

Wonderland

7 May to 19 September 2021

ALBERTINA modern



Exhibition Facts

Duration	7 May – 19 September 2021
Virtual Opening	11 May 2021 6:30 p.m. via Facebook Live & YouTube
Venue	ALBERTINA MODERN
Curator	Klaus Albrecht Schröder
Works	110
Catalog	Numerous paintings can be found in <i>The Essl Collection</i> . <i>ALBERTINA modern: 200 Masterpieces</i> , available in German and in English.
3D Virtual Tour	Online tours through the exhibition given via Zoom in German, English, and Italian For current times and dates, see www.albertina.at .
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Opening Hours	Daily 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
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The third exhibition at ALBERTINA modern draws from the ALBERTINA MUSEUM's rich collection holdings. The selection of works, divided into seven chapters, encompasses over 100 masterpieces by artists ranging from Andy Warhol to Roy Liechtenstein, Anselm Kiefer to Katharina Grosse, Ad Reinhardt to Cecily Brown, Marc Quinn to Erwin Wurm, and Albert Oehlen to Markus Schinwald. This presentation reflects the broad spectrum of post-1945 contemporary art present in all collections of the ALBERTINA MUSEUM and features various thematic emphases in the individual display areas: from pop art and its contemporary offshoots (Tom Wesselmann, Andy Warhol, Alex Katz) to abstract expressionist painting (Cecily Brown, Katharina Grosse, Wolfgang Hollegga) and on to a conspectus of the great German painters (Georg Baselitz, A. R. Penck, Anselm Kiefer, Jörg Immendorff, Markus Lüpertz). Works by Georg Baselitz, who turned the art world on its head and is now in his 80s, are juxtaposed with the output of Maria Lassnig. And finally, the banner of anarchic anti-art is held high by enfants terribles such as Gelatin and Franz West.

Wonderland: the title of a painting by Fiona Rae. A painting that reveals to us in one fell swoop a universe of the unimaginable and mad. Alice in Wonderland, that famous book by Lewis Carroll, reminds us that believing the impossible is simply a question of practice.

Armed with an imagination thus unleashed, the exhibition Wonderland sets off into uncharted worlds. The utopia of a successful life replete with bliss collides with bare, dystopian landscapes where isolation and loneliness, melancholy, cruelty, and death reign supreme. Beyond just individual paintings, this exhibition as a whole sweeps us into a wonderland in which our present's past encounters its own future.

Klaus Albrecht Schröder

More than Just One Exhibition: A Permanent Collection of Contemporary Art

With *Wonderland*, ALBERTINA MODERN is once again establishing an entirely new presentation of its collection. In principle, this is a showing of multiple interrelated exhibitions that, while loosely connected, could all still exist independently. It is a context in which counter-worlds meet. From its underlying holdings, the ALBERTINA can—and will—go on to present a good two dozen further exhibitions of equal quality that feature this new permanent collection.

Here, just like in Lewis Carroll's *Wonderland*, we encounter a collision of various art-realities where contradictory fantasy worlds coexist. Carroll's *Wonderland* is no land of milk and honey. But it's also not a prison. It's many things, all of them at once. And the worlds it opens up can be threatening or fuel hope depending on how they are interpreted.

The Burden of History

The large central exhibition hall is devoted to a group of highly individualistic artists from Germany. Here we encounter the strong personal stances of figures who made the burden of history, of Germany's history, the starting point of their art: Anselm Kiefer; Georg Baselitz, who criticized Germany's National Socialist past; Markus Lüpertz, who decried the militarization of German society; Penck, who was banned from painting and ostracized in East Germany, and Jörg Immendorff, who grappled with Germany's division because the question of his own survival was repeatedly tied to it. These old artists cannot be overestimated in terms of their influence on art in general, even though they were never members of a particular group. Perhaps it is precisely this that explains their decades-long success and their dominant position in art.

Pop Art: The Fragility of Happiness

When journeying through the contemporary art world, there is no getting past pop art. Here, however, we experience it as something quite fragile in spite of all its innate, colorfully expressive impactfulness: Harold Ancart's match will have burned out within in a few seconds while skeletons copulate and the bathers of Alex Katz suggest a brittle promise of happiness. But all this, too, lies in the eyes of the beholders and their individual perspectives.

This showing's artworks are divided into seven chapters that are not always directly adjacent or connected:

- **Pop or the Fragility of Happiness** featuring major works by Warhol, Liechtenstein, Wesselmann and Katz as well as the neo-pop movement of Marc Quinn und Harold Ancart.
- **Anarchy In Art** with works by Franz West and Gelatin.
- **On the Edges of Town, or: Melancholy in Art** from our own times with two rooms for Muntean and Rosenblum along with Leipzig-based Christian Brandl as well as Markus Schinwald (with two newly acquired works) and the restrained façade paintings Franz Zadrazil.
- **Forms of Abstraction** with works by Ad Reinhardt, San Francis, Morris Lewis, and Pierre Soulages as well as Hollegha, Prachensky, Staudacher, and—as the newest acquisitions—Cecily Brown and Katharina Grosse.

- **Maria Lassnig and Georg Baselitz**

The painter who denies his motifs their utility and reality and places them on their heads meets the originator of “Body Awareness Art”.

- **Germany and the Burden of the Past**

Germany’s important individualists Georg Baselitz, Markus Lüpertz, Jörg Immendorff, Penck, and Anselm Kiefer, dominant ever since the 1960s. An old catastrophe—World War II and Germany’s subsequent division—as the common theme of painters who resembled a group and founded a movement and school.

- **The Face and Its Mask**

Spectacular portrait photography by Gottfried Helnwein, for whom greats including Andy Warhol and Keith Haring, Mick Jagger, Clint Eastwood, and Michael Jackson stood for portraits during the 1970s and 1980s.

Works



Harold Ancart, *Untitled*, 2019

Before a bright yellow background, Harold Ancart shows an everyday object that, in 2019, served as his central motif for a series of six paintings. This large-format work portrays the moment at which a match bursts into flame. The green-headed match scrapes over the classic brown striking surface of a matchbox as initial sparks appear in a luminous orange. Ancart views the match as “something that, even if people tend to overlook it due to its absolute banality, bears within it enormous potential.” Stylistically, Ancart brings elements of hard-edge painting with its sharply delineated areas of color together with pop art’s close-up aesthetic and its fondness for everyday consumer goods.



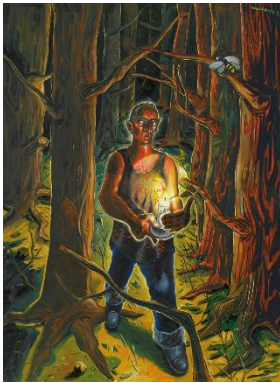
Georg Baselitz, *Hadendoa*, 1972

In the 1970s, Georg Baselitz took a deep dive into the genre of portraiture. For his models, he turns to photos and newspapers and magazine covers. In this case of this painting, Baselitz was particularly fascinated by the hairstyle worn by the portrayed man—a member of the Hadendoa, a nomadic ethnic group in Sudan that supported the Mahdist Revolt against the British during the late 19th century.



Gottfried Helnwein, *Andy Warhol*, 1983/2014

In 1983, Andy Warhol invited Gottfried Helnwein to his Factory in New York for a planned photo session. The Viennese artist remembers how Warhol, sitting silent and motionless opposite him in an empty room, simply froze. “Andy looked like a wax figure in the pose of a pharaoh who’d already been dead for thousands of years. Darkness gradually descended upon the room and swallowed everything. Only the white of Andy’s face and his hair remained, and they began glowing so intensely that they burned themselves into my eyes. It was as if we were floating. Everything just lost its meaning. I raised my Nikon and released the shutter.” (Gottfried Helnwein)



Jörg Immendorff, *Waiting Bee II*, 1992

In *Waiting Bee II*, candlelight illuminates the dark German forest through which the artist walks. At the painting’s center, on the sleeveless shirt of the lost and searching wanderer, one can make out a drawing of a monkey and the lettering “LA PALOMA”—the name of a bar on Hamburg’s Reeperbahn that Jörg Immendorff ran for many years. On a bare twig, there sits an outsized bee (*Imme*)—from which the artist’s name is derived. The monkey is employed by Immendorff as a symbol of art’s imitation of the world and also serves as a proxy of the artist. The candle, a symbol of life, lights his way.



Alex Katz, *Chance*, 2016

It was in 1959 that Alex Katz first cut out a figure from a cast-away painted canvas and mounted it on a piece of plywood. He subsequently developed this approach into a group of flat, freestanding “pictorial sculptures” that he calls “cutouts”. These cutouts evince Alex Katz’s intermediate position between figuration and hard-edge painting with particular clarity as there is no painterly gesture to mediate between his figures’ outlines and their background. In the 1990s, Katz’s linkage of figurative painting with the aesthetics of hard-edge painting became known as Cool Painting and influenced numerous young artists. The portrayed individuals are often women from his immediate family and circle of friends, and they appear repeatedly in his works: in *Chance*, his daughter-in-law Vivien stands in the middle, flanked by Anne and Darinka. The individual figures in fashionable swimwear, each of them with a beachball in her hands, were produced by Alex Katz as stand-alone figures in 1990 and only combined to form a trio in 2016.



Maria Lassnig, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 1973

Maria Lassnig’s attitude toward personal relationships and physical intimacy between the sexes was deeply ambivalent. Though intimacy was something that she did long for, her art always came first. This painting is one of those in which she examined these conflict-laden feelings of attraction and repulsion. She appears naked before the canvas, together with her doppelgänger—and she shows those fragments of her body that she can feel at the moment when she paints. The metaphorical burden represented by the heavy slabs of flesh that the painter carries on her shoulders here nearly crushes her.



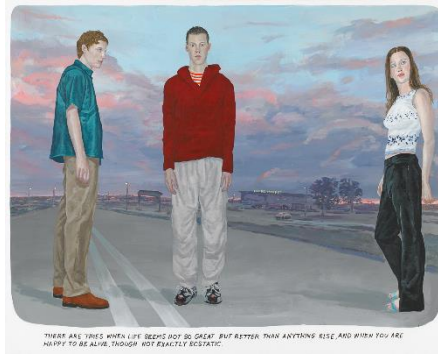
Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup*, 1968

In 1963, Andy Warhol opened his legendary studio known as the “Factory.” To his mind, whether he created a work himself or had one of his assistants do it was no longer relevant. He rejected any and all personal artistic handwriting. Warhol’s works exhibit no particular personal style. His Campbell’s soup cans, dollar bills, and Brillo boxes are everyday objects and solely self-referential, the cleft between reality and its reproduction but at the same time eliminating this difference to the point that one melts into the other.



Ofer Lellouche, *Head of a Woman*, 2009

The oeuvre of Tunisia-born Ofer Lellouche sheds light on universal questions of humanity before the backdrop of the artist’s identity, threatened as it has been by war and persecution. Lellouche, who lives in Tel Aviv and Paris, began experimenting with video art and painting in the 1970s and has dealt with the most varied media over the course of his career including drawing, sculpture, etching, and woodcut. The Self, threatened by immolation, destruction, and extermination, and human beings’ fundamental and existential condemnation to death are the most important themes in his oeuvre.



Muntean/Rosenblum, *Untitled (Before we know it)*, 2000, *Untitled (There are times when life...)*, 2001

Markus Muntean and Adi Rosenblum have been an artist-duo since 1992, and their works are frequently inspired by youth culture aesthetics and lifestyles. They do not develop their figures not response to real observations on the street, much rather taking them primarily from already-staged, idealized portrayals in photographs and lifestyle magazine advertisements. Their tableau-like paintings are similar to each other in terms of structure: young people standing around in deserted places as lonely protagonists who, despite all physical proximity to their peers, exist in isolation from one another.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Glass and Lemon before a Mirror*, 1974

It was above all in the 1970s that Roy Lichtenstein experimented with the most varied templates from European and American art history, paraphrasing masterpieces by artists ranging from Claude Monet to Pablo Picasso in an aesthetic borrowed from advertising posters. In *Glass and Lemon before a Mirror*, he formulates the classic genre of the still life in his own visual language. Lichtenstein paints neither with his motif in view nor before any directly observed reality. And his painted reproductions of realities already transformed into trivial offset prints give rise to tension between high and low, between the rarified world of painted art and the triviality of cheap mass production.

Press Images



Fiona Rae
Wonderland, 2004
Acrylic and mixed technique on canvas
ALBERTINA, Vienna – The ESSL Collection
© Bildrecht 2021 © Photo: Buchmann Galerie, Cologne



Marc Quinn
The Selfish Gene, 2007
Patinated bronze
ALBERTINA, Vienna
© Studio of Marc Quinn



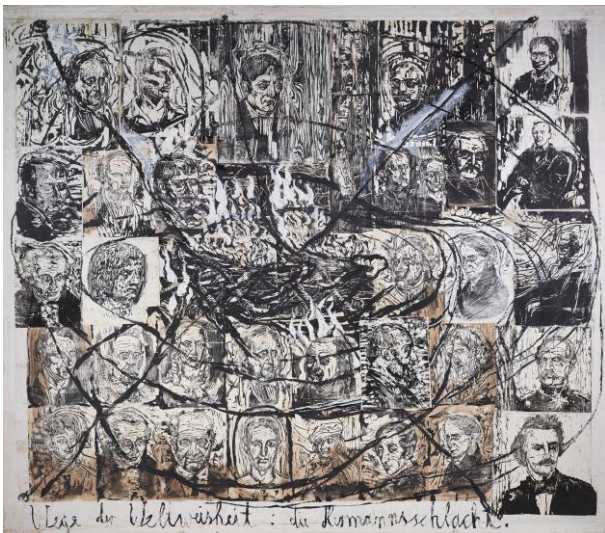
Roy Lichtenstein
Wallpaper with Blue Floor Interior, 1992
 Silkscreen
 ALBERTINA, Vienna
 © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein/Bildrecht, Vienna, 2021



Georg Baselitz
B. for Larry (Remix), 2006
 Oil on canvas
 ALBERTINA, Vienna – Viehof Collection
 © Georg Baselitz



Jörg Immendorff
 Untitled
 1979
 Synthetic resin on canvas
 ALBERTINA, Vienna – The ESSL Collection
 © Bildrecht, Vienna, 2021



Anselm Kiefer
The Paths of World Wisdom: Hermann's Battle, 1993
 Woodcut, acrylic and shellac on paper, collage on canvas

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