

PRESS

Curatorial statement

WHW, artistic directors of **kunsthalle wien**, on the program 2023

In 2023 as in previous years, the principle that underlies our work is the engagement with the here and now, with the complexity of the present social and political moment and what is happening in our immediate environment. **kunsthalle wien**, we believe, is an institution by and for all residents of Vienna, and we want to listen to the diversity of voices in the city and give them space. Our goal is to build bridges between ostensibly separate cultural spheres, bridges that are more needed than ever in light of political events and ecological developments that are cause for global concern. Art alone cannot bring about positive social change, but it can fire up people's imagination, without which a different world will never be possible. We invite artists and our audiences to come together in a dialogue across generations and all walks of life—to think and discuss critically and creatively about issues that will come or are already taking shape.

We will continue to work with local and international artists who experiment with creative modes of expression and approaches to art's role. We want to give fresh impetus to aesthetic as well as ideological debates in the field of contemporary art, and we do not shy away from art that entertains and appeals to the senses. A second focus is on a reconsideration of (hi)stories, as in the exhibition we mount in cooperation with the **Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) Skopje** and the publication project by **Karol Radziszewski**, and the fruitful insights such a look back can provide into how we can work as a community on a fairer future.

As in the past, internationally renowned artists will come to Vienna in 2023 to find inspiration in local contexts and develop projects with us. One example is the solo exhibition by **Laure Prouvost** we present together with **Wiener Festwochen**. We continue our longstanding efforts to promote the local arts scene with the **Kunsthalle Wien Prize**. The 2023 edition of this group presentation is co-curated for the first time by an external curator of international standing who lives and works in Vienna, **Pieterneel Vermoortel**.

Our programming emphasizes queer-feminist, anticolonial, antifascist, and ecological discourses. In 2023, we present **Denise Ferreira da Silva** and **Arjuna Neuman's** new film *Cloud Sand Fog Fur*: coproduced by **kunsthalle wien**, the fourth in a series of films by the two artists exemplifies their vision of an "elemental cinema"—a kind of materialist

filmmaking practice that examines the environment as a key factor in political movements. The international group exhibition *Darker, Lighter, Puffy, Flat* reflects on the manifold meanings of breasts: as objects of panic and censorship, as a mutable sexual fetish and beauty standard, as an object of contradictory contentions or point of departure for many sociological and political lines of inquiry.

As always, our exhibitions are accompanied by extensive public programs. Under the title *Question of Art*, we will launch a new series of art talks in 2023. Held at regular intervals, the talks are dedicated to a public exchange of ideas about the most salient issues in contemporary art. They also provide an opportunity to grapple with the question of what **kunsthalle wien**'s mission will be in the future and to share doubts and hopes in a constructive manner that will make the institution more open and accessible.

– What, How & for Whom / WHW, December 2022