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Künstlerhaus
Halle für Kunst & Medien
Burgring 2
8010 Graz, Austria

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Trägerschaft / operated by
Kunstverein Medienturm
ZVR: 542738445

→ Abstract Hungary
24 06 – 07 09 2017

Press talk
23 06 2017, 11 am

Opening
23 06 2017, 6 pm

Supported by the Embassy
of Hungary – Collegium
Hungaricum Vienna, NOW
Esterházy Contemporary



BUNDESKANZLERAMT ÖSTERREICH
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→ Imre Bak, Sári Ember, János Fajó, Andreas Fogarasi, Péter Tamás Halász, György Jovánovics, Tamás Kaszás, Zsófia Keresztes, Ilona Keserü Ilona, Adrian Kiss, Ádám Kokesch, Tamás Komóroczy, László Lakner, Little Warsaw, Mira Dalma Makai, Dóra Maurer, István Nádler, Márton Nemes, Péter Puklus, Klára Rudas, Gergő Szinyova, Zsolt Tibor, Ádám Ulbert, Júlia Vécsei

Curated by Sandro Droschl, Áron Fenyvesi

Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien (KM– Graz)
Burgring 2, 8010 Graz, Austria, +43 316 740084, info@km-k.at, www.km-k.at

Supported by: the Hungarian Embassy, Collegium Hungaricum Vienna,
NOW Esterházy Foundation, Eisenstadt

Duration: June 24–September 7, 2017, Tuesday–Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.,
Thursdays 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Opening: June 23, 2017, 6 p.m.

Welcome: Sandro Droschl, director

Mária Molnár, Hungarian Embassy, Collegium Hungaricum Vienna

Dr. Stefan Ottrubay, NOW Esterházy Foundation

Dr. Günter Riegler, City Council for Art and Culture, Science and Finance

Mag. Christopher Drexler, Member of the Department of Health, Maintenance,
Human Resources, and Culture

On the exhibition: Áron Fenyvesi, curator

Refreshments afterward

With *Abstract Hungary* the Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien (KM– Graz) is presenting twenty-four Hungarian artists of different generations whose artistic practice is devoted to current variations of abstract art. The exhibition represents a further development of the narrative blueprint for the much-discussed concept of abstraction. It will feature both established and new artists, some of whom are exhibiting their work for the first time in Austria. On two floors indoors and in a sculpture in public space, art by younger and middle generations enter into a dialogue with pioneers from the 1960s whose oeuvres have remained relevant to the present-day production of art.

Key, internationally known figures such as László Moholy-Nagy, Victor Vasarely, Simon Hantái, and Lajos Kassák make us aware that abstract art in Hungary has a long and complicated history that has continued to develop throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For a long time, abstract art was regarded as a practice that received no special recognition.

Contemporary abstract art is inspired by a critical approach to the supposed universality of a visual vocabulary, which, among other things, can be perceived as a kind of universal art relieved of the burden of local context. In Hungary today

abstract artists strive for a timeless, enduring perspective of art that is rooted in the knowledge of its long history. The younger generation's lively, relatively instinctual works tend to distance themselves from a minimalist approach as they open up to a variety of directions from trash aesthetics to the boundaries of figurative art. Taken altogether, it's possible to discern in them a reflective stance toward the current wave of international attention focused on abstract art.

The term "abstract" plays an overriding role in the show, in the sense that it represents an open-minded, productive attitude that transcends the ostensible practice of formalism. The term also encompasses an art historical, discursive dimension that sheds some critical light on the factor of time, while also regarding the participating artists as a connective element. In a period of ambivalent political, social, economic, and technological spheres, abstract art interprets things beyond the local. This approach plays with the concept of an independent international language, underscoring its strength as a binding element that surpasses language barriers. To this extent, the exhibition is not about representing the country. Rather, it takes today's complicated and confusing local and international environments as its starting point in order to contrast via proposals and drafts—"abstracts" with future potential—updated and living traditions with a stance, that overcomes the classic idea of the nation. Moving beyond the specific interest in the Hungarian art scene, the exhibition's title could also be interpreted as an interchangeable, "abstract" concept, in the sense that it represents a productive, empty space for potential contemporary international developments in art and society. Ultimately, the title also brings into question the concept of "abstract art," a term that is overburdened with art historical weight; at best it could be made productive again, as an effective structural aspect of the chain of arguments alluded to here.

The thematic exhibition emphasizes the diverse approaches and understandings of abstract art, from the instinctive and conceptual ideas to the referential and perspectival ones. Without wanting to create an overview with the aid of lexical, chronological, or taxonomic methods, the exhibition demonstrates the complexities of abstract art, which range from the radical geometrical references of the 1960s to the coherent development that continues to this day, despite all of the interruptions and variations.

The Künstlerhaus has invited numerous artists who carry on the legacy of the quiet modernism of abstract art—the neo-avant-garde that was established in the late 1960s. The artists of this generation, such as Imre Bak, János Fajó, György Jovánovics, Ilona Keserü Ilona, and Dóra Maurer, who have recently received increased attention, will present their works from recent years. Other important artists in the show represent New Conceptualism, a movement from the 1990s that includes Andreas Fogarasi, Ádám Kokesch, Tamás Komóroczy, and the art collective Little Warsaw. The youngest generation of Hungarian artists, born in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Sári Ember, Zsófia Kersztes, Klára Rudas, and Gergő Szinyova, are part of the local dialogue and shed new light on current directions in abstract art—most certainly influenced by the conceptual inclusion of the global discourse.

The exhibition *Abstract Hungary* encompasses painting, sculpture, installations, ceramics, photography, and video. The show also incorporates Tamás Kászás's piece *Stage Monument* (2017), a sculptural and performative intervention in the public space that refers to the historical concepts of Lajos Kassák. This installation will function as both a site for performances and workshops, as well as a meeting point for passersby in the city park, who will be able to use this public space as a stage for their own individual purposes.

A catalogue and a program of events will accompany the exhibition.

June 29, 2017, 6 p.m.

Ludwig Múzeum – Museum of Contemporary Art
Komor Marcell u. 1. 1095 Budapest
www.ludwigmuseum.hu

Discussion with Sári Ember, Dóra Maurer, István Nádler, Márton Nemes, Gergő Szinyova; Gabor Rieder (moderator)
Introduction: Sandro Droschl, Áron Fenyvesi

July 6, 2017, 6 p.m.

Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien (KM– Graz)
Performance on an installative outdoor stage
Stage Monument
Tamás Kaszás

For more on the program of events, please see www.km-k.at

Real Hungary – The Esterházy Art Prize

Opening: June 27, 2017, 6 p.m.
Collegium Hungaricum Vienna, Hollandstrasse 4, 1020 Vienna

Parallel to the *Abstract Hungary* exhibition, the Collegium Hungaricum in Vienna will present the show *Real Hungary*. Through the current works of Esterházy prizewinners from the years 2009 to 2015, the show documents the tendencies found in the tradition of Hungarian realism, with reference to select artists as partners in a dialogue.

Press Download: <http://www.km-k.at/en/exhibition/abstract-hungary/press/>

Contact: Helga Droschl, hd@km-k.at, + 43 (0)316 740084



Péter Puklus, 1191 Golden Decadence, 2013, analogue print on color-paper, processed with ReAnalog Negative, 36 x 24,7 cm



Zsófia Keresztes, From a Trustworthy Source, 2016, styrofoam, thread, iPhone boxes, acrylic paint, photo: Krisztián Zana



István Nádler, No 9., 2014, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 150 cm, courtesy of the artist and Kisterem, photo: Miklós Sulk



Little Warsaw, Armour, 2016, iron, 136,5 x 136,5 cm, photo: Tomáš Souče