

KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

edificio Cassa di Risparmio

Press release

July 2021

ART IS.

25 years of Kunst Meran/o Arte

Multiple voices reflect on the words of Vilém Flusser

Works of art are proposals for future experience.

Curated by

Valerio Dehó

Luigi Fassi

Sabine Gamper

Andreas Kofler e
Magdalene Schmidt

Günther Oberhollenzer

Anne Schloen

Susanne Waiz

Artists

Quayola

Ludovic Nkoth

Claudia Barcheri, Barbara Gamper, Maria CM Hilber,
Selene Magnolia, Maria Walcher, Letizia Werth

Vanessa Hanni, Emilian Hinteregger, Eva Mair,
Simone Salvatore Melis, Rita Slodička

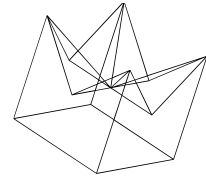
Christian Bazant-Hegemark, Hannes Egger, Oliver
Laric, Roberta Lima, Rosmarie Lukasser, Bernd Oppl

Erika Hock, Zora Kreuzer

Ludwig Thalheimer

Project idea: Ursula Schnitzer

Project management: Martina Oberprantacher, Ursula Schnitzer



KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

edificio Cassa di Risparmio

Kunst Meran – a private association for the arts, founded 25 years ago and active as a municipal arthouse under the Meran arcades for 20 years now – has, for this anniversary, invited eight curators to examine the role of art in the present day. These curators have worked with Kunst Meran over the past 25 years, and all have now enthusiastically signed up to the concept of a chorale exhibition for the anniversary.

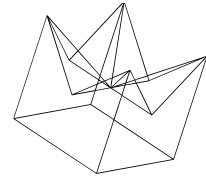
On 16 August 1972, Vilém and Edith Flusser moved into an attic apartment in the Obermais district of Meran. For three years, this apartment on the outskirts of the city with its view of the Texel mountains was home to Vilém Flusser, media philosopher and communication theorist, the starting point for travels through Europe and a writing room for producing his work. For Edith and Vilém Flusser, Meran was a transition between their leaving Brazil and their return to Europe, simultaneously a place of commitment and of retreat.

In a letter of 23 January 1976 to his friend, the artist Regina Klaber Thusek who, like Flusser, was of Jewish descent and had fled to London from the Nazis in the 1930s, ultimately being banished to Meran by the Fascists, Flusser wrote that *works of art are proposals for future experience*. This sentence was part of a dialogue that the two had been having for some time about the relationship between beauty and kitsch: Flusser argued that kitsch could be explained as something pleasant and familiar, while beauty, as a new proposal, has yet to be learned and is thus unpleasant.

This quotation, which is directly related to Meran's recent cultural history, now forms – 45 years after he formulated it – the starting point for the exhibition **KUNST IST**.

Vilém Flusser's stay in Meran was essential for the theories that he developed in the 1970s and 1980s. Country and city, mountain and plain are opposites that increasingly gain in importance in Flusser's pair of terms, dialogue and discourse: Flusser also always preferred diversity to unity. Numerous approaches to his theories can be linked to the questions of themed exhibitions at Kunst Meran, the current artistic discourse and the art association's own self-image. The fact that his extensive writings were partly formulated in Meran can happily be placed at the starting point of this anniversary exhibition. Meran, an international spa town in the midst of a region that, despite the two world wars and two totalitarian regimes, in the very years of his stay achieved a model of autonomy, inspired Flusser through its multilingualism, its eventful history, its

2



KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

edificio Cassa di Risparmio

internationality and its geographical location. For Kunst Meran, too, this heritage has always defined the terms of reference for an ambitious, interdisciplinary programme.

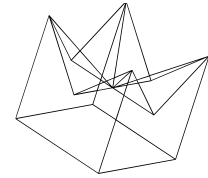
Last but not least, with this exhibition Kunst Meran is attempting to reflect on its own past, present and future. Many years of intensive cooperation with experts from the fields of art, architecture and more have influenced the exhibition activities conducted over its 20-year history. This aspect has now become in equal measure the form and method of the anniversary project, finding its expression in a many-voiced result.

From 17 July to 24 October, therefore, **Valerio Dehò, Luigi Fassi, Sabine Gamper, Günther Oberhollenzer, Andreas Kofler, Anne Schloen, Magdalene Schmidt** and **Susanne Waiz** will jointly present their proposals for future experience through art and architecture.

While, after the pandemic-imposed restrictions on visits to exhibitions and museums, art has only superficially been sidelined over the last year, its voice is now increasingly lacking in society and its visionary power once more urgently needed. Flusser's statement that *works of art are proposals for future experience* is compressed into the exhibition title **ART IS.** and postulates its social value.

Seven sections are transformed into one grand show, one voice. Current issues such as the role of women in society, migration, digitisation, social justice or spatial planning will be addressed by the curators and 18 artists. The show is like a burning glass that can help us see the present and the future in a multifaceted way, all through the lens of art and architecture.

In the section *Who cares?!*, curated by **Sabine Gamper**, the focus is on topics that demand individual and collective care and solidarity for our fellow human beings and our environment. Using a feminist perspective, the curator and the artists address the concepts of "caring" and "sharing" as an ordering in need of urgent upgrading for a post-pandemic future. The contrast between the productive and indispensable power of "caring for each other" on the one hand, and the lack of recognition for "care work" in our society on the other, thus becomes clear. **Claudia Barcheri** (*1985) realises lamellar objects of plaster that in their organic form appear like coral animals or fungi and that, despite their fragility, contain an explosive power. **Barbara Gamper** (*1981)



KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

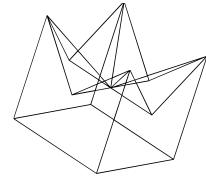
edificio Cassa di Risparmio

deals with the concept of “appropriation” through texts, objects and performance and asks questions about the conditions, power dynamics and privileges prevailing in art and society. In her filmed portrait of a dancer and activist of the DisAbility movement, writer and artist **Maria CM Hilber** (*1984) shows where the development potential of a society may lie by questioning its own norm-setting when dealing with those who are supposedly weaker. **Maria Walcher** (*1984) uses the craft of the shoe-shiner to address the social undervaluation and invisibility of care work, while **Letizia Werth** (*1974) reveals the global problems of our consumer society in her mural that uses the example of laundry washing. Activist and photographer **Selene Magnolia** (*1989) uses her camera to document the rescue of a group of Nigerian women from the Mediterranean and the power of solidarity on their way to a new life.

Luigi Fassi picks up here with a selection of works by the painter **Ludovic Nkoth** (*1994). Nkoth’s painting records the present and makes use of various elements, such as geography, current events or personal memories. Starting with his own biography and switching between two worlds – Cameroon and the USA – the artist uses these media to document the upheavals of current world events. Sweepingly flowing brushstrokes and strong colours create alarming works whose linchpin is currently the waters of the Mediterranean. The bodies of young refugees are swept away by the sea. The contrast between the brilliant colours and the disturbing theme of the struggle for life lead to a tenor of discomfort and dissonance that marks the work. In doing so, Nkoth alludes to a failure: the collapse of a contemporary world that is firmly in the grip of racism, conflict and global fears, where entire social categories are devoured by systematic and persistent injustices.

In their contribution, **Susanne Waiz** and **Ludwig Thalheimer** (*1961) also focus on society and the spaces it creates. The built-up city is such a space, one that hosts working-class neighbourhoods and city villas, better and worse areas. Social housing and urban redevelopment projects testify to a constant striving for quality of life and healthy living spaces for the population. The social circumstances under which architecture is created are today more than ever shaped by capital and politics. Institutional investors determine the market, while the role of public authorities is often limited to defining the framework conditions; building culture degenerates into cosmetic façades. In parallel with this development, homelessness is rapidly increasing

4



KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

edificio Cassa di Risparmio

worldwide. Even in European cities with their high quality of life, thousands of people are forced to “sleep rough”. Speculation in real estate promotes inequality between people and upends hard-earned social conventions.

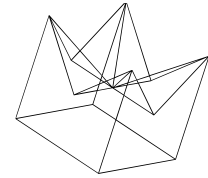
Ludwig Thalheimer’s photographs capture what escapes the superficial glance: improvised accommodation, well-camouflaged in the undergrowth and inhabited by people who have also lost their place in society as they fled. The images are juxtaposed with interviews that, using the example of Vienna as a *pars pro toto* for a European city, reflect on the connection between investor architecture and homelessness from the point of view of urban planning, culture and society.

Working as a team of curators, **Andreas Kofler** and **Magdalene Schmidt** deal with the building style of our region and architectural broadcasting. Their contribution examines the role of Kunst Meran as one of the most important institutions in conveying ideas of contemporary architecture in South Tyrol. For 25 years now, dialogue and discourse regarding architecture in the Alpine region have been a core topic in the work of the cultural association; these have indisputably contributed to the lively architectural debate and to architectural tourism in South Tyrol. Based upon conversations with founding director Herta Wolf Torggler, the view into the past is transformed via items from the archives into a “cabinet of curiosities” that illustrates the topics and discussions surrounding the encounters between architecture and the wider public.

A further contribution goes in search of the attitude of the latest generation of architects, confronting the wide spectrum of positions from previous years with a selection of academic theses dedicated to South Tyrol over the last decade. The works selected together with Turrus Babel (the magazine of the South Tyrolean Architectural Foundation) include several “architectural fragments” created as part of the final thesis *Anche i monumenti muoiono (Monuments also die)* of **Simone Salvatore Melis** (*1996) at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Bachelor in Design and Arts).

Along with contributions from **Zora Kreuzer** (*1986.) and **Erika Hock** (*1981), **Anne Schloen** addresses the value of the sensual experience of an artwork. In addition to being “proposals for future experience”, works of art are for her also an opportunity for unique experiences. Visitors to exhibitions may be moved and stimulated in previously unknown ways, and their physical aesthetic sensibilities fortified. The works of the two

5



KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

MERANO ARTE

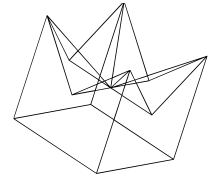
edificio Cassa di Risparmio

artists focus, in the current post-digital and (post-)pandemic era, on the desire to reconnect physically with the world and to achieve real experiences. With the aid of cross-genre approaches, two exhibition spaces of Kunst Meran are transformed into complex “spaces of experience and thought”.

Zora Kreuzer develops a site-specific work using light and wall painting for the central atrium of the building, making its architecture visible in a new way. Erika Hock develops an installation of wall and spatial objects that blurs the boundaries between architecture, art and design, linking the experience of image and object in a highly sensual way.

The exhibition section of **Günther Oberhollenzer** revolves around the question of which new and future-oriented forms of expression are emerging in art at the beginning of the 21st century. Of particular interest is the dialogue between the analogue and digital worlds, the expansion of artistic media through new technological possibilities, but also questions of perception and artistic authorship. **Rosmarie Lukasser** (*1981) is interested in the effects of digital networking on the human perception of self and others: her fragile human-machine being, of terracotta, has completely withdrawn into its own world. **Christian Bazant-Hegemark** (*1978) interweaves digital and analogue drawings and shows people who remain in an indefinite state of waiting. **Oliver Laric** (*1981) reproduces a well-known sculpture from art history using elaborate 3D printing processes and questions the terms *original* and *copy*. **Bernd Oppl** (*1980) creates architectural spatial models and video works that challenge and deceive our perception. In her performative installation, **Roberta Lima** (*1974) approaches the “Wood Wide Web”, the networking systems of nature. Finally, **Hannes Egger** (*1981) realises calls to action for the audience so they can interact with artworks.

The artistic practices of **Davide Quayola** (*1982), invited by **Valerio Dehò** for the exhibition, also focus on how we deal with new technologies and their potentials. In the *Infinite Future* section, humans and machines are no longer competitors: art is made with whatever we want, from whatever industry offers. Quayola thus frees his art from the supposedly deadly embrace of technology and transience. He admires the art of the past and out of this admiration creates a new art, since this inevitably arises in a new time-space. Quayola, a biologist, uses such digital technologies as the electron



KUNST MERAN

im Haus der Sparkasse

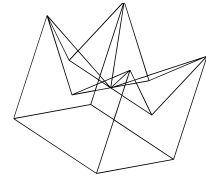
MERANO ARTE

edificio Cassa di Risparmio

grid microscope, immersing himself in the landscape and forming things as if we were seeing them for the first time. Tiny fragments are their secret geometry, made of molecular structures.

Into this new equilibrium of past and present, he inserts the future. Paradoxically, the future here anticipates the present. The future is the only pillar upon which the present can provisionally be built, as technical execution is underpinned by a dynamic concept that does not permit any rethinking.

Quayola's conciliatory approach closes the circle on Flusser's quotation. The exhibition permits visitors to leave with the reassuring certainty that art succeeds in being past, present and future.



KUNST MERAN
im Haus der Sparkasse
MERANO ARTE
edificio Cassa di Risparmio

ART IS.
25 years of Kunst Meran/o Arte

Project idea: Ursula Schnitzer

Project management: Martina Oberprantacher, Ursula Schnitzer

Duration of show: 17.07-24-10.2021

Venue: KUNST MERAN MERANO ARTE
Lauben 163

Press contacts: CLP Relazioni Pubbliche
Anna Defrancesco | Tel + 39 02 36 75 57 00
anna.defrancesco@clp1968.it
www.clp1968.it

Anna Zinelli
Tel. + 39 0473 212643
zinelli@kunstmeranoarte.org

With the generous support of:

gefördert von
Stiftung Südtiroler Sparkasse
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio
sostenuto da

SPARKASSE
CASSA DI RISPARMIO

AUTONOME
PROVINZ
BOZEN
SÜDTIROL



STADTGEMEINDE MERAN
COMUNE DI MERANO
Referat für Kultur
Assessorato alla cultura



Autonome Region Trentino - Südtirol
Regione Autonoma Trentino - Alto Adige

alperia



Niederstätter



Dr'Schär
Herstellung optimaler Produkte



NALS MARGREID

staschitz

MEDUS
DRUCKWERKSTATT
ARTIGRAFICHE

gefördert von
Stiftung Südtiroler Sparkasse
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio
sostenuto da

Gallery Lauben / Portici 163
Office Lauben / Portici 128
39012 Meran/o, Italy

T +39 0473 212643
info@kunstmeranoarte.org
www.kunstmeranoarte.org

Ust-IdNr. / N. ident. CEE
IT 015 960 202 12
MwSt.Nr. 01596020212