

ANNA VIEBROCK

TERMINAL PIECE

AUDIOGUIDE

(EN)

INTRO

Welcome to mumok, and welcome to *Terminal Piece*. This exhibition takes you through five acts across five floors of the building. It centres around a single artwork: the installation *Terminal Piece*, by artist, activist, and author Kate Millett from 1972, which awaits you on the fourth floor. Before you encounter it, you are greeted here on the museum's ground floor by the Prologue.

This entrance level marks both the beginning and the end of the exhibition. It was conceived by the set designer Anna Viebrock. In doing so, she didn't only create spaces for artworks from the mumok collection; she created spaces for people.

For the front section, Anna Viebrock has drawn on one of her own works: a stage she designed in 2003 for the play *Doktor Faust*. Now it stands here, in the middle of the otherwise bare exhibition space. Later on in your tour, you'll come across the accompanying model; a miniature version that shows you how this space is constructed.

Many of the artworks you're about to see have been in storage for decades. Now they make a reappearance.

We invite you to experience something unusual. Don't just observe the art; observe how you see it. Does a work of art change depending on its surroundings? And the people around you – do they, through doorways, windows, and hallways, become part of the overall picture?

A typical picture frame forms a separation between a work of art and its surroundings. Anna Viebrock's spaces do the opposite: they blur the boundaries. Is this furniture or artwork? May I enter this space? What am I allowed to touch?

While many exhibitions share their stories through wall texts, Viebrock has developed another dramaturgy, which invites you to encounter the artworks more directly.

With this audio tour, we'll guide you through a diverse selection of artworks from our collection. Keep to the right and move counterclockwise. You'll enter the exhibition space and find yourself in the study.

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STUDY

In front of you is a pair of shoes on a white pedestal. On the right shoe is a lump of wax resembling meat. Between the shoes is a picture frame containing two photographs – they show the artist's feet, wearing the same shoes. Above it, on a narrow wooden strip, is a contact sheet of small black-and-white photographs: a performance captured during the first presentation of this work.

At the very top is a stuffed buzzard, upside down with its wings spread wide, from which strings dangle. The overall composition forms a cross.

This is an untitled work by Paul Thek, created in 1968. The American artist created this and other objects in his studio in Rome for an exhibition titled *A Procession in Honor of Aesthetic Progress: Objects to Theoretically Wear, Carry, Pull, or Wave*.

When the works arrived at the gallery in Essen, they were in a severely damaged condition. Thek didn't cancel the opening. Instead, he set about repairing the damage, even though the exhibition was already underway. This is how his first "work in progress" came into being. It posed a question: When exactly is a work of art "finished"? The work, *Untitled*, which you see here, was part of that exhibition in Essen and now belongs to the mumok collection.

This was the first time Thek incorporated photographs directly into a work – to document its transformation during the exhibition. For him, the space became both an exhibition and a studio. Production and presentation, which are usually separate, were merged together. Thek himself described it this way: "The exhibition I made in Germany in 1968 inevitably changed from day to day because all the works arrived damaged. That taught me how important the working process is. There was no point at which one could logically say, 'Now it's finished!'"

Now walk a little further, onto the wooden floorboards. Here you'll enter the church.

CHURCH

Grey-painted church pews invite you to linger. You can sit opposite one another, or side by side, and let your gaze wander around the room. The harsh light from industrial lamps fills the room and sets the mood.

Hung high up on the wall are a series of large format black-and-white photographs. With strong contrasts and blurred movement, the images look like snapshots. A table is tipping over. A woman is screaming, as though desperate. The scenes appear dramatic.

This is *Holterdipolter I–II*, (or ‘Topsy-Turvy I–II’) by Anna and Bernhard Blume, created in 1977 – one of their early works.

The artist couple met in the early 1960s whilst studying together at the Düsseldorf Art Academy.

This visual language runs through their later work. They always work in series, mostly large format black-and-white photographs. Their subjects often combine something tragic with something comical.

The next work blends almost seamlessly into this religious atmosphere. In an adjoining room, a sort of separate chapel, stands a table of candles. When this work was first exhibited, visitors could light one of 51 votive candles in return for a small donation. However, as this artwork now is part of a public collection, they are here for viewing only.

This is Carla Degenhardt’s *Opferstock* (or ‘Offertory’) from 1996. The wishes inscribed on the candles here, however, are not for the salvation of souls – but for the art world itself. One might light a candle for a generous pension, or lasting success, or to become a curator’s darling.

Humorous, yet apt, the work makes a comparison between religious promises of salvation and the desires of many artists for recognition and security. Both worlds – religion and the art world – thrive on hope, faith and established rituals. And in both, people rely on symbolic acts to make their wishes a tangible reality.

Carla Degenhardt studied sculpture under Michelangelo Pistoletto – an artist you’ll encounter later on in the exhibition.

CHURCH

A sharp knocking sound interrupts you as you look. Where is it coming from? Is someone knocking on a door?

In fact, it's coming from the wooden cabinet to the left of the doorway.

This is *Kasten III* ('Cabinet III') by Leander Schönweger, from 2017.

Does it seem intriguing or perhaps eerie? Pause for a moment. Listen for a while longer, take a closer look. The knocking becomes strange, possibly funny. Just like the tumbling furniture and people in the Blumes' photographs.

Go through the door at the back wall of the church – you're now standing in a corridor.

CORRIDOR 1

On the left, set into the exhibition wall, you will find three display vitrines containing small, delicate artworks. The first one also offers a view into the next room. In the one on the right, you can see a wall installation by the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers; in the central vitrine is a small lead casting.

This is *Handwerker bei der Arbeit* (or ‘Craftsmen at Work’), by Bruno Gironcoli. At the centre is an abstract figure, like a miniature model. The figure’s hands are clasped above its head, which is painted yellow. The arms and torso are blue – they resemble a work uniform.

This is quite typical of Bruno Gironcoli: he often drew on everyday objects for his sculptures. The figure is enclosed by forms reminiscent of stringed instruments. They seem to make a cage around the body.

What is unusual about this work, however, is its size. Gironcoli mostly worked on a large scale, creating sculptures and paintings of considerable dimensions. Here, he has chosen the exact opposite.

A bit further along, we encounter Bernhard Blume’s mother, Maria Blume, once again. She is the woman we see alongside her son in the photo series *Oedipal Complications?* (1977–1978).

At the end of the corridor, you’ll find Anna Viebrock’s Stage Model for *Doktor Faust* from 2003. Some of the elements you can see here in the model may have already caught your eye in their full-scale versions as you entered the exhibition.

Where does the architecture realised stick closely to the model? And where does it differ?

One is small – a work of art. The other is large - a stage, and you are part of the performance. How does the change in scale affect your perspective?

Once you’ve turned the corner, you’ll enter the hall.

HALL

The space opens widely and, for the first time, with its neutral lighting and high ceilings, now feels like a typical museum gallery.

In this room you see a wall installation measuring just under 4 x 2 metres. It depicts a street corner, scaled one to one. What appears to be a photograph is in fact a cast – a real street kerb surface, recreated in painted fibreglass. A thin layer of resin holds loose material like dust and pebbles in place. The result looks almost photographic but is actually three-dimensional.

This is a work by the Boyle Family, entitled *Westminster Study with Metropolitan Water Board Plate*, from 1987. A large number of works were created between 1968 and 1990 using the same principle. Mark Boyle called these artworks ‘earthprobes’. Each depicts a rectangular section of the Earth’s surface. The selection of these sections was left to chance. For example, at a solo exhibition in London in 1968, visitors chose locations by throwing a dart at a map of the world whilst blindfolded.

The Boyle Family is a British artist collective. Mark Boyle and Joan Hills met in Harrogate in 1957 and began to develop an increasingly collaborative practice. Their children grew up in the studio, accompanying their parents to exhibitions and on trips from an early age, and eventually became full members of the group. Since 1985, the family has been working under the name Boyle Family. A defining feature of their practice is their understanding of art as a collaborative process.

As you continue through the exhibition, you will repeatedly come across black-and-white photographs by Max Octavian Trauttmansdorff. They mostly depict small groups of people – grainy images from the microcosm of the local art scene of the 1990s: artists, gallery owners or collectors at an exhibition opening at the Vienna Secession. Trauttmansdorff himself belongs to this circle.

But what role does he play within it? He’s an artist and photographer but also assists other artists. He’s a kind of ‘participating observer’. Through the spontaneous view of the camera, he reveals how this social world functions: its processes of emergence, its unspoken rules, its dynamics.

HALL

Here in the hall, echoing Anna Viebrock's stage model, you'll encounter another model of a space. This time, however, it's a virtual one, captured as a photograph. This is a body of work by Constanze Ruhm created in 1999 and 2002, comprising *Travelling*, *Plan 234* and *Extérieur Nuit* (Night Exterior). In it, Ruhm explores the question of how cinematic spaces are created and constructed. The work refers to a famous long take by the filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard and reveals how the camera, movement, light, and architecture guide our gaze.

Because this space is digitally simulated, it demonstrates how film, too, constructs its own space – it doesn't simply depict it. This means that the way we perceive a film always depends, in some way, on how it is designed.

Now look around and you'll see a dark, gloomy room. This is the basement.

BASEMENT

Poster-sized, framed pigment prints line the room. Each of the 58 prints in the series follows the same format, depicting a firearm, its model name, manufacturer and place of manufacture, and technical details such as cartridge size, magazine capacity, dimensions and weight.

This is *Firearms* by Lutz Bacher from 2019. The artist has reproduced and significantly enlarged pages from a handbook on the repair and maintenance of firearms. This method draws attention to the unique characteristics of the paper itself: some sheets are more yellowed and discoloured than others. The pages are so thin that the reverse sides are partially visible as shadows.

The concise, factual texts beneath the images describe the technology, construction and intended use of each weapon. It's through this matter-of-fact tone that something else becomes apparent: firearms are entirely ordinary commodities – traded internationally and collected privately and yet an index of violence and loss.

Firearms is the American artist's final completed work. It was first exhibited in 2019 at the Cologne branch of Galerie Buchholz. In Cologne, the prints were presented in alphabetical order by model name – just as they are here at mumok.

The series breaks off at one point but then continues through further sections of the prologue.

Exit the cellar and you'll see a wall, oddly low, with a door you can't pass through – this is the living room.

LIVING ROOM

The herringbone parquet rises like a small platform from the grey terrazzo floor; a step separates the two levels. What does this bring to mind? Does it remind you of your own home?

It's not only the name of this section that evokes the domestic: there's also a mirrored cupboard, a dining table with a pendant lamp, and a display cabinet. But not all of it is actually art. The table and chairs, for example, are part of the exhibition design. The glass display cabinet, on the other hand, is a work of art in its own right.

This is *Sammlungsstücke* (or 'Collected Items') by Anna Viebrock, created between 1990 and 2026. Presented to us at table height on curved Rococo legs is a small collection of objects that Viebrock herself has collected over the years. Among them is a copy of Kate Millett's *The Basement* – an initial, subtle reference to the artist, whom you'll encounter again on the fourth floor. Also included are eggshells, parts of Viebrock's own stage models, a small figurine, and a prop. The objects stem from a wide variety of creative processes, and thus forge links between Viebrock's various projects.

HALL

Back in the hall, there's a life-size, seated man in profile – printed onto a reflective surface. This is Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Seated Man in a Shirt* from 1993, part of his well-known series of mirror works. In these images, the Italian Arte Povera artist depicts passers-by, family and friends in everyday poses.

Look into the mirrored surface: you are now standing behind the smartly dressed man. The space around you becomes part of the image – and you, too, become part of the artwork. Whilst the photograph of the man remains motionless, the mirrored space around him changes in real time, with each movement you make.

Next to you, or perhaps behind you, stands a heavy oak door, upholstered in leather. This is 'Upholstered Oak Door' by Anna Viebrock, created in 2017 – a direct replica of the one in the Palace of Justice in Brussels. It looks solid. Thanks to its upholstery, no sound escapes to the outside.

Through a small, round window, your view opens out onto a small room. It is almost empty – except for a blackened door leaning against the opposite wall. This is an early work by Joseph Beuys: 'Door' from 1954. From a distance, it possibly looks like nothing more than a dark surface. Only on closer inspection do you realise that the wood is completely charred.

Beuys himself tells the story of this door as follows: "This door was not burnt by me but was damaged and burnt in this way by an explosion in the house. When I moved out of this studio, around 1958, I took the door with me and simply attached two objects to it. These were two hare's ears and a heron's skull – anatomical parts of animals that later took on a certain significance in my performances."

Beuys thus belongs to a particular tradition in art: that of the so-called 'objet trouvé', the 'found object'. He simply leant the charred door against the wall, and through this gesture it became an artwork. In structure and surface, it borders on abstraction.

Here, two works that were created in a similar way are brought together: Beuys's early door and Viebrock's significantly more recent piece. Both take something that already exists as their starting point. And yet the two works could hardly be more different.

Please continue now on to the second corridor.

CORRIDOR 2

You are now standing in the rear corridor of the Prologue. Here you will find Anna Viebrock's workbook for the stage design of *Doktor Faust* from 2002 and 2003. Anna Viebrock compiles a workbook of this kind for every major stage production, collecting notes, images, comments, impressions, and encounters relating to the work in question. Throughout the exhibition, the pages are regularly turned. If you visit the exhibition several times, you will see a new double-page spread each time – a new insight into Viebrock's creative process.

Right by the entrance, on a desk, you can find a copy of the book – you're welcome to flick through it yourself and gain a closer insight into Viebrock's working methods.

A series of 25 portrait photographs hangs along the corridor. Start by looking at them closely, as you walk past. From the next room, you'll then have a completely different view of the same series – from a distance, as a whole. They all depict the same man: the artist Rudolf Schwarzkogler.

Schwarzkogler was a central figure in 'Viennese Actionism', a Viennese performance art movement of the 1960s. His performances usually took place without an audience. Photography was his chosen medium for presenting them later. Usually, he stood behind the camera himself, documenting his friend and performer Heinz Cibulka, and sometimes he collaborated with other photographers.

Here, however, it's the other way round. In this photo series by Wilfried Klanjsek-Bratke, Schwarzkogler himself is the model. The two knew each other from their school days together at the Higher Graphical Federal Education and Research Institute in Vienna. In the stark contrast of the spotlight, Schwarzkogler poses stylishly for the camera – sometimes wearing sunglasses, sometimes holding a flower.

AREA

You're now entering the final room of the prologue to *Terminal Piece*, and returning to where this tour began. Here, on the right, Allan Kaprow presents found objects, everyday materials and fragments of his own cut-up paintings, arranged in vertical strips. The abstract image makes loose references to his life: fragments of words such as VAUGH, AUG or HAN allude to his wife Vaughan. The title Baby refers to the birth of their first son.

The large format invites a physical encounter. Come closer, look carefully, notice the layers and transitions. How does this proximity affect you?

Let's now turn to another work: *Interfaces* by Richard Hamilton and Dieter Roth – three hinged panels, almost like a small, winged altarpiece. The two artists often worked together and deliberately shared the authorship: it did not matter to them who had contributed which part.

The work came about as a result of an invitation. In the summer of 1977, Hamilton invited his friend Roth to Cadaqués, on the northern Mediterranean coast of Spain – a place where Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and Man Ray had all previously worked.

There, Roth began experimenting with unusual materials in a sketchbook: pencil, ink, salami, cigarette butts. Hamilton continued working on the portraits. In the end, they had sixty heads, which they sorted into pairs – and were surprised to find that some of the faces resembled their own.

This sketchbook evolved into an ongoing project. Following the first exhibition of the series, additional photographs were taken. After a second exhibition, further photographs were added – this time with paint applied over them.

This resulted in a total of 180 individual images. Three of these were then grouped together in each picture frame. Here you can see one such object – a testament to the close friendship between the two artists.

STUDY

On the corner of a desk stands a black cube. It appears to have been placed there casually. The lacquered wooden cube is an untitled artwork by Sol LeWitt, 1963.

As you approach it and move around it, you'll notice that each of the cube's four sides has a small cut-out. Look closely: inside them, in tiny windows, are black-and-white photographs – portraits of the same woman, sometimes in profile, sometimes facing the camera. Her expression is neutral, perhaps bored. And when you leave this room in a moment, she'll be watching you go.

The cube reflects the artist's long-standing engagement with cubic forms – in drawings, and paintings, but above all with objects that repeatedly return to geometry, surface, grid and volume.

For LeWitt, the cube was a 'grammatical device' – a form that he continually developed through repetition, series and variation.

OUTRO

Now you're ready for Act 1. On the fourth floor, you'll find *Terminal Piece* – the artwork that gives this entire exhibition its name – created by Kate Millett, artist, activist and author. It's the most recent addition to our collection, and forms a statement that also applies to this prologue: a work of art is only complete through you; through your presence as a viewer.

Millett created the work in 1972. She herself said of it: 'I had to create this work because I couldn't write it.' Her aim is not to explain anything – but rather to ensure that your perspective, your gaze, becomes part of the work itself as soon as you encounter it.

We warmly invite you to continue on to the fourth floor and discover *Terminal Piece*.