given the opportunity to arrange objects and establish spatial relationships. Claes Oldenburg created *the Ray Gun* myth for himself, which pursues the idea that the imagination can turn any object with a right angle into a toy gun emitting rays that transmogrify anything and everything. Taking a cue from Oldenburg, the visitors, too, can now trace the magical transformation of things—imagination is everything!

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