

Never Final! The Evolving Museum

March 28, 2025 to April 12, 2026

Press conference

Wednesday, March 26, 2025, 10 a.m.

Opening

Thursday, March 27, 2025, 7 p.m.



Maria Lassnig
Fliegen lernen, 1976
177 x 127 cm
Tempera on canvas
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst
Stiftung Ludwig Wien, acquired in 1980
© Maria Lassnig Stiftung

The exhibition *Never Final!* is dedicated to the significant changes the Museum moderner Kunst underwent when Dieter Ronte was at its helm (from 1979 to 1989). Exemplary insights into the heterogeneity of the collection expansions are presented against the backdrop of the cultural-political parameters and programmatic decisions implemented during the 1980s—a time in which the cornerstones of collaboration with collectors were laid and strategic acquisitions determined the focal points in the museum's collection for decades to come.

Never Final! An Institution's Vision

Never Final! is a formula coined by then-minister of science Hertha Firnberg. It has defined the mumok as a dynamic place of change to this day. Following this objective, this serial project sees itself less as a traditional exhibition and more as a platform for collective research, learning, and investigation. The presentation spaces are consequently structured into a study room with the collection exhibition and archival materials from the 1980s as well as a project space for reciprocal encounters with the mumok collection. Additionally, there will be a comprehensive satellite program of panel discussions and lectures.

The Art: A Selection

The selection of works in the study room shows artworks that arrived at the museum between 1979 and 1989. The hanging is largely modeled on the structure of the holdings. The show starts with an exemplary selection of works that found their way to Vienna as loans from the collection of Peter and Irene Ludwig. They are followed by works from the collection of Wolfgang Hahn acquired the previous year, and purchases by Dieter Ronte from the 1980s.

Placed in the center of the study room are interactively designed pieces of exhibition furniture that invite visitors to settle in and delve into the archival materials and catalogues, correspondences, newspaper articles, and audio and video materials to learn about the history of the museum in the 1980s.

Looking at the historical documents makes it easy to understand how fiercely the collection policies were defended at the time. The material also clearly illustrates that the museum has always seen itself as a living space of debate and reflection.

Historical Classification

April 26, 1979, marked a touchstone for what today is mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien. The collections of the former 20er Haus were expanded by extensive, art-historically significant permanent loans from the Aachen-based collector couple Peter and Irene Ludwig. It was a substantive addition that also engendered an expansion of the museum's exhibition spaces. 20er Haus was supplemented by the Museum moderner Kunst, which opened at Palais Liechtenstein. With this expansion, the extensive networking efforts since the mid-1970s of Künstlerhaus president Hans Mayr and the strategic diplomacy of Hermann Fillitz (professor of art history at the University of Vienna) bore cultural-political fruit. The close to 200 loans were not only a boon to the extant holdings but introduced

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new thematic focal points to the collection. Works of Pop Art and Photorealism entered the building, which were yet again augmented by the acquisition of the Wolfgang Hahn collection and its focus on Nouveau Réalisme.

1981 saw another giant leap with the establishment of the Austrian Ludwig Foundation by then-Minister of Science Hertha Firnberg and the Ludwigs. A major portion of what constituted the loans at the time became the property of the foundation and could thus be anchored in the collection as permanent loans. In return, the Republic of Austria committed to making an annual index-linked payment to the foundation, enabling it to acquire important artworks in the following years, the value of which far exceeded the internal acquisition budget.

Review and Outlook

The exhibition *Never Final* is part of a series of presentations that revisit the museum's collection policies since its beginnings, making them accessible to a broad public. Following exhibitions on the founding director Werner Hofmann (1962–1969) and the era of Alfred Schmeller (1969–1979), the current exhibition is dedicated to the directorial work of Dieter Ronte (1979–1989).

Curated by Marie-Therese Hochwartner and Dieter Ronte

Display by Robert Rüb

Artists in the exhibition

Eva Aeppli, Kiyoshi Awazu, Alice Aycock, Robert Bechtle, Joseph Beuys, Christian Boltanski, Marcel Broodthaers, Günter Brus, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Giorgio De Chirico, Inge Dick, Don Eddy, Loys Egg, Richard Estes, Suzan Etkin, VALIE EXPORT, Trude Fleischmann, Helen Frankenthaler, Birgitta Fritz, Gilbert & George, Nancy Graves, Johannes Itten, Isolde Maria Joham, Hildegard Joos, Martha Jungwirth, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Per Kirkeby, Kurt Kocherscheidt, Brigitte Kowanz, Richard Kriesche, František Kupka, Maria Lassnig, Agnes Martin, Hermann Nitsch, Friederike Pezold, Janis Provisor, Arnulf Rainer, Mimmo Rotella, Niki de Saint Phalle, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, Rudolf Schwarzkogler / Walter Kindler, Daniel Spoerri, Rini Tandon, Sidney Tillim, Oswald Tschirtner, Cy Twombly, Günther Uecker, Ursula, Lois Weinberger

The Evolving Museum Participative Work with the mumok Collection

In addition to the exhibition, there will be programs that take an in-depth look at various questions in the context of the mumok collection. Attendees will be encouraged to actively participate in the lectures, workshops, and panel discussions.

Embodied (Hi)stories: Confronting the Art Collection

March 27 to April 27, 2025

Performative explorations, curated by Frida Robles and Martina Gimplinger

As part of the exhibition *Never Final! The Evolving Museum* mumok presents *Embodied (Hi)stories: Confronting the Art Collection*, a program inviting visitors once a month to travel through history as it is embodied in the mumok collection. The departure point is Nancy Graves's *Fifty Hair Bones and Sun Disk (To the students of the Aachener Werkkunstschule)* from 1971, which the artists Michael Turinsky and Rehema Chachage approach independently in performative explorations.

Michael Turinsky works as an artist and theoretician with physical disabilities on the intersection of contemporary dance and performance. He conceived the artistic method of Crip Choreography, with which he challenges dominant patterns of movement and creates new forms of expression.

Rehema Chachage's artistic work deals with inherited and scientifically generated knowledge, thus yielding a performative archive that investigates alternative paths of knowledge and knowledge development.

The project is accompanied by workshops and talks examining various (hi)stories of trauma, joy, and healing. Guided by curators Frida Robles and Martina Gimplinger, participants are invited to engage with the sculptural work of Nancy Graves. With exercises taken from performative practice, the space is explored in connection with the artwork. Joint readings, selected texts and videos provide inspiration for critical reflection on the relationship between body and archive.

- Saturday, March 29, 2025, 4 to 6 p.m.: Workshop #1: *Bones and Their Containers*
- Saturday, April 5, 2025, 4 to 6 p.m.: Workshop #2: *Bones, Skins and Feathers*
- Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.: Workshop #3: *Taxidermy Form*
- Saturday, April 12 & Sunday, April 13, 2025, 1 to 6 p.m.: Open Studio with Michael Turinsky
- Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 4 to 6 p.m.: audience conversation with Martina Gimplinger, Benedikt Hochwartner, and Frida Robles
- Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 5 to 6 p.m.: audience conversation with osteopath Regina Novy
- Saturday, April 26 & Sunday, April 27, 2025, 1 to 6 p.m.: Open Studio with Rehema Chachage

- Sunday, April 27, 2025, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.: closing event of *Embodied (Hi)stories*
Performative Explorations by Rehema Chachage

Sign up for workshops at www.mumok.at. Participation in the audience conversations and Open Studio events require no prior registration

MATHILDA

May 1 to June 30, 2025

That Vienna Actionism has remained controversial to this day is not so much owed—as it was in its heyday—to its attack on the taboos of a strictly catholic postwar society that many perceived as stifling in favor of a cathartic, often violent liberation of body and spirit. Much rather, it has to do with the crimes of former Actionist Otto Muehl and the question of how they figured into the Actionist program and the corresponding works. How clear a line can be drawn between a work of art and the actions of its creator?

In 1970 Muehl had established a so-called “commune,” which described itself as an Action-Analytical Organization (AAO) and whose self-proclaimed goal it was to abolish the concepts of the single-partner relationship and the nuclear family. This totalitarian community, for which Muehl served as the sole leader, experienced the repeated abuse of power, sexual harassment, and the sexual abuse of minors. In 1991, Muehl was finally convicted of rape and other crimes. Against this backdrop, the project team tackles the aforementioned questions. Leading the discussion will be the art group MATHILDA, who take the development and the violent characteristics of the “Muehl commune” as a jumping-off point, together with the teams of the mumok collections and education departments. In the course of the exhibition, MATHILDA will design a zone of encounter in the adjacent project room, in which attendees can discuss how problematic works and their legacy should be handled.

Reading: Sunday, June 15, 2025

Further items on the itinerary will be posted shortly on the mumok website.

Lecture and Panel Discussion Series

Dieter Ronte and Marie Therese Hochwartner will talk with their panels about aspects of the cultural and collection policies of the 1980s, tackling different facets of the mumok as well as cultural-political shifts in the past 45 years.

Museum Talks #1

Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 6 p.m.

Discussion with Dr. Hilde Hawlicek, Federal Minister of Art, Education, and Sports from 1987 to 1990 about the formative cultural politician Hertha Firnberg, the cultural policies of the 1980s, and the freedom of art.

Museum Talks #2

Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 6 p.m.

Discussion with Dr. Wolfgang Drechsler, former head of collections at mumok, about the collection policies, exhibitions, and programs of mumok in the 1980s.

Museum Talks #3

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 6 p.m.

Discussion with Dr. Gerald Piffl, Director of the Imagno photo archives about the evolution of photographic collections in Austria and photography as a means of documenting history.

Museum Talks #4

Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 6 p.m.

Conversation with Angelika Doppelbauer, art historian, board member of the Austrian Association of Art Educators, and author of the book *Museum der Vermittlung*. Angelika Doppelbauer shares insights into the origins of art education in Austria.

Museum Talks #5

Wednesday, June 25, 2025, 6 p.m.

Discussion with Dr. Rudolf Scholten, Federal Minister of Education and Art from 1990 to 1997

Rudolf Scholten shares insights into the cultural policies of the 1990s and the evolution of museums during that time.

Museum Talks #6

Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 6 p.m.

Discussion on the occasion of the 100th Birthday of Peter Ludwig and a retrospective of the cultural-political strategy of the 1980s.

Museum Talks #7

Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 6 p.m.

Conversation with Nina Ansperger, artistic and scientific director of museum gugging. Discussion about collection and presentation proximities between museum gugging and mumok.

The Museum Talks series will be continued in the fall/winter season of 2025. Dates will soon be posted on the mumok website.

Curator Tour

Thursday, April 24, 2025, 6 p.m. with curator Marie-Therese Hochwartner.

Curator Tour in Austrian Sign Language

Thursday, June 26, 2025, 4:30 p.m. with curator Marie-Therese Hochwartner and Elke Schaumberger, Austrian sign language interpreter