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Hans Kupelwieser - Rudolf Polanszky

Opening: 17.09.2025, 18:00-21:00

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“But if one says: *How am I supposed to know what he means, when I can see nothing but his signs*, then I say: *How is he supposed to know what he means, when he has nothing but the signs either.*”

– Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953, section 504

The importance of material in art shifted profoundly in the twentieth century. Not only was the importance of materiality recognized by modernist art, but the physical properties of the works themselves were now assigned a significance, leading to the development of different artistic approaches.

Hans Kupelwieser (b. 1948) managed to create an independent position within contemporary Austrian sculpture, embodying a significant development for sculpture of the post-modern era. His work not only includes the use of new techniques and materials, but also a sort of linguistic exploration of the variety of meanings associated with these unconventional materials. Fundamentally, Hans Kupelwieser moves between two and three dimensions, leading him to reimagine the transformations, overlaps and inversions of forms, processes and materials, and thus to contemplate new phenomena, levels of reality and meaning.

In turn, Rudolf Polanszky (b. 1951) accepts nothing as a given, sees the world as only vaguely defined, the borders are questionable and only apparent. Where Hans Kupelwieser's sculptural approach simulates a function that does not exist, Rudolf Polanszky - creating here a body of mural works stemming from his sculptural vocation - works with industrially produced materials, the traces of prior use and manipulation remaining forever inscribed in the work. By removing the materials from their usual surroundings, this approach transforms them into an artistic material, freeing them from their previously intended relations of constraint and use. In the process, he transforms traces of histories into a new field of association and meaning.

On one hand, the material expansion, as well as the extension of form and function, is Hans Kupelwieser's domain of analysis. On the other, accidental order opposed to calculated disorder are the omnipresent enigmas of Rudolf Polanszky's work. Freeing the material from its predetermined use also liberates art from its traditional constraints, showing us that the potential of art can go far beyond its own discipline.

Functional illusions then form an independent thread in the complex fabric of contemporary sculpture, which Hans Kupelwieser and Rudolf Polanszky continue to explore.

Hans Kupelwieser was born in Lunz am See, Austria, in 1948 and lives and works in Vienna. From 1976 to 1982, he studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. In 1995, he taught at the Institute for Contemporary Art at Graz University of Technology.

Hans Kupelwieser's works can be found in international public and private collections. He has made a significant contribution to various genres of art in public spaces (e.g. Post am Rochus, Vienna; Musiktheater, Linz; alte Universität Wien, BIG-art, Vienna) and is one of Austria's most important contemporary artists.

Numerous solo and group shows include exhibitions with Lentos, Linz (2023); Heidi Horten Collection, Vienna (2023); Kunsthalle Krems (2022); Daimler Art Collection, Berlin (2019); Museum of Fine Arts, Osijek (2015), amongst many others.

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Rudolf Polanszky was born 1951 in Vienna, Austria, where he still lives and works today. Polanszky's work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions, such as e.g. at Almine Rech (2019, 2021); Gagosian (2020, 2021); Secession, Vienna (2018); Museo Madre, Naples (2015). His group exhibitions include amongst many others NKW, Vienna (2022); Galaxy Museum of Contemporary Art, Chongqing, China (2020); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); Leopold Museum, Vienna (2018).

His works feature in major public collections such as Dior Flagship Store, Vienna; Allbertina, Vienna; Belvedere Museum, Vienna; Beth Rudin DeWoody/The Bunker Artspace, West Palm Beach, USA; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; Rubell Museum, Miami, USA.