PRESS RELEASE

Museum Liaunig about to reopen

The Museum Liaunig possesses one of the most extensive collections of contemporary Austrian art since 1945, which is supplemented by leading representatives of classic modernism and exemplary works from international artists. In the reopening year following enlargement, five exhibitions await the visitor. Under the title *WIRKLICHKEITEN (REALITIES)* works from Herzig, Jungwirth, Kocherscheidt, Pongratz, Ringel and Zeppel-Sperl will be on display along with a one-man show by the Irish artist Sean Scully. In addition, the historic collections of decorated glass, portrait miniatures and the *Gold of the Akan* provide a conscious contrast programme to the presentations of contemporary art.

The refined museum building, which as if predestined by nature has been placed in the southern Carinthian landscape above the River Drau by the Viennese architectural team *querkraft*, forms an appropriate architectonic and museological framework for the collections of the industrialist Herbert W. Liaunig. After a year of extension work, the private museum in Neuhaus/Suha, which has already been awarded the Austrian Museums Prize and the status of a protected building, is now about to reopen.

The original architectural concept, comprised of four striking structural elements has now been supplemented by a triangular room for special exhibitions with an adjacent atrium that in 2015 will be dedicated to Sean Scully's abstract paintings, as well as two underground presentation rooms and additional depot space.

A ramp runs up from the entrance area along the display depot to the main exhibition tract, which is illuminated from above and measures 160m in length and 13m in width. In 2015 this long hall, which is visible from outside the building, will provide the exhibition space for the most comprehensive presentation to date of works from the six-artist *WIRKLICHKEITEN* group. Wolfgang Herzig, Martha Jungwirth, Kurt Kocherscheidt, Peter Pongratz, Franz Ringel and Robert Zeppel-Sperl first exhibited together during 1968 in a show organised by Otto Breicha at the Vienna Secession, which stood in crass opposition to both the painters of the Viennese school of fantastic realism and the abstractionists surrounding Otto Mauer, who dominated the Viennese artistic scene of the time.

From the main gallery, one enters an underground annex, which contains an artistically and ethnologically unique collection of African gold objects from the 19th and 20th centuries. Behind this room for the presentation of the *Gold of the Akan*, which was part of the original museum, new spaces have been added in which the collections of decorated glasses and portrait miniatures from the 16th to the 19th century are housed in a generous display case landscape.

Following the reconstruction work, a new artistic intervention has been integrated into the architecture from *querkraft*, which has won numerous awards and is characterised by fair-faced concrete, steel and glass. As a counterpoint to Brigitte Kowanz's light installation in the exit area of the underground cube housing the gold collection, Esther Stocker has designed the corridor leading to the glass and portrait miniature exhibitions. Via this connecting passage visitors can also enter the impressive, circular sculpture depot, which is now accessible for the first time. A shop in the foyer also augments the museum's facilities.

The enlargement of the museum has also been accompanied by a change in its opening hours. It can now be viewed without a prior agreed appointment from Wednesday to Sunday between 10.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Guided tours through the exhibits will be available at 11.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. These are included in the price of admission, but participation is not obligatory. Children aged 12 and over are also most welcome.