

Art into Life! Collector Wolfgang Hahn and the 60s

mumok
Museum moderner Kunst
Stiftung Ludwig Wien
Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien

Exhibition dates
November 10, 2017 to April 22, 2018

Press conference
November 8, 2017, 10 am

Opening
November 9, 2017, 7 pm

Press contact

Karin Bellmann
T +43 1 52500-1400
karin.bellmann@mumok.at

Katja Kulidzhanova
T +43 1 52500-1450
katja.kulidzhanova@mumok.at
Fax +43 1 52500-1300
press@mumok.at
www.mumok.at

In the 1960s, the Rhineland was an important focus for massive changes in contemporary art. A new internationally networked generation of artists turned away from traditional notions of art. Inspiration came from everyday life. Everyday objects became the material for art. These artists worked in urban contexts, they broke across the borders between disciplines, and they collaborated with musicians, writers, filmmakers and dancers. Cologne restorer Wolfgang Hahn (1924–1987) was right up with the times, and he began to collect this new art. Over the years his collection grew to become one of the most significant collections of contemporary art, with works of *nouveau réalisme*, Fluxus, happenings, Pop art, and conceptual art.

Hahn was chief restorer at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, and later at Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Before training as a restorer, he spent five years studying art history. It was his work as a collector and disseminator of art—and as a host—that made him well known. He lived as the avant-garde demanded—art and life were one and the same thing for him. His interest in art did not end when the working day was over. He undertook gallery tours and then carried on into the night in his own home, where artists were regular guests. His widow Hildegard Helga Hahn recalls living with art: “This was our everyday life, our normality. There were countless evenings like this, and they were all interesting and inspiring.” This is how the Hahns’ semi-detached house came to fill up with works by the most important artists of the 1960s. The staircase, the living room and bedroom, utility rooms, basement and garden and even the tiny guest bathroom all became exhibition spaces for the artworks the Hahns purchased, including works by Arman, Joseph Beuys, George Brecht, John Cage, Christo, Jim Dine, Robert Filliou, Allan Kaprow, Yayoi Kusama, Gordon Matta-Clark, Claes Oldenburg, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Niki de Saint Phalle, Daniel Spoerri, Paul Thek, Jean Tinguely, Franz Erhard Walther, Andy Warhol, Lawrence Weiner, Wolf Vostell, and many more.

In Cologne Hahn was a key initiator. The first presentation of his collection in 1968 was like a bombshell. This exhibition entitled *The Hahn Collection. Contemporary Art in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum* was a sign of Cologne’s rising star as an international metropolis for contemporary art.

Hahn was a truly handsome young man, mostly impeccably dressed in a blue suit. He was always the first to arrive, often coming to the galleries before the exhibitions opened. If he liked the works he saw, he bought them. When Daniel Spoerri was traveling with his *Suitcase* in the early 1960s and showed it in Cologne, Hahn was there. Following his chronicler’s instinct, he later bought the case. His aim was not to somehow consolidate his own taste or some status quo. Hahn took risks when he bought and sold art. His collection grew and grew, and he sold items to make way for new ones.

Coming from the perspective of a restorer and art historian, Hahn saw art in historical contexts. He made records of what was going on and he collected not only works but also publications and documents. His art collection, his archive, and his library witness his time, offering a new view of art in the 1960s and 1970s, beyond the usual art-historical and geographical ascriptions.

In 1978, mumok was able to purchase part of the Hahn collection, and in 2003 a further purchase brought the whole collection together. Then, in 2005, Hildegard Hahn made mumok a gift of Hahn's library. Together, collection, archive and library show the complexity of art in the 1960s. Working together with Museum Ludwig Cologne, in 1917 we will be able to present this collection in its entirety for the first time to the public.

Curated by Susanne Neuburger (mumok) and Barbara Engelbach (Museum Ludwig Cologne)

This exhibition is in cooperation with Museum Ludwig Cologne, where it will be on show in adapted form from June 24 to September 24, 2017. There will be a comprehensive publication.

Fact Sheet
Art into Life!
Collector Wolfgang Hahn and the 60ies

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| Ausstellungsdauer | November 10, 2017 to April 22, 2018 |
| Press conference | November 8, 2017, 10 am |
| Opening | November 9, 2017, 7 pm |
| Venue | mumok, MuseumsQuartier, Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien, levels –1, –3 |
| Curators | Barbara Engelbach (Museum Ludwig, Cologne), Susanne Neuburger (mumok) |
| Catalogue | <p><i>Art into Life! Collector Wolfgang Hahn and the 60ies</i> Edited by Barbara Engelbach und Susanne Neuburger With a preface by Yilmaz Dziewior und Karola Kraus. Texts by Barbara Engelbach, Susanne Neuburger, Susanne Rennert 40 detailed work descriptions by Agnes Berecz, J. P. Binstock, Lisa Bosbach, Stephan Diederich, Diedrich Diederichsen, Marianne Dobner, Silvia Eiblmayr, Barbara Engelbach, Ines Gebetsroither, Barbara Herrmann, Dirk Hildebrandt, Matthias Koddenberg, Doris Krystof, Annette Lagler, Dirk Luckow, Simone Moser, Susanne Neubauer, Susanne Neuburger, Susanne Neuburger, Marlene Obermayer, Sandra Reimann, Dietmar Rübel, Feliticas Thun-Hohenstein, Ulrich Wilmes, Jörg Wolfert, Michael Wonnerth Catalogue raisonné of the collection Hahn at mumok and Museum Ludwig English, 328 pages, numerous color and b/w illustrations, soft cover Sales price: € 38,- ISBN: 978-3-902947-42-0 (Museum edition) ISBN: 978-3-96098-147-3 (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne)</p> |
| Exhibition production | Ulrike Kucher |
| Opening hours | Monday: 2 pm to 7 pm, Tuesday to Sunday: 10 am to 7 pm Thursday: 10 am to 9 pm |
| Admission | Normal € 11,-, reduced € 8,50 / € 7,50 |
| Press contacts | <p>Karin Bellmann T +43 1 52500-1400 karin.bellmann@mumok.at Katja Kulidzhanova T +43 1 52500-1450 katja.kulidzhanova@mumok.at press@mumok.at, www.mumok.at/de/presse</p> |