

ESSL MUSEUM

Exhibitions January to June 2016

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Get to know the Essl Collection

In the first half of 2016, the Essl Museum's programme provides profound insights into the Essl Collection. *Rendezvous* (19 February 2016 until January 2017) tells the story of how the Collection's history started with a rendezvous in New York, where Agnes and Karlheinz Essl met for the first time and discovered their passion for each other and for contemporary art in the world capital of art. This major presentation of works owned by the Essl Collection has seminal works and artists go on a 'date'. Max Weiler meets Cecily Brown, Martha Jungwirth has a rendezvous with Asger Jorn, and Kurt Kocherscheidt with Antoni Tàpies, to quote just a few examples.

Body & Soul (06 April until 04 September 2016) is devoted to a subject widely represented in the Essl Collection, the human body in all its facets. The exhibition places the topic in a wider social context and traces its evolution up to the present. The show includes works by VALIE EXPORT, Maria Lassnig, Günter Brus, Marc Quinn and Biljana Djurdjević.

The *Silence* project (08 March until 28 March 2016) represents an antithesis to the conventional atmosphere of exhibitions and provides visitors with ample space and time to explore works of art at their leisure. Only two works of art are displayed on a surface of 600 sq.m., and the viewers will find comfortable seating in front of the artwork.

New experiments: the Essl Museum Laboratory

The Essl Museum places great importance on developing and enabling many different approaches to contemporary art. Today, art is a relevant aspect in all walks of life and the Essl Museum offers a new feature to account for this recent development. To be inaugurated in May 2016, the *Essl Museum Laboratory* constitutes an interdisciplinary art platform. The first project under the title of *Die Sammlung eSeL (The eSeL Collection)* is created in cooperation with the art networker, knowledge producer and artist Lorenz Seidler aka eSeL.

The laboratory is an experimental sphere designed to promote co-operation and networking between artists from all disciplines, NGOs, universities, experts and museum visitors. The laboratory responds to current artistic and social developments. Visitors will find innovative approaches to topical subjects, new exhibition concepts and interdisciplinary and participative projects. Every year, the laboratory will host three or four projects, running over several weeks or months each. In line with the experimental character of the laboratory, there will also be room for adding projects on the spur of the moment.



Rendezvous Masterpieces from the Essl Collection

19 February 2016 until 31 January 2017
Opening: 18 February 2016

Sometimes a date or rendezvous can ignite an exceptional story, as was the case with the initial meeting of Agnes and Karlheinz Essl in 1959 in New York. They immediately became a couple and enjoyed their first encounters with contemporary art in the fascinating metropolis on their dates which took them to the museums and galleries of New York. This was the origin of their love for art which soon became a passion. In over 40 years, the couple has never stopped building a unique collection of Austrian and international art which has made them the most well-known art collectors of their home country.

Rendezvous, the major show of collection holdings in 2016, features a rendezvous between central works and artists from the Essl Collection.

Max Weiler meets Cecily Brown, Martha Jungwirth has a date with Asger Jorn, and Kurt Kocherscheidt with Antoni Tàpies, to name just a few examples. The exhibition starts with a rendezvous in New York and continues with Paris in the 1950s, where the young Austrian artists Arnulf Rainer and Maria Lassnig were in a relationship. Far Eastern philosophies with their focus on reduction influenced not only these two, but also Hans Bischoffshausen and Friedensreich Hundertwasser. But there is more, and visitors will discover a host of exciting, tender, unusual and surprising encounters. The Blind Date is a special highlight. Every two months, friends of the Essl Collection will choose two works from the art depot independently of each other and give them a rendezvous at the exhibition area.

Maria Lassnig, Kopf, 1963,
photography: Mischa Nawrata, Wien © Sammlung Essl

Arnulf Rainer, Vertikalgestaltung, 1951,
photography: Mischa Nawrata, Wien © Arnulf Rainer





Silence

08 March until 28 March 2016

Silence represents an antithesis to the conventional atmosphere of exhibitions and provides visitors with ample space and time to explore works of art at their leisure. Only two works of art on a surface of 600 sq.m. with comfortable seating in front of them. Only two visitors per hour will be let in upon prior registration. At museums, the visitors spend no more than 15 seconds on the average per work of art. Hence, they often miss out on the experience of exploring art in a contemplative spirit and enjoying the interaction between artwork, viewer and surrounding space. *Silence* is an offer to enjoy art fully, in an atmosphere of calm and silence. There are no explanatory texts or thematic statements to come between the art and the viewer.

Exhibition view of *Silence*, 2012, photography: Archiv Sammlung Essl



Body & Soul

06 April until 04 September 2016
Opening: 05 April 2016

What attitude do we take today vis-à-vis our body and sexuality? In the 20th century, Western society revolutionised and redefined its relationship with the body, but also brought problematic aspects to light. Artists reflected these developments, of course, particularly after 1945. Post-war Austria saw the head-on confrontation between hypocritical sexual morals and far-reaching denial and sub-culture avant-gardes striving to overcome these obstacles. Vienna Actionism, a movement that produced art which still has the power to shock, is now considered one of the most significant achievements of Austrian art.

Body & Soul is devoted to a subject widely represented in the Essl Collection, the human body in all its facets. The exhibition places the topic in a wider social context and traces its evolution up to the present. The human body may serve as platform for the expression of inner states and feelings, as exemplified by Maria Lassnig's *body awareness paintings*; it can be a metaphor for metaphysical notions, or, as in Marc Quinn's sculpture *Alison Lapper*, it may celebrate beauty beyond social norms. That the body can also be a threat is demonstrated, for instance, by the aggressive male presence in Biljana Djurdjević's reflection on the Balkan war.

Marc Quinn, *Alison Lapper (8 months)*, 2000,
photography: courtesy Jay Jopling/White Cube, London, © Sammlung Essl



Die Sammlung eSeL (The eSeL Collection) Essl Museum Laboratory

Starting in May 2016

The *Essl Museum Laboratory* will be inaugurated by a project designed by the Viennese art networker, knowledge producer and artist Lorenz Seidler aka eSeL.

The eSeL Collection documents and reflects on the world of art on the basis of eSeL's comprehensive archives: information on and documentation of exhibitions from the last 15 years, many boxes filled with leaflets and many terabytes of data will be arranged to form an interactive exhibition setting.

With the help of a many-layered timeline, *The eSeL Collection* provides an insight in current developments and dynamic trends in an increasingly interrelated world of art, explores the changes in conditions underlying art production and investigates new challenges and the future potential of contemporary art. Individual focus areas are highlighted by selected eSeL projects from the last 15 years. eSeL's photographic oeuvre, which is devoted to the art scene and its protagonists, will be presented in large formats.

“Art is the product of communication!” – visitors will have the opportunity to contribute actively by adding their own observations on the development of art in the last 15 years. On several days, eSeL himself will attend the laboratory and change and expand the setting of the collection together with the visitors.

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