

## **press information**

### **A new museum for contemporary Austrian art**

**A new museum, designed by querkraft for the industrialist and art collector, Herbert W. Liaunig, is to open on August 29, 2008 in Neuhaus, Carinthia.**

### **Vienna/Neuhaus, August 28, 2008**

On August 29, 2008, the private museum owned by the industrialist and art collector, Herbert W. Liaunig, is to be opened in Neuhaus/Suha, Carinthia, by the Austrian president, Heinz Fischer.

In a display area of around 3200 m<sup>2</sup> (large exhibition hall, graphics room and viewing depot), a selection of contemporary art from Herbert W. Liaunig's extensive collection, which has largely been chosen by curator, Peter Baum, will be on show. Moreover, as a challenging counterpoint to the modern works, Herbert W. Liaunig's collection of African gold, which is unique from both an artistic and an ethnological perspective, will be available for viewing in a purpose-built, underground annex (350 m<sup>2</sup>).

According to Herbert W. Liaunig, who has personally financed the entire museum project, "The museum will fulfil the long-held wish of my family to create an adequate home for our collection."

For its long-term, alternating presentations, the museum intends to only use works from its own collection and at least initially, does not plan any special exhibitions. Through this focus upon the main currents in Austrian art in the period beginning with 1950, the museum will close painful gaps in the national museum landscape.

Indeed, the diversity of the MUSEUM LIAUNIG in Neuhaus/Suha currently represents the most cogent response to the desire frequently expressed by both Austrians and foreigners for a representative overview of the recent history of the fine arts in Austria.

### **A collection of contemporary art**

Herbert W. Liaunig has built up his collection of contemporary fine art over the past four decades. At first, he was helped by contacts to school friends with an interest in the arts, however of even more decisive importance were subsequent friendships with artists, which had a lasting influence on the collector's differentiated understanding of the arts.

As Herbert W. Liaunig writes in the foreword to the recently published catalogue of contemporary works at the MUSEUM LIAUNIG in Neuhaus/Suha, "Under the spell cast by a limitless subject, not only did my desire for art increase, but I also attained my own horizons. The best training was looking and then looking again, visits to exhibitions and museums and meetings with artists in their studios."

From the outset, the Liaunig collection concentrated on examples of Austrian contemporary art after 1945/50. This nucleus is supplemented by purchases of works from earlier representatives of the classic modern such as Boeckl, Berg, Frankl, Kokoschka, Anton Kolig, Thöny, Mahringer and Wickenburg (which will first be displayed in a second Museum presentation) together with targeted purchases of works from foreign painters and sculptors, including Robert Motherwell,

Pierre Soulages, Georges Mathieu, Tony Cragg, Matt Mullican and Anthony Caro, which became possible more recently.

The focus of the first museum presentation for 2008/09, which will consist of ten connected groups of works in the large exhibition hall, will be on Geometric Abstraction and Op Art (Marc Adrian, Helga Philipp, Richard Kriesche, Hermann J. Painitz, Joos+Joos), the expanded circle of the Galerie St. Stephan (Rainer, Mikl, Prachensky, Hollegha, Staudacher, Bischoffshausen), the representatives of “pure” painting with its meditative tendencies, such as Bohatsch, Swoboda, Stanzl, Gasteiger or Hikade, and the “Neuen Wilden” including large works by Anzinger, Damisch, Schmalix, Klinkan and Mosbacher. Individualists such as Nitsch and Gironcoli, Tony Cragg, Gerhard Moswitzer, Julie Hayward from Salzburg and the Carinthians Meina Schellander and Cornelius Kolig will also be well represented in the exhibition.

The extensive “mixing” of painting and sculpture provides a confrontation with characteristic works from important Austrian sculptors, which begins with Wotruba, Avramidis, Bertoni, Hoflehner, Urteil and Prantl, includes Eder, Goeschl, Pillhofer, Reiter, Nakajima and Oswald Stimm, and ends with Erwin Wurm.

The graphics section, where in combination with sculptural drawings many of the smaller sculptures are to be found, is dominated by Austria’s leading draughtsmen in the period commencing in 1945 such as Absolon and Moldovan, Hradil and Fleck, Brus and Pichler. Objects from Fink, Panzer and Schmögner offer a counterpoint to these works.

### **A collection containing 2150 items**

Over the years, the Liaunig collection has grown steadily and including the drawings and architectural sketches (a further specialist area of the collector) currently consists of 2150 works. The collection awaits with focal points of personal interest and above all covers the development of the fine arts in Austria between 1950 and 2000 in outstanding fashion.

### **The Akan gold collection**

The permanent exhibition, “Akan Gold“ (350 m<sup>2</sup>), which is housed in a dark blue, underground cube, is accessed via a narrow passage containing a light installation from Brigitte Kowanz. The cube contains some 600 objects from a collection of African gold recently acquired by Herbert Liaunig, which are displayed in a spotlighted showcase landscape and a viewable treasure chamber.

The objects, which convince with their formal richness and expressiveness, represent important historical and artistic artefacts from various Ghanaian tribes such as the Baule, Ashanti and Fante. Herbert Liaunig’s African collection, which has been scientifically processed by the American Doran H. Ross and installed by the architect and the museum designer Rolf. E. Hartmann, can be rated among the world’s three largest museum collections of Ghanaian insignia alongside those of the British Museum in London, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and the Gold of Africa Museum in Cape Town.

## **The museum building**

The formally demanding, stringent architectural concept from querkraft consists of four related, functional and structural elements comprised by the viewing depot adjoining the foyer, which runs parallel to the museum entrance (600 m<sup>2</sup>), the main area consisting of a white cube measuring 160m in length, 13m in width and 7m in height with free viewing terraces at the ends (2000 m<sup>2</sup>), the low, artificially illuminated graphics room (500 m<sup>2</sup>), and the underground cube for the “Akan Gold” collection (350 m<sup>2</sup>).

Including the foyer with reception area, workshops and the necessary space for infrastructure, the building has an effective area of around 5000 m<sup>2</sup>. The structure, which is extremely reduced in design, closely follows the prevailing site typography. The long gallery section is the only part of the building that is visible from the outside and offers views of the landscape from its terraces. The remainder of the museum is subterranean. As far as materials are concerned, querkraft has mainly used exposed concrete, steel and glass.

## **Visiting**

The private museum will be open to the public from the beginning of May until the end of October. Visits will assume the form of pre-arranged, guided tours, which will take place from Tuesday to Sunday. In September and October 2008, two tours will offered in the morning and four in the afternoon.

### **PRICES**

Group tours (10-20 people): EUR 10 per person  
Individual tours: EUR 30 per tour and EUR 7 per person

## **Liaunig Collection catalogue**

The opening of the Museum will be marked by the publication of two extensive collection catalogues with numerous texts and illustrations:

### **CATALOGUE “ZEITGENÖSSISCHE KUNST” (CONTEMPORARY ART)**

464 pages with some 400 colour illustrations, a foreword by the collector, an introduction by Peter Baum and explanatory texts concerning 103 artists. (Language: German)  
Opening offer until October 30, 2008: EUR 40, subsequently normal price: EUR 46

### **CATALOGUE “DAS GOLD DER AKAN” (AKAN GOLD)**

208 pages with over 200 illustrations and field photos, a short introduction by Peter Baum and detailed scientific notes from Doran H. Ross and Georg Eisner. (Language: German)  
Opening offer until October 30, 2008: EUR 24, subsequently normal price: EUR 30

Special offer for both catalogues “Zeitgenössische Kunst” and “Das Gold der Akan”: opening offer until October 30, 2008: EUR 57, subsequently normal price: EUR 67

In the case of dispatch, the cost of postage will be added to the catalogue price.

Please send orders to:  
HL Museumsverwaltung GmbH  
A-9155 Neuhaus 41  
Tel: +43(0) 4356 21115  
Fax: +43(0) 4356 21115-25  
office@museumliaunig.at

Press information and photos for downloading are available on the Museum homepage  
**[www.museumliaunig.at](http://www.museumliaunig.at)**

**Inquiries**

Peter Baum  
Bösendorferstrasse 6  
A-1010 Vienna  
Tel: +43(0) 1 513 57 87