

ALBERTINA klosterneuburg

De Sculptura



Karl Karner, *I eat with my bird*, 2024, ALBERTINA, Vienna – Familiensammlung Haselsteiner © Karl Karner, Photo: Karl Karner

Exhibition Facts

Duration	17 April until 16 November 2025
Opening	16 April 2025 6 p.m.
Venue	ALBERTINA KLOSTERNEUBURG – The Essl Museum Exhibition Hall 2 and 3
Curator	Angela Stief
Assistant Curator	Lydia Eder
Works	88
Contact	An der Donau-Au 1 3400 Klosterneuburg T +43 (0)1 534 83 0 presse@albertina.at www.albertina.at
Opening Hours	Thursday to Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Press contact	Daniel Benyes T +43 (0)1 534 83 511 M +43 (0)699 12178720 d.benyes@albertina.at Lisa Trapp T +43 (0)1 534 83 512 M +43 (0)699 10981743 l.trapp@albertina.at

ANNUAL PARTNER

Verbund

 **Bank Austria**
Member of  **UniCredit**

DE SCULPTURA

This year's presentation explores sculpture's significance as a theme in present-day art and to the museum itself: *De Sculptura* provides an impression of output by established and younger Austrian and international artists from the ALBERTINA Museum's collection of contemporary art.

Breathing, inflating and deflating bodily organs made of light balloon silk rear up and collapse shortly thereafter in a regular rhythm. The large-scale installation *Gonflés – dégonflés* by French artist Annette Messenger takes up the phallic thrust of Franz West's *Sexuality Symbol* and contrasts starkly with Kennedy Yanko's tripartite sculpture made of heavy recycled metal, whose elegant and colorful skins exude a downright painterly quality.

The presentation shows Erwin Wurm's *Box People* and the three-dimensional beings arisen from Eva Beresin's paintings as well as Claudia Märzendorfer's knitted, crocheted, and sewn Soft Sculptures and Jonathan Meese's deformed bronze busts, all of which are part of the ALBERTINA Museum's holdings. With works made of aluminum, steel, wire, concrete, wood, papier-mâché, wool, and found materials, a sculptural theme extends across all of the exhibition halls and bears witness to sculpture's contemporary diversity. This collection presentation features not only new sculptural approaches but also instances of interplay with classic art forms such as painting and drawing as well as installation art.

This new presentation on the second upper level of Albertina Klosterneuburg maximizes the effect of the prizewinning architecture of Heinz Tesar, with its theme of a wave on the Danube reflected in the abstract undulating lines of works by figures ranging from Hubert Scheibl to Albert Oehlen and on to young shooting stars like British artist Jade Fadojutimi and Chinese artist Xiyao Wang. The overarching motto at Albertina Klosterneuburg in 2025 is *De Sculptura*.

Albertina Klosterneuburg is also currently featuring paintings and works on paper in a special focus on output by the Austrian artist Martha Jungwirth—a small act of homage with which we extend our warmest 85th-birthday congratulations to her.

This exhibition includes sculptural works by the following artists:

Eva Beresin, Bruno Gironcoli, Karl Karner, Soli Kiani, Basil Kincaid, Elena Koneff, Jonathan Meese, Annette Messenger, Nam June Paik, Friedrich Panzer, Rudolf Polanszky, Dieter Roth, Markus Schinwald, Toni Schmale, Julian Schnabel, Tschabalala Self, Erwin Wurm, Kennedy Yanko

Further featured paintings and works on paper from:

Herbert Brandl, Cecily Brown, Alexandre Diop, Jadé Fadojutimi, Martha Jungwirth, Maria Lassnig, Albert Oehlen, Hubert Scheibl, Liliane Tomasko, Xiyao Wang

Exhibition Texts

Hall 2

From Jonathan Meese to Eva Beresin

A music room with Fritz Panzer's upright piano made of wire, a grand piano at which the artist Nam June Paik seated his own avatar, and a material assembly with keyboard by Dieter Roth: *De Sculptura* invites visitors to take pause for a delightful artistic diversion. This new presentation at Albertina Klosterneuburg centers on sculptural works from the contemporary holdings of the Albertina Museum, which is currently diversifying in terms of its featured media and placing innovative new accents.

The sculptures on exhibit here, made from aluminum, steel, wire, concrete, wood, papiermâché, wool, and found materials, bear witness to this art form's present-day heterogeneity and enter into dialog with classical media such as painting and drawing. This dialog involves works by artists both Austrian and international and both young and established: the weighty sculptures fashioned from bronze and other metals by Bruno Gironcoli and Toni Schmale, who stand nearly two generations apart, enter into a pas de deux that sweeps up the surrounding space. Works by Maria Lassnig and Eva Beresin, seen here in a combined presentation, not only reveals astonishing analogies but also allude to the exhibited sculptures' origins in painting. The deformed and prosthesisequipped figures by Markus Schinwald and Erwin Wurm are in part about visualizing psychological dispositions amidst a generally precarious contemporary state of being. And an even more strongly sociopolitical tack is taken by the Iranian artist Soli Kiani and by Elena Koneff, who fled to from Russia to Vienna in 1979, in their rope sculptures and woven works.

Jonathan Meese

In his multifarious output, contemporary art's *enfant terrible* Jonathan Meese consistently attempts to return words, objects, and figures to their origins. The theatrical appearances and performances by this vociferous German artist, who proclaims his worldview with stridently powerful words, are legendary. Meese has long dealt with primal myths, heroic tales, and great personalities of world history. 2003 witnessed the creation of his first bronze heads, whose materials, classical design, and employed casting technique form a contrast with the artist's characteristically flamboyant mode of expressivity. Herein lies an aspect that sets these additive sculptures part from Meese's earlier works, marking a shift in his output: processes come to a standstill in their bronze materiality, with the actionist and provisional qualities of provocation largely absent—allowing these metal sculptures to stand as an expression of permanence.

Alexandre Diop

He has to start out from reality to create a new reality, as Alexandre Diop describes his artistic practice. For him, art is a way to exist. That also means that the French-Senegalese artist, born in Paris in 1995, detects visibility with a material-aesthetic sensibility, cultivates the diversity of reality through assemblages and celebrates the hybridization of forms, content, and styles. Bricoleur-like, he connects everything with everything else, working with language(s), words, and scraps of text. When viewed, these often seemingly eclectic works reveal an archaic quality, recalling an analogue age and indigenous cultures. Diop creates a sense of belonging by combining what does not belong together. Found objects made of various materials such as nails, latex, and leather, as well as everyday items like books, metal cans, car parts, and photographs lend his work a rough quality. The gold leaf that Diop has lately applied to many works on paper lends something noble to his composed figures.

Erwin Wurm

In his work Erwin Wurm turns our day-to-day experience of the visible world upside down. He dissects the world as we know it, creating a universe that presents things to us from a different perspective in the truest sense of the word. In his multifaceted work, Wurm explores the “paradoxes and absurdities” of human existence. Over the years, he has created a dense network of artistic statements, ranging from sculptures and drawings, work instructions and documentation, videos, photographs, and more recently, also paintings. Everyday objects such as houses, cars, cucumbers, and rolls, when viewed through distorted and eccentric (size) relationships, are deformed, inflated, repeated, melted, and

narrowed, taking on new perspectives of meaning. In many works, Wurm critically addresses the manipulative mechanisms of our consumer society and their effects. Status symbols, fashion, and textile products run like a red thread throughout his work, adorning entire walls. Wurm views clothing as a second skin: it protects, warms, and stages the person and the body. Despite the elegant clothing, the corners and edges of the headless carriers remain apparent, as in the *Box People*.

Markus Schinwald

Psychological engagement with space and bodies, the sinister, the uneasy, the deficient, as well as the irrational depths of individual and collective existence: these are the themes in the works of Austrian artist Markus Schinwald. His work is an interplay between object and space, spanning from film and performance to painting, drawing, sculpture, and installation. For the painting series *Extensions*, which fluctuates between abstraction and figuration, past and present, Schinwald purchased historical paintings and interwove the old canvas with a new one under the microscope, meaning newly joined thread by thread. The initial picture provides the frame for the composition that follows. Representational elements like tiny figures become the pivotal point in the picture, where the abstract tilts over into the representational. Also for his carbon prints, historic portraits by the Viennese lithograph Josef Kriehuber served Schinwald as templates. The prints are scanned and adapted on the computer by shifting, or doubling individual details. Spectacle frames, nose coverings or mysterious apparatuses are inserted into Kriehuber's portraits.

Bruno Gironcoli

Human beings with their abysmal depths, interpersonal relationships, and sexuality, as well as various manifestations of violence are in the focus of Bruno Gironcoli's work. „I try to capture the image of humanity through rephrasing, detours, and the psychologization of the environment, because representation, the depiction, yields too little for me,“ as the artist explains. His oeuvre revolves around the unresolved, obsessive, and tormented aspects of human existence. The artist developed his personal iconography and unmistakable language of form, which is symbolically condensed in elements such as ears of wheat, burning children, absurd apparatuses, edelweiss, and grapes. In his sculptures, which over time grew into ever-larger installations, he emphasizes the fusion of the archetypal and futuristic, of organic and technical matter through smooth, flowing surfaces and a monochrome color scheme. Whether it is painted polyester, bronze, or aluminum: the color of metal,

which he also uses in his paper works, suggests cold detachment, artificiality, and lifelessness, which are in contrast to humanness.

Toni Schmale

In their reduced, clear, and geometric formal language as well as in their employment of industrial raw materials, Toni Schmale's sculptures evoke works of minimal art. In contrast to the anonymized production processes typical of large factories and production lines, however, this artist produces her works in her own studio. She bends, stretches, and reshapes standardized steel piping, for instance, through bodily exertion that can extend to the point of physical exhaustion. Schmale also frequently applies heat to rigid materials in order to render them elastic. These working processes involve pressure and counter-pressure, action and reaction, giving rise to a body-material relationship between the artist and her works. Titles such as *lap* and *rack martha* make reference to the human body as such or to certain individuals. As apparatuses that invite speculation as to their potential use, Schmale's sculptures refrain from prescribing any clear interpretation—much rather serving as projective surfaces for viewers, affording them space for their own interpretations, yearnings, and imaginings. They also quite consistently suggest engagement with questions of power, control, and structural orders of society.

Maria Lassnig

Maria Lassnig opened the door to an inward-focused exploration of her own body awareness with her central artistic invention, which she called "Body Awareness," as early as the late 1940s. This revolutionized the artistic intent in painting and established her as a trailblazer of international art after 1945. In a feminist avant-garde context, she also anticipated the concept of body sensation by painting what she felt. Through her unique visual language, she addressed major societal, political, and emotional themes such as love, death, technology, violence, war, and the threat to nature. In 1968, Lassnig moved from Paris to New York, where she lived for over a decade. During this time, the feminist movement reached its peak, and female artists primarily used photography, video, and performance to explore their relationship with their bodies and their roles in society. However, Lassnig remained faithful to her medium and also began creating animated films. She never allowed her work to be reduced to a purely feminist position in art; instead, she always sought to be recognized as a female artist among artists.

Eva Beresin

In the paintings and sculptures of Hungarian artist Eva Beresin, who has lived and worked in Vienna since 1976, one encounters hybrid creatures, grotesque figures, and strange fantasy-beings. Humor is wed with horror, the fantastical with the dreadful. Beresin frequently depicts her human subjects engaging in animal-like behaviors, while the numerous bona fide animals that populate her paintings bear positively human traits. The artist's broad thematic palette includes the whimsical just as it does the tragic and existential, and it runs the gamut from medieval cruelties to everyday banalities and on to humorous episodes. In Beresin's large-format narratives, one encounters instances of exposure where the boundaries of shame between the intimate and the public are put to the test as she playfully unhinges the laws of decency. The interplay of concealment and revelation finds its parallel in a pictorial program that alternates between abstraction and figuration. These creations' inherent charisma is underlined by the swiftness of Beresin's working process and the expressiveness of her artistic language.

Soli Kiani

The poetic formal vocabulary of Soli Kiani, born in Iran in 1981, explores a brittle reality that is under increasing threat from radical sentiments, separatism, and right-wing populist ideas. Like the wellknown Persian artist Shirin Neshat, Kiani, too, reduces her color palette to black and white and employs strong contrasts. Opposites such as exposure and concealment, sensuality and violence, liberation and coercion dominate this oeuvre, whose various facets unfold between the poles of diametrically opposed cultures—those of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Western liberalism. In her precarious explorations of this frontier, Kiani engages with questions of female identity between tradition and modernity as well as women's status in society. The artist criticizes restrictive gender-based narratives and questions contrasting moral values between religion and secularization. Employing aesthetic means, Kiani fights back against oppression, censorship, and the violation of human rights. The artist's newer series of sculptures features rope of the type used for executions in Iran as a central creative element.

Elena Koneff

Elena Koneff studied at the State University in Moscow, where she took up a stance that was situated outside of Soviet academic discourse and also critical of the government in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1979, she emigrated to Vienna with her husband, the sculptor Vadim Kosmatschof, and lived in Germany from 1984 to 2010 before settling in Lower Austria. The style of her large-format works is rooted in Russian modernism, which joins art and architecture in a way that is free of any academic or political doctrines. Paralleling Western modernism, the artist, who also creates drawings and watercolors, developed woven works that manifested something of a counterproject to Soviet iconography and its nationalist paradigms. The two monochrome black woven works from the series entitled *Black Relief* are made from cord, rubber, and resin. Organic shapes and abstract patterns emerge unexpectedly from the depths of these monumental textiles, which are possessed of an appeal something like the pull that emanates from a black hole.

Hall 3

From Annette Messenger to Martha Jungwirth

The overarching motto at Albertina Klosterneuburg in 2025 is *De Sculptura*. This year's presentation explores reductive and additive sculpture's significance as a theme in present-day art and for the museum itself: *De Sculptura* provides an impression of output by both established and younger Austrian and international artists from the Albertina Museum's collection of contemporary art, which is currently diversifying in terms of its featured media and placing innovative new accents.

Breathing, inflating and deflating bodily organs made of light balloon silk rear up and collapse shortly thereafter in a regular rhythm. The large-scale installation *Gonflés – dégonflés* by French artist Annette Messenger takes up the phallic thrust of Franz West's *Sexuality Symbol* and contrasts starkly with Kennedy Yanko's tripartite *Wading the Storm*, a sculpture made of heavy recycled metal whose elegant and colorful skins exude a downright painterly quality. This new presentation at Albertina Klosterneuburg maximizes the effect of Heinz Tesar's award-winning architecture, whose theme of a wave on the Danube is reflected in the abstract undulating lines of works by figures ranging from

Hubert Scheibl to Albert Oehlen and on to young shooting stars like the British artist Jadé Fadojutimi and Chinese artist Xiyao Wang. Albertina Klosterneuburg is also currently featuring a special focus on paintings and works on paper by the Austrian artist Martha Jungwirth—a small act of homage with which we extend to her our warmest 85th-birthday congratulations!

Franz West

The exceptional Austrian artist Franz West worked with space in a way that truly occupies it, with his oeuvre coming to encompass sculptures, objects, installations, furniture, and whole *Environments* as well as collages, performances, posters, artist's books, and graphic works. Having grown up in proximity to Viennese Actionism, West began working as a self-taught artist in 1970. The well-known *Adaptives* that he began producing in the decade that followed, objects intended for placement on the body as supports, prostheses, or growths, were subsequently converted by the artist into seating furniture beginning in 1987. It was thus that West, consistently skeptical toward hallowed formal rules, developed a notion of art that negated any strict separation between object and viewer while also putting the boundaries between art and utilitarian objects up for debate. Whether working in papier-mâché, plaster, or metal, he always presented art's made-ness wholly apart from any artisanal perfection. West set little store on rendering an object's superficial appearance sleek or beautiful, instead placing irony, irritation, and absurdity firmly in the spotlight—one of numerous ways in which he lent his multifarious oeuvre an experimental character.

Hubert Scheibl

Hubert Scheibl's artistic universe unfolds kaleidoscopically and coincidentally: "Coincidence is, in reality, the greatest master. It ennobles and refines. Intention alone is insufficient for good art." His works effectuate a permanent experiment that synthetically melds opposites and plays them off against each other, oscillating between figuration and reduction but always remaining nonrepresentational. Scheibl's central mode of expression lies in painting abstract realms of color to which inspirations from music, film, sculpture, drawing, literature, philosophy, and science all contribute, determining how they take shape. These artworks, created from numerous overlapping layers of paint, give rise to a uniquely vivid "sound" comprised of individual coloristic chords inhabited by emotional quantities that are difficult to apprehend and describe. Light, color, and the specific handling of surfaces transform these paintings into room-filling bodies of color that radiate far out

into their environments, infusing them with their energy. With his paintings, Scheibl evokes an aesthetic experience that consistently addresses the viewer's emotional perception.

Albert Oehlen

The 1980s saw Albert Oehlen, a German artist often referred to as a “free radical,” joined forces with Martin Kippenberger and other contemporaries as protagonists of a worldwide movement that propagated a return to painting, which he had studied under Sigmar Polke. Beneath the banner of “post-non-objective” painting, a term he himself describes as silly, Oehlen has repeatedly explored the limits of contemporary art—making a significant contribution to the development of “bad painting” with his rebellious and experimental oeuvre. The content of his large-format tableaux typically alternates between figurative portrayal and abstraction. The artist creates vividly colorful and highly expressive paintings, collages, and computer prints inspired by European Informalism, American abstract expressionism, and the work of figures such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. The physical motions of his body during the painting process, of his arm and his hand, are reflected in the dynamism of his compositions. Oehlen's pictorial inventions are always in part about artistic freedom, about the dissolution of obligatory structures and painting conventions.

Herbert Brandl

Color is central to Herbert Brandl's oeuvre, which connects him with Austrian contemporaries such as Otto Zitko and Gunter Damisch. Together with Hubert Scheibl and a few others, they represent the “Neue Wilde” (New Wild Ones) of the mid-1980s, a generation that consciously turns to painting after its end had been repeatedly postulated with art movements such as Minimal Art, Conceptual Art, and the feminist avant-garde in the decades before. A new hunger for images rules this era. For Brandl, painting means a constant overlaying, condensing, blurring, revealing and concealing. Earth, water, clouds and changing light moods are recognizable in many natural landscapes, often only vaguely perceptible. His intensive color experiments address the gestural act and the processual nature of painting, sometimes he splashes or pours the individual colors onto the painting surface. Brandl's work culminates in his famous mountain landscapes. Especially in his watercolors, he works wet-in-wet with the physical properties of the paint - thick or thin fluidity, drying behavior on special papers and with its spontaneous unfolding on the painting surface.

Annette Messenger

Body parts, which she combines as she pleases, play a key role in the installation of French artist Annette Messenger. The twenty-eight inflatable elements in *Gonflés—dégonflés* are oversized organs and extremities that are initially distributed flat on the floor or fixed to the wall near to the floor. At the same time or one after the other, they fill with air, unfold, take on volume. Here, finger-like projections unfold, there a penis springs up, somewhere else something resembling a heart. Finally, the air escapes again, the elements gradually collapse limply. Dissected into its component parts, a body lies before us like a landscape, spread-eagled, breathing in and out—familiar and at the same time unsettling.

Martha Jungwirth

Martha Jungwirth, who in recent years has garnered major recognition internationally, is considered one of the most important female artists of the present. Her fascinating creative output revolves around the coloristic possibilities both of watercolor and oil painting, for which she prefers to use special paper as the painting base. From the beginning she has experimented with the different materiality of picture supports and pigments. From the 1980s onwards, the artist combined abstraction and figuration in large-format watercolors, the motifs of which appear to swim or float on the painting ground. Their delicate connections arise in a rhythmic, intuitive, and unplanned creative process. The object color turns into an emotional color, translating what is visible into a dense, unique, unmistakable visual language of the highest expressivity and sensitivity. The paper becomes as if the score of one's own perception, reacting through color tones like stain structures. Like a membrane, these artworks are a resonating body of sensibility.

Rotunda Hall 1

Claudia Märzendorfer

It takes months of painstaking work for Claudia Märzendorfer to knit the individual parts of a truck from fine wool: an engine block, tires, and spare parts such as an exhaust pipe. Working with and grappling with materiality play a central role for this sculptor, who thereby explores the outer edges of what sculpture can be. The act of knitting, stereotypically associated with the feminine, forms a contrast to the cliché of the masculine-connoted vehicle. Moreover, her elaborate hand-crafting stands strongly at odds with these motifs of industrially produced products that represent technology, speed, and a rapid pace of events. Märzendorfer's knitted works from the series *Silent Running* hence embody an antipode, representing deceleration—and against the backdrop of current world affairs, particularly in the context of climate change, Märzendorfer's installation seems all the more topical.

Press images

The following images are available free of charge in the Press section of www.albertina.at.

Legal notice: The images may only be used in connection with reporting on the exhibition.



Eva Beresin
Resting in Ecstasy, 2023
3D-Print, PLA
100 × 95 × 53 cm
The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – Family Collection
Haselsteiner
© Eva Beresin / Photo: The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna



Karl Karner
I eat with my bird, 2024
Aluminium casting, Swarovski glitter
130 × 90 × 260 cm
The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – Family Collection
Haselsteiner
© Karl Karner, Photo: Karl Karner



Nam June Paik
Duet Memory, 1995
Video installation (1 piano, 1 laser disk player, 22 televisions of different sizes, radio and television cabinets, wooden bench, suspenders, wristwatch)
180 × 265 × 200 cm
The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The ESSL Collection
© Nam June Paik Estate, Photo: Lisa Rastl



Dieter Roth
Interior with a look back, 1988-1990
Glue, oil paint, acrylic paint, watercolor on painting and household utensils, various materials (wood, glass, metal)
145 × 135 × 18 cm
The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – The ESSL Collection
© Dieter Roth Estate, Courtesy Hauser & Wirth,
Photo: The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna



Martha Jungwirth
Vladimir Nabokov: Memory, that is, 2017
Oil on cardboard
160 × 138 cm
The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna
© Martha Jungwirth / Bildrecht, Vienna 2025,
Photo: The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna



Claudia Märzendorfer
Silent Running, 2013
Wool, coconut, latex
Multiple parts, variable dimensions
The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna – Family Collection
Haselsteiner
© Claudia Märzendorfer / Bildrecht, Vienna 2025,
Photo: The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna