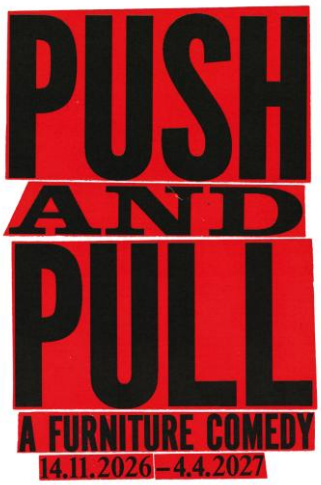
mumok

Push and Pull
A Furniture Comedy

14. November 2026 to 4. April 2027

Press Conference
Friday, 13 November 2026, 10 am

Opening
Friday, 13 November 2026, 7 pm



The exhibition *Push and Pull* takes its title from a 1963 work by the American artist Allan Kaprow and invites the public to approach the museum as a place where things can not only be viewed, but also activated and transformed.
By encouraging visitors to touch the works and physically engage with them, *Push and Pull* extends this year's program focus on forms of attention. Other facets, such as acts of looking or listening, are at the heart of the exhibition *Terminal Piece* and, from December onwards, Verena Paravel's exhibition *Exuviae*.

For Allan Kaprow, who is considered the founder of happenings as an art form, the event character of everyday life was of central importance. His work *Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann* is the center of gravity for an exhibition that deliberately brings together works distinguished by the way they hover in a kind of limbo: Artwork or everyday object? To look at or to use? A disruption or an invitation?

The exhibition addresses its audience directly and is continually transformed through their creative interventions. Visitors are invited to rearrange furniture and objects into new configurations within the designated space. Each of their arrangements thus becomes part of an open-ended work that is constantly taking on new forms. Here, "pushing" and "pulling" are not just playful acts but also entail a redistribution of roles. The curators who "furnish" the space become artists, while the visitors who "compose" the installation's materials become curators.
For mumok, such moments of openness and a spirit of hospitality toward the audience are essential. The decision to once again exhibit Kaprow's "furniture comedy" in 2026 is part of a broader desire to actively involve audiences in the process of transforming and redesigning a space. At the same time, it comes as an invitation to reflect together on what a museum can and wants to be.

***Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann*, 1963**
Through the deliberately open-ended instruction in its title, Kaprow's *Push and Pull* creates a scenario where audiences can directly experiment with the compositional methods of his teacher, Hans Hofmann. The original version from 1963 consisted of two rooms, and visitors were invited to actively rearrange them, moving furniture and objects back and forth in order to alter the installation's overall appearance. The visitors thus participated in a "furniture comedy" that rebelled against established painting and the institutional rigidity of the museum. As a deliberate troublemaker within the orderly day-to-day operations of an exhibition, *Push and Pull*, along with its ever-changing iterations, continues to offer space for disorder and idiosyncrasy with lasting resonance. The work must be reinvented, realized, and activated, again and again.

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Here, Kaprow's radical plea for an institution in flux is complemented by works from the mumok collection that reveal museum routines and articulate forms of participation, openness, and collectivity: an invitation to reconsider art and everyday life, even beyond the confines of the museum.

Scores / Scripts
Alongside Kaprow's "furniture comedy," the exhibition presents score and instruction-based works by Yoko Ono, George Brecht, and Milan Knížák. Their written prompts encourage the audience to perform specific actions drawn from everyday life. In doing so, the participants are not just interpreters of the work but actively help determine its form. In the 1960s, scores and instructions were seen as a radical expansion of the concept of art that sought to free artworks from their dependence on objects. These action-based works also challenged institutions such as museums and galleries, which were associated with traditional forms like painting and sculpture.

The Museum as a Space for Action
In 1970, the architectural collective Haus-Rucker-Co transformed Vienna's 20er Haus, which was mumok's predecessor, into a public interior and a space for collective action as part of their exhibition *LIVE*. Futuristic pneumatic furniture and a giant inflatable PVC mat with large balls, known as "giant billiards," invited visitors to bounce around and hang out, but also raised fundamental questions about the relationship between art and life. Conceived as an open invitation, the installation was available for everyone to use. Photographs by Peter Baum and Cora Pongracz document the exhibition at that time.
The spirit of radical change in the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with a joy in experimenting with new materials, is equally reflected in the video *Inflatables Illustrated* (1971) by the artist group Ant Farm. It shows how large-scale inflatable sculptures can become metaphors for collective coexistence and new forms of connection.

Furniture Between Function and Art
Efforts to open up the museum and enable new forms of participation are common threads running throughout the artistic developments of the last decades. In Austria, Franz West created furniture objects starting in the 1980s, which deliberately negated the strict separation between the art object and the viewer, as well as between art and usability. They combine an exploration of bodily experiences with an invitation to interaction. Chairs, tables, lamps, or coat racks are fashioned out of simple, untreated materials, then repurposed and handled with irony. Questions about the organization of our sensory experience, the conditions of our perception, the relationship between touching and understanding, and, not least, the distinction between an artwork and an everyday object are quite literally formulated in space.

Role-Playing
With subtle wit, Christian Philipp Müller uses a hat rack to express an institution-critical approach that has long informed his sociological investigations of the art world. Of the forty-nine white fishing hats, seven of each are printed with one of the following designations: "Künstler" (artist), "Kritiker" (critic), "Betrachter" (viewer), "Vermittler" (mediator), "Förderer" (patron), "Sammler" (collector), and "Händler" (dealer). Visitors can try on the hats and are invited to act out the roles with everyone present. The hierarchies, social conventions, and traditional rules of the art world and

museums are playfully enacted and taken to absurd conclusions.

Body and Contact
The artist Park McArthur problematizes the museum's supposed bodily neutrality. Her work *Contact E* consists of a metal tray presented on a pedestal. It contains hand sanitizer, COVID-19 tests, menthol balm, and condoms. These unassuming everyday objects point to a social space in which forms of coexistence can take shape—to physical contact, vulnerability, and the need for precaution. *Contact E* highlights how accessibility is always embodied and situated, while risks, needs, and dependencies are unevenly distributed. The ideal of autonomous art appreciation is supplanted by contact, interdependence, care, and the question of how a museum can be opened up to bodies of different kinds.

Featuring: Ant Farm, John Baldessari, Peter Baum, George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, Corita Kent, Milan Knížák, Julius Koller, Park McArthur, Ree Morton, Christian Philipp Müller, Yoko Ono, Cora Pongracz, Franz West, and Heimo Zobernig, among others.

Exhibition design: Robert Müller

Curated by Vanessa Joan Müller and Matthias Michalka