

Biennales and festivals

What makes Vienna Art Week unique?

Cocktails, auctions, tours of art stores and major shows help draw an international audience

VIENNA. What makes Vienna Art Week unusual, and probably unique, is that it brings together museums and the market. Every November, its organisers promote the visual arts with a programme which attracts an international audience.

This year, from 15 to 21 November, there was an eclectic offering in the city. Along with openings, cocktails and auctions there were dozens of small tours on offer, from the conventional to the offbeat. These ranged from a visit to the Kunsthistorisches Museum's decorative art store-room to an artist-led project which booked into company cantens to investigate the culture of the business lunch. Altogether around 15,000 visitors took part in Art Week events, up from 700 in 2004, the first year.

For the first time, Art Week had a theme: "Crossing Limits". This was inscribed on a razor blade which was reproduced on the programme cover. Vienna has long had a reputation for the artistically shocking, from Klimt's erotic drawings to Viennese Actionism. The Leopold Museum is now holding a major retrospective on Otto Muehl, which would have been



Shocking? The Leopold Museum is holding a retrospective of Otto Muehl's work

greeted with howls of protest in (say) London or New York. Now aged 85, he was released from prison in 1997 after serving six years for "fornication with minors". The opening of the Leopold Museum (until 24 January 2011) encouraged Muehl to apologise to his victims for the

first time, and his letter is displayed at the exhibition entrance.

Vienna Art Week began six years ago, conceived by arts organiser Robert Punkthofer and Dorotheum managing director Martin Böhm. "The city was well known for its music, but less so for its visual arts, despite its fine museums and growing contemporary art scene," Böhm explained.

The Dorotheum jumped in with financial sponsorship, partly because it could time previews of its major auctions to coincide with Art Week's influx of international collectors. This year these included Cesar Cervantes from Mexico and Uli Sigg from Switzerland. The Dorotheum previewed design, modern art and contemporary art, with the

auctions taking place the following week, on 23-25 November.

The Austrian Galleries Association, which represents modern and contemporary dealers, is also an Art Week partner. Thirty-five galleries hold evening views and often open special shows. In the early years Art Week was held alongside the Vienna Fair in May, but Art Week later decided it wanted to be separate and moved to November.

At the other end of the market spectrum is the Künstlerhaus, which gives over its galleries for ARTmART, a five-day fair for young artists. All works are sold for a standard price, €80.

For those who know the Vienna museum scene, it may come as a surprise that they come together for Art Week. Museums are highly competitive, but all participate, with the exception of the Bank Austria Kunstforum. Art Week's arrangement with the museums is simple. Each pays an almost token amount, €1,000, but the individual museums then fund a range of special events.

The Picture Gallery of the

Academy of Fine Arts showed off its old master collection, which has just reopened after a three-year closure for refurbishment.

Some venues time exhibitions for Art Week. Francesca von Habsburg's Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary opened "Figura Cuncta Videntis" ("The All Seeing Eye") on 16 November (until 16 April, see below).

At Mumok (Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation) the new director, Karola Kraus, held a presentation on her plans and announced the future exhibition programme. Highlights include a retrospective on Claes Oldenburg in 2012, which will go on to New York's Museum of Modern Art.

The Albertina held a symposium on Michelangelo drawings, to coincide with its current exhibition (until 9 January 2011). Questions of attribution emerged, with some German scholars taking a narrower view of the master's oeuvre than Anglo-American specialists.

At the Secession, Trevor Paglen, an American who bills himself as an artist, social scientist and provocateur, gave a presentation about secret aircraft developed by the US military. This was a taster to his show "Unhuman" (27 November-6 February 2011).

With this diverse schedule, how is Art Week funded? It costs roughly €250,000 for the organisation, management of the programme and publicity. All the special events are free. The Dorotheum is by far the most important sponsor, followed by the Vienna Insurance Group. Art Week gets virtually no official funding. Nothing comes from the federal government and Vienna's city council provides a modest contribution of €5,000. "I'd like to see governmental support, and we could then be even more ambitious," said Punkthofer. **Martin Bailey**

Viennese tribute to Schlingensief

VIENNA. While the German Pavilion at next year's Venice Biennale will be dedicated to Christoph Schlingensief, the artist who was due to represent his country, but died last August, an exhibition at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary in Vienna paid tribute to the film-maker, launched during Vienna's Art Week. At the centre of "Figura Cuncta Videntis" was Schlingensief's work *The Animatograph (Iceland Edition)*, 2005, in which film projections overlap with interventions. Schlingensief appeared in the first version of the work, commissioned by the Thyssen-Bornemisza, at the Reykjavik Arts Festival in May 2005. **Anny Shaw**

Venice

Russian road trip

SAN ANTONIO. San Antonio's Artpace will present new works from New York-based artist Anton Ginzburg at the 2011 Venice Biennale. This will be the first time in its 15-year history the Texas institution will have a presence at the biennale. "The decision to participate in Venice conformed to a strategy that Artpace adopted to grow its commitment to artists and broaden the community for projects it develops," said Matthew Drutt, the director of Artpace.

The exhibition, "The Map Is Not the Territory", draws inspi-

ration from a mythical land called Hyperborea, which is described as a place where the sun never sets. For the exhibition at the Palazzo Bollani, Ginzburg will travel from the northwest coast of Russia's Solovki Islands, where it has been suggested the actual Hyperborea was discovered, to St Petersburg. Paintings, videos, sculptural installations and images taken from the artist's road trip will go on display. Funding for the show, which travels to Artpace in 2012, will come from London's Flo Art Fund. **M.M.K.**

Three-week walk over the Alps to reach Venice

VENICE. German artists Wolfgang Aichner and Thomas Huber are planning to carry a boat over the Alps and arrive with it in Venice for the opening days of the biennale. "The project is a metaphor for the seemingly useless undertakings of mankind," said Christian Schoen, who is curating the project, titled "Passage". The artists want to build a 5m boat weighing 200kg which they will carry from Munich. They believe the journey will take three weeks. The project aims to expose the environmental waste of shipping works of art to and from fairs by plane. The cost for the project, which is not yet fully funded, is estimated at €70,000. **Clemens Bomsdorf**

Comings & goings

United States

■ **Andrew Walker** has been appointed director designate of the Anon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas. Walker joins the museum at the end of January and will officially take up the role of director on 1 April 2011, following the retirement date of current director **Ron Tyler**. Walker has spent the past six years as assistant director for curatorial affairs and curator of American art at the Saint Louis Art Museum.



Europe

■ **Hans-Martin Hinz** was elected president of the International Council of Museums (Icom) during the organisation's general conference in Shanghai last month. He succeeds **Alissandra Cummins**, who was the first female president of Icom, serving from 2004-10. Hinz was deputy culture minister for Berlin from 2000-01 and has been on the management team at the German Historical Museum in Berlin since 1991.

■ **Anne Aasheim** has been chosen as the new director for the Norwegian Arts Council (Norsk Kulturråd), starting 1 January. Aasheim is currently editor-in-chief of the Norwegian daily paper *Dagbladet*. The Norwegian ministry of culture said that one reason Aasheim was selected for the new position is her experience in restructuring organisations, as the council is expected to grow from 50 to 90 employees.

■ Historian, art critic and curator **Javier Fuentes Feo** was named the new director of the Center for Documentation and Advanced Studies of Murcia in Spain by the region's ministry of culture and tourism. The appointment has caused some controversy as it was made without an open election or the consultation of other contemporary art institutions.

Honours

■ British Museum director **Neil MacGregor** was quietly awarded an Order of Merit last month by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II. He joins an elite group of only 24 people who are allowed to hold the honour, including the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales, artists Lucian Freud and Anthony Caro, and architect Norman Foster.



■ Collector **Anthony d'Offay** and his wife Anne have been awarded the Prince of Wales Medal for Arts Philanthropy. D'Offay sold 725 works of post-war and contemporary art to the nation in 2008, accepting only the £26.5m he paid for them, rather than their market value, which would have netted him a profit of around £100m. The works are now on a nationwide tour.

Kenneth Noland & Anthony Caro circa 1968

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