

**Press Release: "Ins Dunkle schwimmen. Abysses of the Creative Imperative"**  
Kunstsammlung und Archiv (Collection and Archive)

In approximately 60 works by 19 female and 16 male artists, the exhibition "Swimming into the Dark" curated by Cosima Rainer, director of Kunstsammlung und Archiv (Collection and Archive), and artist Robert Müller, explores current artistic perspectives on how the individual is shaped as a 'creative subject.' It examines both the continuation and deconstruction of modernist hopes for art as a supposedly authentic expression of the inner self and for creativity as a tool for improving living conditions.

Featuring works from the Collection of the University of Applied Arts Vienna, supplemented by numerous loans, this extensive exhibition will open in mid-October at the Angewandte University Gallery at the Heiligenkreuzerhof in Vienna's city center. Among the works on display will be pieces by Hanne Darboven, Verena Dengler, Jana Euler, Harun Farocki, Ghislaine Leung, Martin Kippenberger, Sigmar Polke, and Franz West (the complete list is provided below).

The title of the exhibition, "Swimming into the Dark" (Ins Dunkle schwimmen), refers to the deep waters and dark abysses of self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy that are closely associated with creativity. Self-realization and self-presentation are fundamental components of the entrepreneurial self. Doing the things one is 'passionate' about, that you 'burn' for, is part of the ideal of a successful life that hyped on social media. In this context, cultural sociologist Andreas Reckwitz speaks of an "ideal of creativity."

Artists, as "self-designers" are prototypical for the creative existence that has become an overall societal requirement profile. The works displayed at the Heiligenkreuzerhof from mid-October focus on the contradictory expectations and pitfalls of creativity in the context of art production. They question the societal mechanisms of aesthetic capitalism and the associated myth of the new. Strategies of repetition, removal, non-action, refusal, revaluation, and flattening play a central role. The works explore the conditions of self-formation in artistic production and in refining one's life, or seek exit strategies from the instrumentalization of the pathos of creativity and freedom.

In "Ins Dunkle schwimmen. Abysses of the Creative Imperative", the exhibition deliberately adopts a design that appears unfinished, open, and almost ruinous. It is less "designed" and more the result of an ongoing process of reuse, reenactment, reference, commentary, and pragmatic processes within the program of the Collection and Archive at the University Gallery.

The exhibition not only addresses fundamental questions about artistic and creative work but also offers a new perspective on the collection itself and potential future focal points. It connects current themes with works from the Collection of Applied Arts, serves as a point of reflection for the university, and highlights the topics currently shaping the discourse.

The Collection and Archive is the material memory of the University of Applied Arts Vienna and a crucial tool in shaping its future direction—a vibrant place where research, artistic and scientific teaching, collection care and documentation, museological work, and exhibition practices are closely linked and in constant exchange.

With works by

Uli Aigner, Monika Baer, Linda Bilda, The Critical Ass (Niklas Lichti, Anke Dyes) & Michele Di Menna, Josef Dabernig, Hanne Darboven, Verena Dengler, Jana Euler, Harun Farocki, Jessyca R. Hauser, Alexander Hempel, Richard Hoeck & John Miller, Helena Huneke, Martin Kippenberger, Josef Kramhöller, Michael Krebber, Tonio Kröner, Maria Lassnig, Ghislaine Leung, Lee Lozano, Friederike Mayröcker, Luzie Meyer, Sigmar Polke, Ulla Rossek, Jack Smith, Josef Strau, Jean-Marie Straub, Martine Syms, Franz West, Tanja Widmann, Amelie von Wulffen, Min Yoon.

Press Tour Swimming into the Dark

Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 10:00 AM

Angewandte University Gallery at the Heiligenkreuzerhof

Schönlaterngasse 5, Staircase 8, 1st Floor, 1010 Vienna, Austria

Speakers:

- Petra Schaper Rinkel, Rector of the University of Applied Arts Vienna
- Cosima Rainer, Curator, Head of Collection and Archive, University of Applied Arts Vienna
- Robert Müller, Co-Curator, Exhibition Designer, Collection and Archive, University of Applied Arts Vienna

Further information about the exhibition:

<https://kunstsammlungundarchiv.at/sammlung-kunst-architektur-design/projekte/ins-dunkle-schwimmen-ausstellung/>