

Mapping the 60s Art Histories from the mumok Collections Focus #2: Fluxus, Nouveau Réalisme, Happenings, and Actionisms

December 5, 2024, to May 10, 2026



Yoko Ono
Painting to Hammer a Nail, 1961/2005
34.9 cm x 26.6 cm x 11.4 cm
Iron nails, cloth, hammer, hairs, chain,
paint and acrylic lacquer on wood
mumok - Museum moderner Kunst
Stiftung Ludwig Wien, donation of the
artist, 2008
© Yoko Ono

The 1960s marked a pivotal era of radical social, political, aesthetic, and theoretical transformation. Civil rights movements and student protests, anti-colonial liberation struggles, the rise of feminist activism, and the triumphs of pop culture and consumer society all continue to resonate today. Contemporary movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo draw on the emancipatory efforts of that time, while current debates around war, media, technology, consumerism, and capitalism are deeply rooted in the 1960s.

mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien opened in 1962 as the Museum of the 20th Century, which was then Austria's first and only museum dedicated exclusively to contemporary art. Acquisitions from this period, along with the Peter and Irene Ludwig Collection and the Wolfgang Hahn Collection, form the foundation of the museum's holdings.

Mapping the 60s exhibits works from the museum's permanent collection, tracing the diverse ruptures and shifts of this transformative decade. In the spirit of "mapping," a form of charting and surveying, the works on display are contextualized within their historical frameworks. Like a magnifying glass, the exhibition casts selective spotlights on key historical junctures and artistic currents. After first focusing on Pop Art, conceptual modes of expression, major international exhibitions, and publications from July 5, 2024, to September 7, 2025, the second part of the exhibition turns to specific artistic movements: Fluxus, Nouveau Réalisme, Happenings, and Actionism in Vienna and beyond, which reject the conventional art object while proposing a new relationship to reality. With performance, the body enters the stage, and process- and material-based approaches challenge traditional notions of art. Against the backdrop of sweeping political and societal upheaval, visual art also begins to pose systemic questions that critique entrenched hierarchies and power structures and call for a fresh start — questions that remain strikingly relevant today.

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