

Exhibition facts

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Venue Basteihalle
Curator Dr Antonia Hoerschelmann, Albertina
Works 70

Contact Albertinaplatz 1 | 1010 Vienna
T +43 (01) 534 83 0
info@albertina.at
www.albertina.at

Opening Hours Daily 10 am – 6 pm | Wednesdays & Fridays 10 am – 9 pm

Press contact Fiona Sara Schmidt
T +43 (01) 534 83 511 | M +43 (0)699 12178720
s.schmidt@albertina.at

Sarah Rainer
T +43 (01) 534 83 512
sarah.rainer@albertina.at

Partner



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ALBERTINA Contemporary Art presents artworks created from the second half of the 20th century to the present. Around 70 works by artists including Anselm Kiefer, Gerhard Richter, Gottfried Helnwein, Andy Warhol, Alex Katz, and Maria Lassnig represent the broad diversity of post-1945 artistic stances.

Key works illustrate international trends running from hyperrealism to abstraction and from color-aesthetic to political themes, thereby exemplifying the multifaceted artistic output of the past several decades.

An additional highlight is the ALBERTINA Museum's very first showing of newly acquired works by Brigitte Kowanz, Los Carpinteros, Rainer Wölzl, and Kiki Smith.

Wall Texts

Introduction

The current presentation of *ALBERTINA Contemporary Art* shows a selection of about eighty works from the ALBERTINA's comprehensive and continuously growing holdings of present-day art. The exhibition focuses on highlights of the institution's collections, on both already known key works and on new acquisitions. The emphasis of the presentation is on the confrontation of international achievements and positions of Austrian art. It is part of the ALBERTINA's collecting strategy to purchase groups of works instead of isolated items to ensure a complex understanding of the artistic idea and compositional principles of an oeuvre.

Only drawings and prints are purchased for the ALBERTINA's Graphic Art Collection. However, many artists have donated important paintings to the museum as they regard their production as an inseparable artistic whole: drawings, printed works, and paintings are nothing but different forms of expression of the same artistic concept and idea.

Since the foundation of the Albertina in 1776, the art of the day has always been at the core of the institution's acquisitions. In continuation of this interest of the Albertina's first hour already pursued by the initiator of the collection, Albert of Saxe-Teschen, contemporary works on paper are still in the center of the Albertina's collection and exhibition policy. Offering insights into the most recent chapter of art history, the presentation of its own holdings of present-day art constitutes a crucial commitment of the ALBERTINA rooted in its very tradition.

Eduard Angeli

For more than fifty years, the Vienna-born artist Eduard Angeli has unwaveringly devoted himself to one subject: the myth of silence, of melancholy. Angeli espouses the soundless motionlessness of the world. In recent years, Angeli has worked on a comprehensive cycle of charcoal drawings dedicated to Venice, the city on the lagoon. Taking up the myth of the dead city, the works are anything but garrulous genre pictures. They unfold symbols of man's forlornness – of his loneliness and that last silence which he finds both threatening and comforting.

The motionless and deserted compositions isolate their main motifs. They refrain from all narrative details to the point where absolutely nothing happens and where everything freezes in complete immobility.

Entering the pictorial stage is out of the question though the drawings are suggestive and present the ambience in a plausible way. The somber darkness of the charcoal additionally seals the already hermetically barred buildings. Like intense dreams, Angeli's drawings articulate a terrifying truth in confronting us with symbolic figures of existential isolation.

Adriana Czernin

The large-format colored pencil drawings by Austrian artist Adriana Czernin are immediately captivating. The subject seems to be always the same: women and their environs. The viewer is confronted with snapshots of movement and realizes he is treading on slippery ground: nothing is what it seems to be; the pictures may tell a story of beauty and harmony, but also of conflict and aggression.

The women's bodies are depicted in an illusionistic manner that relies on the clearly two-dimensional rendering of clothes and background. The sumptuous ornamentation catches the eye: sometimes large blossoms, often many-part floral or geometric patterns. These patterns recur, are repeated in different sizes and colors, are mirrored, appear in their positive or negative form, which reminds us of cut-outs. The artist only uses a pencil and two different colored pencils in most cases. While the focus is on the female figure in some pictures, there are others in which the figures seem to disappear more and more, to dissolve in the ornamental until they fight their way back to the surface again.

Adriana Czernin has a definite idea of her figures and their poses. She is not interested in portraying a specific person. Ornamentation began to fascinate her early on; she has been collecting ornaments since her days at school. Today, she has a huge arsenal at her disposal, which she can draw on at will.

Gunter Damisch

The Austrian artist Gunter Damisch became known in the context of the "New Wild Ones," a loose group of young artists responding to the internationally proclaimed death of painting with expressive and colourful pictures in the 1980s. Within his extensive oeuvre, Damisch, who held a professorship for graphic art and printing techniques at the Academy of Fine Art Vienna from 1992 on, came to develop a highly individual iconography and mythology that oscillate between figuration and abstraction. His works are about the perception and representation of the world as well as the process of its continuous transformation. Accordingly, the titles of Damisch's pictures revolve around notions of energy fields and field lines. As viewed under a microscope, protozoa take on the dimension of planets, and big things are to be found in little things. The artist concatenates microcosm and macrocosm, close-up and view from a distance, concreteness and abstraction.

Lucian Freud

The English painter Lucian Freud revolutionizes 20th-century portraiture. With him, the human becomes the mere showpiece of an uncompromising realism that does not shy away from ugliness, nor is intimidated by the insignia of power. He represents reality as it is, unembellished, without charging it with meaning. The human is treated like an object. His models mostly come from the artist's personal environment and often have to endure long portrait sittings, but not to help the artist get to know them better. Freud is not interested in a psychological analysis of his models; instead, he waits for all masks to drop, for everything

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that adheres to a person—background, education, or attitude—to fall away, leaving only the naked human body. This is why Freud does nude portraits that have nothing in common with conventional nude paintings.

A chance meeting in the street with Alexandra (Alexi) Williams Wynn, a sculpture student, led to a short love affair and a few portraits like this one here.

Sonja Gangl

The conceptualist artist Sonja Gangl, who was born in Graz, relies on models from the media. Taking in what she sees, she transforms these perceptions into new pictures. Drawing being her preferred medium, she interweaves the traditional artistic genre with more recent media technologies. In 2013/14, the ALBERTINA Museum dedicated a comprehensive retrospective to her work: *DANCING WITH THE END*.

The large group of works *The End* takes the final images of various films as the starting point for the artist's transformation. Sonja Gangl maintains her autonomy by seeing the ancient art of drawing overcome the new medium of film. Exploration of the various qualities of paper and pencil is significant to her artistic practice.

Franz Gertsch

The Swiss artist Franz Gertsch made a name for himself with his huge gaudy, photorealistic paintings of celebrities of the Bern art scene in the late 1960s: pictures after plain snapshots. In the mid-1980s, Gertsch abandoned painting for a longer period of time and devoted himself to a new woodcut technique. He distanced himself from the representation of "colourful" group scenes and events that had made him famous and henceforth chose nature and portraiture as his exclusive domains. Gertsch immortalized details of nature such as inconspicuous plants or the river streaming past his house and severed the bonds of his subjects with specific places and points in time. What matters to him is the universal validity of the motif rather than its uniqueness. The dedication to these themes also informed his painting which he took up again in 1995. His later works in the field from the 2000s on reveal the influence of photorealism and resemble blurry photographs. In conjunction with the realistic manner of painting, the small-area application of colour creates—as do the countless point-like notches of his prints from wood blocks—a nearly abstract impression, which is further enhanced by the intense and powerful colourfulness of the egg tempera chosen by the artist.

Michela Ghisetti

Born in Bergamo, Michela Ghisetti has been living and working in Vienna since 1992. After completing her training as an artist in her native Italy, she studied painting and printing techniques with Gunter Damisch at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Ghisetti's oeuvre continuously oscillates between abstraction and figuration.

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Biographical and emotional components merge with philosophical and art-theoretical elements in her work. In groups of works that are conceptually strict, and likewise humorously and intuitively ordered, the artist steadfastly explores new contents and a large variety of materials, the foundations of which she questions in her drawings. Another constant factor in Ghisetti's production is the reflection on movement in working processes. Using a photograph as her starting point for Felicia, Ghisetti renders a monumental cropped close-up of a face and, relying on intellectual austerity, discipline, and physical effort, conquers the pictorial surface of the wooden support with coloured pencils. Hair, a central motif of her work, provides a metaphor for women's complex presence in society and their role models. Here, it turns into abstract bundles of coloured strokes, the lines tearing the surface and digging into the ground. The coloured pencils have furrowed the wood in the drawing process, turning the subject's hair into a web of abstract lines.

Xenia Hausner

The Vienna-born artist Xenia Hausner first studied stage design but turned to working exclusively as a painter from the 1990s. And yet, her sense of theatrics keeps making itself felt. Her figures behave like actors on a stage. In all their sensually colorful glory, they look completely isolated, absent. So even the intimate gesture of an embrace does not find emotional expression in the faces, it is just a posture. People don't interact, they don't even look at each other. Intense eye contact is sought only with the viewer.

The artist frequently mingles with her models and depicts herself, as in *Night of the Scorpions* with a brush in her hand. It is a mystifying witch scene. Four strong women, all of them born in the sign of, or with an ascendant in, Scorpio, take a good inquisitive look at us, the viewers, against an open night sky.

Gottfried Helnwein

Pain, injury, and violence are the subjects upon which Vienna-born artist Gottfried Helnwein's work pivots. His central motif is the figure of the vulnerable and defenceless child. This figure not only embodies the entire range of psychological and social fears but also provides the artist with a means to explore historical themes like National Socialism and the Holocaust as well as taboos such as abuse. The fascination with Helnwein's hyperrealist pictures, which always draw on photographic models, lies in their technical perfection.

Still a child, Helnwein relied on art to escape the oppressive post-war atmosphere of his surroundings and the social constraints of his petty bourgeois parental home. His first exhibitions in the 1970, staged after he had studied at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, aroused violent protests; some of his pictures were even seized by the police. While he had frequently worked in watercolour in his beginnings, he came to prefer larger formats and oil or acrylic after he had moved to Germany in 1985. He and his family left Germany for Ireland in 1997. Since 2002, Helnwein has been alternately living and working in Ireland and Los Angeles.

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Having taken a critical stance towards society since his early days as an artist, he is still regarded as a provocateur: “Actually, my work has always been an attempt to come to terms with—and react to—what affects me.”

Marcus Kaiser

Born in Tübingen, Marcus Kaiser studied cello at the Robert Schumann University of Music and Media in Düsseldorf after graduating from the city's Arts Academy. Pursuing an interdisciplinary approach, the artist produces works oscillating between art and music: Marcus Kaiser is a painter, sculptor, installation and performance artist, musician, and composer.

Usually working simultaneously on different series and groups of works over long periods of time, the artist sometimes combines the results to complex installations on the occasion of major exhibitions—installations that may provide him with a starting point for interactions and further works of art. Interleaving different genres of art is Kaiser's very programme.

The works on paper shown here belong to the artist's production for his series *Green Pictures* that he began in 1995. Kaiser has slowly filled the pictorial space of these jungle drawings with pigment ink, pencil, and watercolours, applying layer after layer of green to the point of near-saturation, until details begin to disappear in the sea of paint. The works are characterized by precision and richness in detail as well as a certain all-over principle that has the tropical vegetation imaginarily grow rampant beyond the pictorial space so that microcosm and macrocosm interlock. Nature not only provides the point of departure for Kaiser's *Green Pictures* in reality—the artist has created an artificial rain forest in the inner courtyard of his studio in Düsseldorf—but also has a metaphorical meaning beyond that: “If I were to say something about my art / I would like it best if it were a garden / moving some things into the shade / others into the sun / outgrowing my regimen / dependent on what goes beyond” (M.Kaiser).

Alex Katz

Alex Katz has been regarded as one of the most important American artists since the 1950s. Being surrounded by abstract art, he has focused his endeavours on portraiture from early on, painting mainly his family and a small number of friends. Katz's portraits have laid the foundation for a new realism in American art. Katz combines aspects of abstraction with a realistic depiction of his subjects.

His works are characterised by a radical flatness; most of his motifs find themselves tightly enclosed by the picture's margins. The larger-than-life heads are often reminiscent of films, advertisements, or billboards. Katz is not interested in an emotional narrative but aims at endowing traditional, model-based portraiture with an extended, contemporary appearance.

Anselm Kiefer

The work of Anselm Kiefer, who was born in Germany in 1945, is all about German history and mythology. Kiefer studied law, history, and linguistics before he embarked on his career as an artist at the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe. He later moved on to Düsseldorf where he exchanged views with Joseph Beuys and other artists. It is the identity of post-war Germany that Kiefer has explored from the very beginnings. He presented his works in the German pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 1980. Kiefer's approach draws on traditional history painting in many respects. His art and history painting share the monumental dimensions, historical subject matter, the conception of cycles, and a generous manner of painting that is intended to be viewed from a distance. Yet whereas history painting glorifies victories achieved in battles and triumphant military leaders, Kiefer's scorched-earth paintings preserve the memory of pain and destruction. The artist thematises the atrocities of the twentieth century, commemorating and conveying them as timeless recollections in his impressive paintings. The world Kiefer tells us about is both wounded and vulnerable and finds its expression in his works' fragile, relief-like surfaces. The immediate general response of post-war art to what had happened in the Second World War was to refuse to make a statement and to retreat into abstraction, into the non-objectivity of Art Informel. Anselm Kiefer's status and significance lies in the fact that he has returned the allegorical image to the world in monumental dimensions.

Brigitte Kowanz

Holding a professorship for transmedia art at the University of Applied Arts Vienna since 1997, Brigitte Kowanz, who, together with Erwin Wurm, represented Austria at the 57th Biennale di Venezia 2017, has dedicated herself to issues of space and light from the very beginnings of her career as an artist. The medium of light allows her to immaterially extend the traditional (pictorial) space.

In her more recent works, which explore light as a carrier of information on the one hand and the aspect of digitization on the other, Kowanz works with mirrors: intertwined neon loops between two mirror surfaces reflect into infinity, creating a virtual space. Many works belonging to the group "Infinity and beyond" and bearing titles like *Wikipedia 17.01.2001*, *iPhone 09.01.2007*, or *Google 15.09.1997* refer to defining moments in the digital era. The work presented here, *Email 02.08.1984 03.08.1984*, recalls the first e-mail message sent to Germany. It was Laura Breedon at the US elite university MIT who mailed it from the administrative office of CSNET, a forerunner of the Internet, on August 2, 1984. After wandering through the servers for almost twenty-four hours, it reached Michael Rotert at Karlsruhe University on August 3. The e-mail era had been ushered in.

Kowanz is interested in how real space and virtual space merge and how humans move between these worlds. The neon signs reflecting into infinity symbolize the complexity of (tele-)communication.

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Maria Lassnig

Most works of the Austrian-born, internationally renowned artist Maria Lassnig are self-thematizations that translate personal sensibilities and self-perceptions into an independent, impressive imagery. By depicting body feelings, Maria Lassnig opens up a new, till then unknown terrain to art. Already her early works are representations of, in her own words, “felt experiences.” Around 1970, when she lives in New York, she speaks of this acute sense of her own corporeality as “body awareness.” Maria Lassnig is one of the first women ever to make her own body and its innate sensations the center of her art.

In her paintings, the pain and suffering that is in the world becomes visible and apprehensible for the viewer. Her picture entitled *Potato Press* is to be taken as a metaphor. The bloody piece of meat is a self-perception: the feeling of oneself as something soft and vulnerable, being caught in the unrelenting grip of the environment, the iron potato press. Will the amorphous lump of flesh succumb and be squashed? Will it hold out, put up resistance?

Roy Lichtenstein

Next to Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein is the most important and influential exponent of American Pop Art. And like Warhol he draws on comic strips, advertisements, newspapers, and mail-order catalogues for his work, blowing up the often very small printed motifs into huge formats. The printed halftone pattern is reproduced dot by dot in painting by Lichtenstein, which becomes a formative design principle and his trademark. At the same time, Lichtenstein is one of the spiritual fathers of the transformation of low into high art: he transposed the fictional world of comics into museum art. It is the migration of a genre motif to a different sphere.

Mainly in the 1970s, Roy Lichtenstein was also studying models from art history. In *Glass and Lemon Before a Mirror* he reformulated the classical genre of the still life in his own visual language. He also likes to paraphrase masterpieces from art history, from Monet to Picasso.

Los Carpinteros

The name of Los Carpinteros, Spanish for “the carpenters,” leaves no doubt about the fact that its members understand themselves as a group working together. Taking a back seat as particular persons, they dismiss the idea of individual authorship. The name of the Cuban collective also emphasizes their penchant toward manual craftsmanship.

Drawing as an engine of artistic practice defines the work of Los Carpinteros. Bricks, Lego elements, and wooden beams figure as recurring architectural elements in the artist collective’s production. Various combinations yield a wide range of pieces from buildings, islands, and alleys to tornadoes and everyday objects. Some drawings project these structures into the future and thus turn into architectural drawings and construction plans for installations and objects while others retain their autonomous character throughout time. Los Carpinteros rely on soft techniques such as watercolour and gouache, clear lines, contours, and perspective for their drawings in which man-made rooms and objects exhibit

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how they were made and how they work. Though the drawings may initially elicit a humorous response, we begin to feel the presence of critical irony as soon as they reveal their contradictions and political connotations: social development and luxury, utopia and melancholy, the practical and the surreal.

Markus Prachensky

Ever since his first visit in 1967, the Austrian-born artist Markus Prachensky kept returning to America's Pacific coast. His fascination with the Californian landscape, its deserts and rock formations, continuously stimulated him to create cycles of pictures, whose titles refer to their places of origin. The artist was however not concerned with portraying the reality he had seen. His works are rather a reaction to the things seen, transformations of his personal experience into the medium of painting. In the case of *Red on white, Los Angeles I*, Prachensky's language of forms, which is based on strictly chosen principles of composition, derives its extraordinary and unique clarity and reduction from the artist's intense engagement with the American art of the 1960s.

Arnulf Rainer

Arnulf Rainer's paramount importance for art history after 1945 extends far beyond Austria and cannot be stressed enough. Rainer's exploration of new artistic paths, his fascinating strategies, and his experimental approach make him one of the most influential living artists of the present day. Time and again, Arnulf Rainer's work confronts the beholder with the opposition between the image and the non-mimetic, yet without harbouring an unresolvable contradiction.

Gerhard Richter

The imagery that Gerhard Richter, who was born in Dresden in 1932, has set out to explore ever since the 1960s in different variations, sequences, and series, has only one central theme: painting itself. It is a heterogeneous world informed by widely diverse and conflicting motifs. His work is characterized by stylistic oppositions and appears to be full of contradictions and discontinuities. Photorealistic pieces are juxtaposed with paintings of complete and total abstraction. But there is no consistent development that becomes discernible, different styles and expressions are found to alternate and coincide with one another. "Make oneself a picture of this world" is how Richter himself has described his work.

From 1980, Gerhard Richter starts turning to Informalism. He creates large-sized, colorful, expressive, abstract paintings. The material character of paint, the structure, and the sometimes almost haptic formal solution came to determine his pictures' composition. In recent years, Gerhard Richter has developed several new types of works, such as lacquer-on-glass paintings. The clear contours of the lacquer paints that spread across the fragile glass

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plates evoke natural phenomena like the pattern grain of stones. Chance as a key element of the design brings the inexhaustible possibilities of colour combinations into play.

Hubert Scheibl

The paintings by Austrian artist Hubert Scheibl oscillate between figuration and reduction. Though one may sometimes divine landscapes and impressions of nature, the works are abstract and strike us through their vastness, atmosphere, and spatial depth. The spontaneous, gestural process of drawing and painting is always perceptible; transparent layers of color alternate with graphic elements, opaque surfaces meet with areas of open ground.

Kiki Smith

The US artist Kiki Smith has made a name for herself with her cross-media and interdisciplinary method of work, with which she explores the foundations of human existence. Subjects such as body, transience, death and birth, as well as the connection between spirituality and nature are viewed from a postmodern perspective. The range of her means of expression spans from sculpture, photography, and prints to drawing, painting, and textile art. It is always the human body Kiki Smith focuses on in her works. She regards it as “our common thread and as a stage for our joy and sorrow” and uses it to describe “who we are and how we live and die.”

The art of drawing features prominently in Kiki Smith’s oeuvre. Her life-size female figures, which draw on symbolic elements from myths, fairy tales, and legends, as well as Christian iconography, thematise her role as a woman and artist. The Nepalese paper she uses plays a particularly important role: fragile, permeable, and displaying an organic, almost skin-like structure, it gives expression to the female protagonists’ vulnerability, who seem to be turned inside out. Thus, muscle cords, tendons, and bones are visible in the two nude figures featured in *Blue Stars on Blue Tree* and *Tree with Yellow Roses*. Repeatedly broken line work embodies energy flows and emotions.

Kiki Smith’s representations of the female body confront the viewer with issues of gender and identity. These representations unfold a fragile, female, often autobiographically connoted universe with which the artist counters (the) male-dominated (history of) art.

Andy Warhol

Mercedes-Benz Formel Rennwagen W125 belongs to the last series of pictures Andy Warhol worked on in 1986/87 before his death. The series *Cars*, commissioned by Daimler on the occasion of the centennial of the automobile, remained unfinished. Presenting a selection of twenty types of Mercedes cars, it was intended to document the history of the automobile

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from the Daimler Motorcoach and the Benz-Patent Motorcar of 1886 to the present. From the planned eighty pictures, thirty-five paintings and silk-screen prints with acrylic on canvas as well as twelve large-format drawings were realised. A selection of eight different models was used.

The car as a fetish of the growing consumerist society accompanied Andy Warhol's entire early oeuvre. Whether luxury goods or pictures of disasters like those of accidents borrowed from newspaper photographs, Warhol saw cars as symbols of individual freedom and desire as well as of danger and misfortune. The devaluation and banalisation of objects, which their mass production necessarily entailed, found their equivalent in the stereotype repetition of certain models in one work.

Tom Wesselmann

Despite the artist's resistance against such a stigmatisation, Tom Wesselmann is regarded as one of the key representatives of American Pop art. The outsized mouth only partially shown and the cigarette smoke escaping from it are rendered in a way reminiscent of the close-up aesthetic of films made in the 1960s and 1970s. The glaring red half-opened lips tie in with the flat calculated use of sexual stimulants in advertising intended to seduce people to consume. Yet Wesselmann also succeeds in transforming the photographic model into an abstraction through his eye-catching use of colour as well as by monumentalising and at the same time isolating the mouth from the rest of the body—a tenor emphasised by offering only a cropped view and especially by abruptly cutting off the rising smoke.

Tom Wesselmann's first works on metal date from the early 1980s. An enlargement of the preparatory drawing was transferred onto a steel or aluminium plate, cut out with a laser device, and then painted. The fascination with this technique informed the artist's work until the end of his life. In spite of this most modern form of production, Wesselmann also remained true to his leitmotifs—still lifes, nudes, and landscapes—in this technique: deliberately leaving Abstract Expressionism as the dominating art of his time behind, he took his bearings from the history of art and its traditional categories, directly relating to his models such as Henri Matisse or contemporaries such as Andy Warhol, whose work *Liz Taylor* is cited in the background.

Rainer Wölzl

Born in Vienna and teaching at Vienna's College/University of Applied Arts since 1990, Rainer Wölzl centres on the fundamental questions of human existence. His work, in which black features as an important constant, explores cultural, social and political themes in various media such as drawing, painting, sculpture, installation, and film.

The expression "museum of shadows" appeared as a title in Wölzl's work for the first time in the 1990s, referring to a lithographed book that takes up the Yugoslav Wars. Since the 2000s, it is the title of a series of mostly large-format tableaus composed of many parts that

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motifically draw on art-historical models and images of the media age and deal with socio-political issues of contemporary history and the present-day world. The term “shadow” provides the artist, as he puts it, with “a multifaceted frame of reference, a projection image, a constant companion, and a part of memory.” The grid emphasizes the constructive character of the pictures and is aimed at encouraging viewers to question their visual habits, forge imaginative relationships, and discover the unknown in the familiar.

Starting point for the drawing *Hedge I—for camouflaging Crematorium V in Auschwitz-Birkenau* from the series *Museum of Shadows*, which is composed of twelve separate sheets, was a documentary photograph of a concentration camp guard reproduced in the French art historian and philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman’s book *Images malgré tout (Images in Spite of All)*, in which the author questions the theologically and ethically motivated doctrine of the nonrepresentability of mass extermination by the Nazis. Wölzl transforms this photograph of the “hedges that were erected as a screen to prevent people from seeing all the things that happened inside”—as formulated in a report by Filip Müller, a Slovak survivor of the Sonderkommando KZ Auschwitz-Birkenau—into an extreme horizontal format, a barrier that seems to extend endlessly beyond the margins of the picture. The drawing is a contribution to the discourse on the representability or nonrepresentability of the Shoah that Wölzl counters through his “painting of disappearance,” as he says.

Rainer Wölzl’s twelve-part large-format drawing *Poem I* refers to a discourse in the field of literature and literary history considering the atrocities of National Socialism. In his poem *To Future Generations*, which ranks among the most important texts of German literature written in exile, Bertolt Brecht wrote: “What are these times, when / A conversation about trees is almost a crime / Because it implies silence about so many misdeeds.” And in 1949, Theodor W. Adorno postulated in his text *Cultural Criticism and Society*: “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” Written after the end of Nazi Germany, the text, which sprang from a fundamental distrust of the possibilities of culture, was disputed by philosophers, cultural scientists, and artists and applied to art in general.

Wölzl, who describes his oeuvre as “text-related,” motifically draws on Brecht’s poem in his charcoal drawing that shows part of a wood from below with the sun breaking through countless treetops. Like *Hedge I—for camouflaging Crematorium V in Auschwitz-Birkenau*, the work deals with the subject of the representability or nonrepresentability of the Holocaust and questions the dictum of the “inconceivable” and “inexpressible.”