

Press release Opening

## **VIENNA ART WEEK 2016**

### ***Seeking Beauty***

**14–20 November 2016**

(Vienna, 14 November 2016) This week, once again, Vienna is all about art. True to the motto “Seeking Beauty,” VIENNA ART WEEK 2016 sets off on a quest for notions of beauty, with more than 200 events from around 90 program partners. Participants gathered at DOROTHEUM this morning for a discussion of this year’s topic and a look at the festival program:

French body- and performance artist ORLAN and artist-philosopher Elisabeth von Samsonow described their own artistic approaches to the theme. Both artists are also set to appear at another key event on the agenda; the multi-hour performative interview marathon “Seeking Beauty” is scheduled for Tuesday at the MAK.

ORLAN famously had her body surgically altered in the early 1990s to resemble art historical ideals of beauty. Asked about her idea of beauty, she said: “Any kind of beauty ideal is boring to me. What keeps me awake is when my eyes are caught off guard, when my regular standards are questioned!”

Philosopher-artist Elisabeth von Samsonow, a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, will also be performing at the interview marathon. Speaking on the significance of beauty in art, she notes: “Beauty is a form of protuberance, a moment of radiance. In my work, it denotes the focal point where the comic and the profound, the old and the new intersect. It is an instant of transformation, fostering a kind of excitement on the part of the viewer.”

Besides the interview marathon, VIENNA ART WEEK is offering a wide array of high-caliber events over the next few days, with everything from exhibition openings to guided tours, visits to artist studios, talks, lectures and performances. Highlights include *Open Studio Day* on Saturday, when around 70 artists will open their studios to the public for a behind-the-scenes glimpse into contemporary art production; *Family Art Day* on Sunday, with art events for the whole family; and the much-anticipated international *Curators’ Picks* program.

VIENNA ART WEEK’s Artistic Director Robert Punkenhofer is thrilled to see a Vienna bursting with art: “This is the twelfth edition of VIENNA ART WEEK, but it’s still impressive to see the diversity and productivity of the local art scene.”

Strengthening and internationalizing the local art scene is precisely what major local art institutions had in mind when they established Art Cluster Vienna in 2004, and laid the foundation for VIENNA ART WEEK. What started as an exclusive art event is now a top-class, international crowd-puller: this year’s festival is expecting more than 30,000 visitors.

“VIENNA ART WEEK has become an institution whose colorful festival program entuses art experts and art lovers alike.” said Martin Böhm, President of Art Cluster Vienna.

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**SEEKING BEAUTY**  
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