

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

*Class Reunion*  
*Works from the Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann Collection*

Exhibition dates  
June 23 to November 11, 2018

Press conference  
Friday, June 22, 2018, 10 am

Opening  
Friday, June 22, 2018, 19 pm



Alice Tippet, *Bride*, 2017

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## Class Reunion Works from the Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann Collection

Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann do not see their collection as just private property or a prestige object, but rather as an item of cultural value that needs exchange with the public. Their collection has been constantly growing since the late 1970s, and it provides an incomparable view of the development of contemporary art from the 1980s onward. This is a progressive statement on behalf of contemporary art that is anchored in social issues and sees itself as a form of communication. The rationale behind the collection, which is held in Herzogenrath near Aachen and in Berlin, is both creative and productive, and the two collectors' practice can be described as a particularly free-spirited form of cultural production. The act of collecting is realized less in the processes of keeping and completing artworks and is instead understood mainly as an invitation to participate in the public production of connections. This very pragmatic and hands-on approach is manifested in sensual and unconventional gestures of presenting, including the principle of "comparative seeing." In this sense, the *Class Reunion* exhibition, the title of which refers to a 2008 installation of the same name by Berlin artist Nairy Baghramian, will unravel an exciting, humorous, and surprising dialogue between the diverse artistic positions in the collection, establishing unexpected points of contact. One focus in this is on Viennese influences on this international collection and its networks.

Gaby und Wilhelm Schürmann take a hold of art, and of the practice of collecting, for intellectual purposes, subjecting them to continuous critical scrutiny. This implies a dynamic collecting philosophy. "Art and the ways in which we approach it," Wilhelm Schürmann says, "are a never-ending process for me, which can and has to be continually changed. In public I am an interpreter, translator, and thus also co-producer. I am also there as a collector." And Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann reject notions of collecting according to a "contemporary canon" or as a way of amassing venerable works. They are more interested in features of art such as its relevance to reality, its openness and humor, its credibility and necessity. They also value the quality of what is not immediately evident. "I have always been interested in what you cannot see in a picture," Wilhelm Schürmann says. The two collectors also welcome large installations that cannot be kept or shown in private spaces.

Collecting as practiced by Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann opens up the possibility "to bring together very different perspectives and mentalities and to credibly interlink divergent approaches." Collecting is not aimed at establishing a legacy, but is about the here and now. Wilhelm Schürmann has often criticized the timidity of both private and public collections when it comes to abandoning "the well-trodden paths of the mainstream," and he has used his own curatorial and media activities to set a progressive counter-model against a lame "thinking on the safe side." Art must and should be seen as an engine of exploration, change, and renewal. Like a conductor of music, Schürmann would like

to utilize a concert made up of solos to “direct our perception but without any intention to lecture or to teach.”

Wilhelm Schürmann, who was born in 1946, developed his interest in art in the early 1980s in the context of punk and new wave music and their lifestyles. His first purchases were works by the Cologne studio collective Mülheimer Freiheit, but he later took these works out of the collection. In 1984 he also sold his collection of historical Czech photography to the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. His connections to works by Günther Förg, Georg Herold, Meuser, Martin Kippenberger (who like Schürmann was born in Dortmund), and Albert Oehlen have remained significant throughout the history of the collection. From 1984 to 1986 Schürmann curated exhibitions of contemporary art at the CCD photo gallery in Düsseldorf, which was owned by F. C. Gundlach, and he encouraged some artists there to take an interest in photography. In the early 1990s the focus of the collection shifted toward American art, including West Coast influences (Jack Goldstein, Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, Cady Noland, Raymond Pettibon, Stephen Prina, Jason Rhoades, Christopher Williams, Julia Scher). Since then the collection has been expanded continuously, with works by international artists including many Austrian artists.

Parts of the collection have been shown in the past in many museums and galleries.

Curated by Karola Kraus and Wilhelm Schürmann.

**Participating artists (selection):**

Nairy Baghramian, Silvia Bächli, Monika Baer, John Baldessari, Jennifer Bornstein, Nicola Brunnhuber, Ernst Caramelle, Kate Davis, Heinrich Dunst, Marina Faust, Morgan Fisher, Julian Göthe, Trixi Groiss, Gerhard Gronefeld, Julia Haller, Georg Herold, Lone Haugaard Madsen, Nicolas Jasmin, Raimer Jochims, Mike Kelley, Anne-Mie van Kerckhoven, Martin Kippenberger, Sonia Leimer, Zoe Leonard, Park McArthur, Paul McCarthy, Meuser, Lisette Model, Oswald Oberhuber, Albert Oehlen, Anna Oppermann, Rebecca Quaytman, Susanne Paesler, Laurie Parsons, Stephen Prina, Deborah Remington, Lin May Saeed, Sigune Siévi, Michael Simpson, Michael E. Smith, Walter Swennen, Alice Tippet, Joëlle Tuerlinckx, Nora Turato, Miriam Visaczki, Franz West, Christopher Williams, Heimo Zobernig