

PRESS RELEASE

WIRKLICHKEITEN. Painting that bucked the trend

To mark its reopening following extensive structural alterations, the Museum Liaunig is to exhibit the special show *WIRKLICHKEITEN (REALITIES). Painting that bucked the trend*. This has been curated by Hans-Peter Wipplinger and will occupy the museum's large exhibition hall and adjacent graphics room. With some 250 works comprised of paintings, drawings, prints and sculptural pieces, this presentation constitutes the most comprehensive overview to date of the loose *WIRKLICHKEITEN* artistic group, which at the end of the 1960s was formed by Wolfgang Herzig (*1941), Martha Jungwirth (*1940), Kurt Kocherscheidt (1943-1992), Peter Pongratz (*1940), Franz Ringel (1940-2011) and Robert Zeppel-Sperl (1944-2005).

These six heterogeneous, artistic characters held their first joint exhibition under the title *WIRKLICHKEITEN* at the Vienna Secession in 1968. The show, which was designed by Otto Breicha, proved to be an unexpected success and the talk was of "The debut of a Handke generation in the Austrian visual arts" and "A type of new CoBrA group". As opposed to the stylistic directions of the period, which were dominated by the Viennese school of fantastic realism and abstractionism, as well as emerging avant-garde tendencies such as minimal and conceptual art, which declared painting to be obsolete, the *WIRKLICHKEITEN* pursued "open" painting that was far removed from academic dogmas and the tyrannies of fashion. Whether representational, gestural-figurative or abstract-expressionist, the six protagonists surprised the visiting public with paintings and drawings possessed of an intensive colouring and forceful, personal pictorial imagery that both touched and shocked. In a written comment about the *WIRKLICHKEITEN* phenomenon, Otto Breicha noted: "Reality is really in the imagination and the imagined is so real that it becomes plausible through the painting."

The selection of works for the *WIRKLICHKEITEN* exhibition at the Museum Liaunig focuses on the main phase of the formation around 1968. Significant examples of both the early and subsequent working phases of the artists expand the view of their respective oeuvres in a cross-sectional manner. A shared main hall forms the beginning and linkage of the exhibition and from this area six spatially separated and generously designed solo presentations can be viewed. A thematic compaction in the graphics room counterpoints the partly large paintings in the hall and through drawings and etchings exemplifies aspects such as pop, paraphrasing and ironic quotations, comics and kitsch, sex and sentimentality, as well as stylistic influences from informal and "insane art".

In addition, posters, photographs and archive material bring to life the years between 1968 and 1972, when the *WIRKLICHKEITEN* appeared upon the international stage.

Numerous works and historical documents from the archives of artists, private and institutional collections such as the ESSL Museum Klosterneuburg/Vienna and the collection of the Culture Department of the City of Vienna Authority (MUSA) supplement the comprehensive *WIRKLICHKEITEN* collection of the Museum Liaunig. A considerable number of the exhibits in this show are not only on public display for the first time, but are also making their debut in print. A richly illustrated accompanying publication with content that is as profound as it is entertaining and around 350 colour images, offers an invitation to in-depth perusal. Apart from articles from Silvie Aigner, Brigitte Borchhardt-Birbaumer, Daniela Gregori, Susanne Längle, Rainer Metzger, Thomas Mießgang, Florian Steininger and Hans-Peter Wipplinger, the catalogue also contains historical texts from Otto Breicha and Alfred Schmeller, as well as contributions from literary companions of the *WIRKLICHKEITEN* such as Peter Handke, Elfriede Jelinek and Friederike Mayröcker, and last but by no means least, from the artists themselves.

Curator:
Hans-Peter Wipplinger

Scientific concept for the exhibition and catalogue:
Susanne Längle und Hans-Peter Wipplinger

Exhibition "WIRKLICHKEITEN. Painting that bucked the trend"
April 26th to October 31st 2015, Museum Liaunig, 9155 Neuhaus/Suha 41, Austria
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Wednesday to Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm, guided tours at 11 am and 2 pm