

abstract.!? between figuration and abstraction

October 19, 2023, to March 17, 2024

museum gugging

Am Campus 2, 3400 Maria Gugging

This exhibition is the first to be dedicated to abstraction as a central theme in Gugging art. It is also the first show to be centered around a currently active female artist from Gugging: [Laila Bachtiar](#). Selected positions from the artist's work are paired with pieces by [Rudolf Horacek](#), [Rudolf Liemberger](#), [Philipp Schöpke](#) and [Erich Zित्रa](#) in four thematic sections. In this way, a bridge is established from the present back to the first generation of [Gugging Artists](#). A video enables visitors to watch [Laila Bachtiar](#) create a work. Drawing, as the most direct form of artistic expression, is the focus of this presentation.

“Many of the Gugging artists choose a figurative mode of representation at the beginning of their artistic work,” explains Nina Ansperger, Artistic and Scientific Director of the [museum gugging](#). “But what paths do they take after that? Laila Bachtiar finds her way from drawings dominated by lines to powerful two-dimensional surfaces in which it is still possible to recognize the depicted animals and people. [Rudolf Horacek](#) focuses on heads in his images. Over time, [Rudolf Liemberger's](#) human figures increasingly seem to disappear. In [Philipp Schöpke's](#) late phase, he wraps his figures in exuberant hairdos and provides them menacing rows of teeth and see-through torsos with atmospheric layers of color. In [Erich Zित्रa's](#) works, forceful vertical strokes are used to rework his figural motifs to the point of abstraction,” reports the curator of the exhibition.

Chapter 1: Motif and Line

Drawing is the most frequently used medium at Gugging. [Laila Bachtiar](#), who was born in 1971, has been creating her often very time-consuming works at Gugging since 1990. She proves how much power and complexity can be displayed by a line drawn in pencil. At the same time, line has always provided the framework of her motifs: Initially its shapes were filled with colors of varying transparency and, finally, with forceful two-dimensional cross-hatching. Animals are her main theme: In addition to ducks, cats and horses, she also depicts exotic animals like elephants and dolphins. She additionally portrays the people around her. In this room, we find her work paired with that of [Erich Zित्रa](#), who drew buildings, churches and animals — both artists often depicted rabbits, as is the case with many [Gugging Artists](#). Using thick lines, often in many colors, Zित्रa drew over the motifs he first placed on the paper with a pencil.

Chapter 2: Figure

For many *Gugging Artists*, the depiction of a person formed the point of departure for their work as artists. [Philipp Schöpke](#) developed these images into the previously mentioned two-dimensional, colorful drawings — progressing all the way to the boundary of abstraction. [Rudolf Horacek](#), whose acrylic painting of a head and torso enjoys iconic status in Gugging, primarily devoted himself to depicting heads. In this show, the focus is on his pencil and colored pencil drawings, which resemble highly detailed, almost technical drawings and are always signed with name, numbers, a sequence of letters and his birthplace Mannswörth.

Chapter 3: Concentration

With her forceful cross-hatching, [Laila Bachtiar](#) is central for the theme of concentration, which she has intensively developed specifically since 2003. There are also boldly colorful drawings, but even her works done in colored pencil reveal an incredible variety of chromatic nuances between black and light gray, which develop into a dynamically charged polarity. Her work is paired with that of [Rudolf Liemberger](#), whose human figures became increasingly geometrical as time went on. His initial crossing out of these figures continually increased in strength until it developed into a cross-hatched overdrawing usually concentrated primarily in the middle of the sheet.

Chapter 4: Color and Abstraction

Here the late work of [Philipp Schöpke](#) is brought into play, because in the late 1980s and early 1990s, this artist increased the chromatic intensity of his work. Schöpke retained his original motifs, but his art became more two-dimensional. In the process, he made use of colored pencils, wax crayons and charcoal. What is always impressive about [Philipp Schöpke's](#) world of figures and forms is the artist's incredible vehemence, which is always ready to escalate to the point of nonobjectivity.

[“abstract.!? between figuration and abstraction”](#) is Nina Ansperger's second exhibition as the new artistic and scientific director of the [museum gugging](#). Her debut exhibition [“gugging inspires.! from bowie to roth”](#) dealt with art from Gugging's influence on visual art, literature, music and fashion design, and it has enjoyed a very positive international resonance. In addition to [David Bowie](#) and [Gerhard Roth](#), the exhibition also presented [Arnulf Rainer](#), Peter Pongratz, Johann Rausch, the photographer Christine de Grancy (who accompanied David Bowie to Gugging) and the Scottish fashion designer [Christopher Kane](#).

Press Breakfast and Opening

[Nina Ansperger](#) invites you to join her for a press breakfast and tour of the new exhibition on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. (registration at presse@museumgugging.at). The opening will also be held on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. (registration at anmeldung@museumgugging.at). The music for the opening will be provided by the internationally known Martin Breinschmid Trio with Carole Alston (vocals), Herbert Swoboda (piano) and Martin Breinschmid (drums, vibraphone).

A free shuttle bus from Operngasse 4 (1010 Vienna) to the opening will be available (departs 6:00 p.m., returns 9:00 p.m.). Due to the limited number of seats, it is absolutely necessary to register in advance at anmeldung@museumgugging.at by October 16.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact:

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