

The Present of Modernism

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

Exhibition dates
March 14, 2014, to February 8, 2015

Is the grand utopian project of modernism still relevant today? What potential does it hold for later generations and contemporary artists? These are the questions raised by mumok's new presentation of our collection, *The Present of Modernism*. From March 14, key works of classical modernism, early abstract art, and futurist works will be shown in contrast with the avant-gardes of the early 1960s, post-minimal art, and present-day artworks by artists like Isa Genzken, Christopher Wool, and Simon Starling. This comparison will again clearly show how the visual repertoires of modernism continue to be explored today. The strategies used by younger generations when they refer to modernist forms and idioms will be given ample space in this exhibition, alongside the grand themes of twentieth and twenty-first-century art.

With around 150 works, this new presentation includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, films, and architectural models. Important new acquisitions and gifts of recent years are included—with works by Carolee Schneemann, Judith Hopf, Tom Burr, and David Maljkovic. The exhibition is complemented by selected loaned works.

Architecture, urban living, and design and construction are central themes in this new show. They can be traced from modernism—from Albert Renger-Patzsch to László Moholy-Nagy to Friedrich Kiesler—to Walter Pichler or Mary Ellen Carroll in the present day. In her film *Empty the Pond to Get the Fish* (2008), on show at mumok kino, Runa Islam offers an exemplary perspective on the theme of this exhibition. Against the backdrop of the modernist architecture of the 20er Haus, in which mumok was first opened in 1962 as the Museum of the Twentieth Century, she describes in film several key works of classical modernism from the mumok collection.

Seldom seen works, like a selection of drawings by Josef Hoffmann or architectural models by Adolf Loos, Le Corbusier, and Fritz Wotruba, can be seen alongside classics from the mumok collection. This combination of older and younger generations also includes a number of Austrian positions, with works by Arnulf Rainer, Marc Adrian, Dorit Margreiter, Florian Pumhösl, and Anna Artaker.

In his film *Black Drop* (2012), Simon Starling takes a productive approach to the themes of modernism, analyzing the planet Venus in transit within a historical context of representational methods and recording technologies. This draws on a theme that

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the futurists interpreted in painting as a grand modernist vision, as shown by Giacomo Balla's *Mercury Passing in Front of the Sun, Seen through a Telescope* (1914), a main work in the mumok collection.

An excellent example for the ways in which contemporary art transgresses the genre boundaries is John Baldessari's work *Color Corrected Studio (with Window)* (1972–1973). Baldessari here transferred typical Piet Mondrian horizontals and verticals onto the window of his studio in California, thus translating questions raised by painting, the undisputed guiding medium of modernism, into architecture and photography. The significance of Piet Mondrian as a great universalist and pioneer of modernism is also newly interpreted in Baldessari's humorous appropriation.

Around 1900, new forms of expressionist dance began to emerge, displayed in *The Presence of Modernism* with photographs contrasted with comparable images in expressionist painting. The significance of the dancing body for contemporary art is exemplified by Katarina Kozyra's film installation *Rite of Spring* (1999), a choreographic paraphrase of Igor Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*.

The mask as the second face is a motif and theme that was prominent from the nineteenth century and into modernism. Especially the surrealists took great interest in masks, as shown by works by Joan Miró or Max Ernst. For contemporary artists too, exploring games with masks has not lost its fascination. In her new work shown at dOCUMENTA 13, Judith Hopf draws on this theme.

Finally, the exhibition takes an in-depth look at critical investigations of the institutional parameters of modernism. Jörg Immendorff's legendary *Musée d'art Moderne* (1989) is contrasted with other perspectives on the twentieth century. In her work *Unbekannte Avantgarde* (2008), Anna Artaker, for example, overwrites the images of great male heroes with images of the neglected women of modernism.

Whether the points of reference are formal or in terms of content, this new presentation of the mumok collection examines the traces of the past in the present. Through the mirror of some of the newest works in the mumok collection, modernism again proves to be a highly contemporary term of reference.

Curated by Susanne Neuburger with Katharina Schendl

We thank the Dorotheum, partner of the mumok collection, and our media partners Der Standard, Wien live, and Ö1.

Fact-Sheet The Present of Modernism

Exhibition dates	March 14, 2014, to February 8, 2015
Venue	mumok MuseumsQuartier, Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien Levels -1, -3
Curator	Susanne Neuburger with Katharina Schendl
Exhibition production	Sophie Haaser, Dagmar Steyrer
Opening hours	Mondays: 2 – 7 pm Tuesdays to Sundays: 10 am – 7 pm Thursdays: 10 am – 9 pm
Tickets	Normal € 10 Concessions € 8 or € 7
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