

viennacontemporary Presents First Program Highlights 2024

VCT STATEMENT: ENERGY, the new section CONTEXT, and Bruno Mokross as curator of ZONE1 2024 – Austria's leading international contemporary art fair gives first insights into the upcoming edition under the direction of Francesca Gavin.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

Austria's leading international art fair viennacontemporary will take place from 12–15 September 2024 in Halle D of Messe Wien. With around 90 established galleries and exciting newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe and the rest of the world, as well as a diverse program and side events throughout the city, the fair once again promises to be an international highlight for the art scene.

The upcoming edition will not only mark the tenth anniversary of viennacontemporary but will also take place in a large exhibition hall with an increased number of galleries.

To kick off the 2024 program presentation, viennacontemporary is delighted to announce some of the first highlights:

VCT STATEMENT, a program that builds a bridge between current social and political issues and their reflection in art, will deal with one of the most pressing issues of our time: Energy. The program includes a special exhibition curated by Mirela Baciak, Director of the Salzburger Kunstverein, as well as two international panel discussions in cooperation with ERSTE Foundation.

With **CONTEXT**, viennacontemporary presents a new section of ten curated individual presentations by artists from the late 20th century, focusing on Central and Eastern Europe. The inaugural edition of CONTEXT is curated by Pernilla Holmes.

In addition, viennacontemporary is pleased to introduce Bruno Mokross, the curator of this year's **ZONE1**, where he will present emerging talents and innovative perspectives in the contemporary art landscape.

Last but not least, the fair team is proud to announce Paolo Zani from the renowned Italian gallery ZERO..., which was founded in Piacenza in 2000, as a new member of the

viennacontemporary admission committee. Together with Ursula Krinzinger from Galerie Krinzinger, Nikolaus Oberhuber from KOW, Gregor Podnar from Galerie Gregor Podnar, and Sophia Vonier from Galerie Sophia Vonier in Salzburg, he will play a key role in selecting the list of exhibitors for 2024 in early summer.

The team of viennacontemporary is looking forward to presenting more news in the coming months and welcoming you to the fair in September 2024!

VCT STATEMENT 2024: ENERGY

viennacontemporary is pleased to announce VCT STATEMENT: ENERGY, a comprehensive special project set to take place during the fair. Coproduced with Salzburger Kunstverein, viennacontemporary will present the special exhibition *The Color of Energy*, curated by Mirela Baciak. This two-chapter exhibition held at Messe Wien and at Salzburger Kulturverein looks at how energy colors our past, present, and future. Simultaneously two panel discussions titled *Nexus Thinking – Energy, Future, Sustainability* will stimulate intellectual discourse through the lens of art, drive meaningful change, and imagine a world where sustainability is the norm.

Francesca Gavin, Artistic Director of viennacontemporary, expresses the significance of this year's overarching theme: *"Energy is the fuel that enables people to exist and communicate. How that energy is created, extracted, disseminated, and used raises questions about how humanity functions politically, socially, and ecologically. From heat to light, wind to gas, physical labor to mental power, energy manifests in dynamic forms, shaping human existence in profound ways. Energy is one of the most pressing topics of today and will define how we exist in the future."*

VCT STATEMENT EXHIBITION: The Color of Energy **Curated by Mirela Baciak**

Anchored in the idea that energy's primary colors are geopolitics, technology, and people, *The Color of Energy*, a two-part exhibition co-produced with Salzburger Kunstverein, seeks to reflect on the often-overlooked energy flows essential for comprehending the dynamics of today's world. The exhibition, the first chapter of which will be presented at and during viennacontemporary and the second in Salzburg the following week, explores our entanglements with sun and wind as well as oil, coal, gas, and metals, and shows how the different intensities of energy connect politics and cultures.

The showcase will feature Sophie Jung's new performance rooted in the theme of climate anxiety, Shubigi Rao's video installation and various objects, which draw upon her critical stance on environmental exploitation, Liv Bugge's installation that invites viewers to contemplate the visibility and invisibility of oil, mirroring its omnipresence in the Norwegian context. The full artist list will be published later this year.

"The focus of this exhibition is on sensory exploration of the narratives and debates surrounding energy through colors. In the show's context, each color becomes a narrative," curator Mirela Baciak explains. "It is with great anticipation that I approach the collaboration with viennacontemporary to curate "The Color of Energy," an exhibition that reflects one of the most critical discussions of our time—the flows of energy, and its transformation for a habitable future. As this is a vast topic, I am happy that we are able to give it two stages, one in Vienna and one in Salzburg."

Mirela Baciak (1987, Warsaw) is a curator in the field of visual arts whose practice is guided by the notion of hospitality as a process that captures one's ethical relation to the unknown and the strange. Since July 2023 she has been the director at Salzburger Kunstverein, where she just revealed her first exhibition program under the title *Chronic Contradictions*. Between 2019 and June 2023 she served as curator at steirischer herbst festival and worked at Public Art Munich 2018. She has held residencies and fellowships worldwide, contributing to exhibitions and research projects. Baciak earned an MA in Critical Studies from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and co-founded the AAC | Austrian Association of Curators in 2023.

VCT STATEMENT TALK: Nexus Thinking – Energy, Future, Sustainability on Friday, 13 September 2024

The second element to VCT STATEMENT are two panel discussions at the fair organized in cooperation with ERSTE Foundation. The forum serves as a platform for critical discourse on pressing global issues, with a focus on the energy transition and the sustainable use of resources. The discussions encourage critical conversations, amplify the voices of those individuals and initiatives that are leading the way in tackling climate change, and underline the commitment of viennacontemporary to promoting interdisciplinary dialog and social engagement through art.

Previous editions of STATEMENT have been held under the patronage of Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen and have featured prominent panelists such as Oleksandr Tkachenko (Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine), Martin Selmayr (Representation of the European Commission in Austria), Alma Zadić (Austrian Minister of Justice), and Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal (Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in dialog with important figures from the arts and culture scene, such as R. C. Baker (artist and senior editor of the Village Voice in New York), Halyna Hryhorenko (Deputy Minister of Culture and Information of Ukraine), Francesca Thyssen (founder and chairwoman of Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Oliver Ressler (artist), and

many others. The participants of this year's panel discussion will be announced in the coming months.

About VCT STATEMENT

VCT STATEMENT was launched in 2022 with VCT STATEMENT UKRAINE as a reaction to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in order to contribute to raising awareness of socio-political realities as an art fair that sees itself as a bridge-builder between East and West in Europe. Since its initiation, the special program has developed into an important and popular platform for linking art and pressing socio-political issues. Last year's edition VCT STATEMENT POLITICAL HOMELESSNESS AND CONTEMPORARY CITIZENSHIP dealt with the possibilities of political participation and cultural expression of citizens with refugee and migrant backgrounds. VCT STATEMENT brings socio-political ideas into a cultural context beyond art debates and raises artistic awareness through collaboration with external curators and thinkers.

VCT STATEMENT takes place with the kind support of ERSTE Foundation.

PRESENTING: CONTEXT

CONTEXT is a new section of ten curated individual presentations by artists from the late 20th century, focusing on Central and Eastern Europe. It aims to anchor the contemporary art in the fair and Vienna in a wider sense with its vibrant cultural history, CONTEXT emphasizes how the present emerges from an exciting recent past. For the section's premiere, viennacontemporary is pleased to have won an influential curator in Pernilla Holmes.

"Art history is undergoing a revision to push beyond its confines and include wonderful and important artists who were once overlooked, often on the basis of gender, ethnicity, location, or education. With this section I hope to tell the stories of some of those artists, in partnership with the galleries who believe in them," says Holmes.

Art advisor, curator, and writer Pernilla Holmes has been Director of art advisory and cultural strategy firm Wedel Art since 2010, spearheading a range of special projects including curating exhibitions with artists such as Theaster Gates, Shara Hughes, Sam Gilliam, and Frank Bowling. Pernilla has an MA from the Courtauld Institute and has written extensively on art in catalogs and for such publications as the Financial Times, World of Interiors, and ARTnews, as well as giving lectures and talks on a variety of subjects around the world, including hosting a series on how to collect with Frieze, one on one artist interviews and moderating and sitting on panel discussions on subjects such as Artworld Disruptors, Art under the Radar and New Trends in Collecting.

ZONE1: CURATOR BRUNO MOKROSS

This year's ZONE1, the fair's section focusing on emerging talents with a connection to Austria, will be curated by Bruno Mokross. With ten solo exhibitions of artists who live or have lived in Vienna and are represented by local and international galleries, Mokross wants to examine what attracts international artists to Vienna and how the living conditions here affect their art:

"Vienna is an attractive bedrock for a diverse cast of aspiring professionals. International artists who are setting up base in the Austrian capital are citing an improbable constellation of affordable rents, government support, harmonious ecosystems, stable economy, and high living standards in a peaceful, democratic nation—oh, and the water quality!—as motivation", says Mokross. "How might the aspirations of those who came to stay contrast with those who ultimately left? What are the driving desires of a scene shunning the prevalent hustlepreneurship of most art metropolises? Or, in broader terms: how do the conditions under which art is created contribute to shaping it—and how do artists shape those conditions?"

Bruno Mokross works as an artist, curator, and software developer in Vienna. He runs the independent exhibition space Pech and is one of the founders and main organizers of Independent Space Index, the network and eponymous festival of Viennese project spaces.

About ZONE1

A regular highlight since 2015, the exhibition format exclusively presents the works of talented artists under 40, who either live, work, or have received their education in Austria. Appreciated by institutions, art experts, and visitors alike, ZONE1 provides a unique space for these artists to make their mark on the international art scene and has established itself as a stepping stone to accelerate young artist's careers.

SAVE THE DATE

VIENNA CONTEMPORARY 2024
12–15 September
Messe Wien, Halle D

For media inquiries please contact:

Salomea Krobath
Communications
krobath@viennacontemporary.at
+43 699 19 3333 22

Press Conference and Press Preview:

12 September 2024, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Address:

Messe Wien, Halle D
Trabrennstraße 4
1020 Vienna

VCT STATEMENT Exhibitions:

The Color of Energy
(blue, white, and yellow)
viennacontemporary, Messe Wien, Halle D
12–15 September 2024

The Color of Energy
(green, black, and red)
Salzburger Kunstverein
21 September–24 November 2024
Opening: 20 September 2024, 8:00 pm

www.viennacontemporary.at

#viennacontemporary
#viennacontemporary2024
#VCT24

viennacontemporary is organized by

VC ARTFAIRS GmbH
Siebensterngasse 46/1/44
1070 Vienna