

KÜNSTLERHAUS VEREINIGUNG
K Ü N S T L E R H A U S

**DU SOLLST
DIR EIN BILD
MACHEN**

23.10.2025–8.2.2026

ENGLISH

CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

The exhibition *Du sollst dir ein Bild machen* [You Shall Make for Yourself an Image] tells of the imaginative power of the religious experience, its visual counterpart in the tradition of Christian imagery, and how these are interpreted by contemporary artists. The exhibition's focus is on works by 42 artists who approach Christian iconography from critical, but also from loving, humorous, and feminist perspectives, thus enabling new, contemporary viewpoints of motifs that have been handed down across centuries. The concept and direction the exhibition takes does not seek to create superficial provocation or loud protest, choosing to take a more differentiated approach, searching for commonalities and striving to promote dialogue between contemporary art and religion.

Religion, like art, is an essential trait of humanity. Both engage with the fundamental questions of human existence: questions of meaning, the world, and our being. Religion renders the unfamiliar familiar, while art often contrasts an unfamiliar realm with the familiar world. Church and art are connected by the irrational, the mysterious, and above all by the imagination and creative power to construct a world with its own order and laws – a world that in turn reflects back on our lives and tells us about our existence. A wealth of such worlds is revealed in *Du sollst dir ein Bild machen*.

How do artists approach Christian pictorial themes in the present? How are these themes integrated into their concepts, how are they quoted, transformed, and reinterpreted? What topics are they trying to raise, and how strongly do these have religious and spiritual connotations? The exhibition addresses these questions in seven chapters: Icon, (False) Holyness, Cross, Resurrection, Divinity, Madonna, and Last Supper.

ICON

“She’s an icon!” or “Such iconic images!” – these are phrases we often hear in popular culture. They praise exceptional skill or distinctive artistic style, while also evoking a certain kind of staging: a pose, a gesture, a visual composition. Actors and musicians, for example, sometimes depict themselves as saints in photographs or videos, consciously – or perhaps intuitively – drawing on Christian imagery. The word *icon* comes from the Greek *eikón*, meaning “image” or “likeness”. In art history, it refers specifically to a sacred image, a usage that later evolved into today’s figurative sense: a person or object seen as the embodiment of particular values, ideals, or a way of life. Something “iconic” is symbolic, style-defining, and instantly recognizable. Such people or objects often inspire unreserved admiration, achieving a kind of cult status.

The works in the introductory section of the exhibition fulfil those criteria in very different ways. A wing and a ladder, the fold of a drape, the shade of a colour, the Virgin Mary and Jesus: here, we encounter a multitude of symbols, quotations, and figures from religious and art history that are considered iconic. Many of these – such as the cross or the Pietà – will be explored in greater depth later in the exhibition.

Renate Bertlmann
Lena Lapschina
Lois Hechenblaikner
Sumi Anjuman
Drago Persic
Teodora Axente
Aron Demetz
Sissa Micheli
Sylvie Riant
Markus Wilfling
Manfred Erjautz
Philipp Haslbauer, Marco Schmid, Aljosa Smolic
Johannes Rass
Billi Thanner

1 RENATE BERTLMANN

Renate Bertlmann approaches religion and the church with playful critique, a rejection of institutional authority, and a pointed examination of its repressive effects on women. Her works serve as artistic rebuttals to religiously rooted social norms. In *Zärtlicher Christus* (Tender Christ, 2019) – a classic crucifix entirely covered with latex nubs – she transforms one of Western culture's most potent symbols into a tactile, erotically charged object. This radical feminist critique of religion profoundly questions conventions, creating both a provocation and a poetic proposition: a reimagining of belief, body, gender, and sexuality through tender, life-affirming symbolism.

1a *Zärtlicher Christus*, 2019

Digital photograph on BacklitTex
Courtesy of Silvia Steinek Galerie

1b *Regret – Prozession*, 1999

Fired glazed clay, porcelain, wood, artificial snow, metal, plexiglass
Courtesy of Silvia Steinek Galerie

2 LENA LAPSCHINA

At the entrance, visitors are greeted by Lena Lapschina's *Curators' Water* (2014). On a table, clear glass bottles stand neatly in rows. Each is numbered, its contents noted on the label, alongside a playful disclaimer: "Effects may vary with personality." Across religions, water is a universal symbol of purification and life. In Christianity, baptism marks the initiate's entry into the church, traditionally through the pouring of holy water. In Catholic churches, small basins of holy water are placed at the entrance so that worshippers may cross themselves in remembrance of their baptism. Lapschina's work humorously replaces the priest with the curator, suggesting that in the art world, the Christian promise of eternal life finds its counterpart in admission to the art-historical canon – though here, it comes in a limited edition.

Curators' Water, 2014

Installation, glass bottles

LOIS HECHENBLAIKNER

Lois Hechenblaikner juxtaposes historical black-and-white photographs of Tyrol – many by Armin Kniely, a freelance agricultural engineer from 1936 to 1970 – with his own colour images, illustrating the region's transformation from rural tradition to mass tourism. The surprising formal parallels and strong contrasts within paired images prompt reflection on cultural change. The image pairs often have a religious connotation and open up exciting opportunities for interpretation between nostalgia, criticism, and (belief in) progress.

Prozession Südtirol, Burggrafenamt //

Table-Tänzerin open air, Schatzi Après Ski Bar, Ischgl, 2007

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

3 Kreuze // Siegerehrung Gager Mayrhofen, 2001

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

Prozession mit Mutter Gottes //

Paris Hilton Rich Prosecco, Südtirol, P1 Kronplatz Talstation, 2005

B/W photograph: Leo Bährendt

Kreuz am Weg, Wolkenstein //

Lifteröffnung mit Schützen, Reith im Alpbachtal, 2001

B/W photograph: Leo Bährendt

Maria hat geholfen, Votivtafeln //

Rodelhütte, Schaukasten mit Table-Tänzerinnen, Sölden, 2001

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

Herrgottswinkel: Heiligstes Herz Jesu //

Champagnerflasche im Herrgottswinkel der Champagnerhütte, Ischgl, 2008

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

Herrgottswinkel, Bauern beim Essen //

5 Männer mit Hemd-Aufschrift „Bei Orientierungslosigkeit abgeben an ...“

Ischgl, Idalp, 2010

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

Gemälde, Jesus im Boot //

Hansi Hinterseer im Boot, Fanwanderung Hahnenkamm Kitzbühel, 2006

Painting: Unknown

Krippe // Tänzerinnen in Swatch-Kugel, Saalbach-Hinterglemm, 2006

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

Schäfer u. Schafherde, Gurgler Tal, Ötztal. //

Hinterseer Kalvarienberg-Szene, Kitzb. Hahnenkamm, 2007

B/W photograph: Armin Kniely

4 SUMI ANJUMAN

In Sumi Anjuman's *I am the Mother too* (2019), part of the *Somewhere Else Than Here* series, a figure – perceived as male – stands in a meadow, draped in a heavy blue cloak over a white dress while holding a baby. The allusion to the Virgin Mary is clear: in Christian art, Mary's blue robe denotes heavenly purity, divinity, loyalty, and regal dignity. Anjuman addresses the fears and struggles of Bangladesh's severely oppressed and socially isolated LGBTQI+ community, alongside its dreams and aspirations.

I am the Mother too, 2019

Digital photograph

5 DRAGO PERSIC

Drago Persic's paintings frequently draw on motifs from the old masters. His work is preceded by a profound engagement with colour and pigment. In the series *Bergotte** (2024/2025), painted in the style of old masters, the drapery, gesture, and colour palette inevitably echo Christian iconography. Several paintings depict Christ dressed in a red undergarment, symbolising his humanity and suffering, and a blue robe, signifying divinity. The ultramarine shade of blue also evokes the Holy Mother (see text on Sumi Anjuman).

- * In Marcel Proust's *The Prisoner*, the gravely ill protagonist Bergotte visits a Vermeer exhibition after reading about a colour detail in a painting on display there that he had never noticed before. Standing in front of the masterpiece and seeing the detail, he becomes so excited that he dies.

Bergotte #10 (J. Bautista Maíno / Cyanblau), 2025

Bergotte #11 (A. Kauffmann / Waid, Indigo, Azurit, Magenta, Manganviolett), 2025

Bergotte #12 (P. Veccio / Heliogenblau, Chinacridon Violett), 2025

Bergotte #13 (A. Carracci / Ultramarinegrün, Fastogen Rosa), 2025

Bergotte #14 (G. Bellini / Lapislazuli, Ultramarin, Fastogen Rot), 2025

Bergotte #15 (F. Lippi / Lapislazuli, Ultramarin, Pyrrolrot), 2025

Bergotte #16 (J. Pontormo / Leithners Blau, Molybdänrot), 2025

Bergotte #17 (Raffaello / Manganblau, Terra Ercolano, Bleizinngelb, Gummi Gutti), 2025

Bergotte #18 (G. Reni / YInMn Blau, Italienischer Ocker), 2025

Bergotte #19 (A. Corregio / YInMn Blau, Magenta), 2025

Oil on canvas

6 **TEODORA AXENTE**

Descent (2014) by Teodora Axente portrays an introverted young woman whose face and body are covered by a translucent veil. The figure, Madonna-like, seems to receive divine protection through the shimmering layer. Axente often uses cheap materials – such as plastic film – to infuse her models with tangible texture and an illusionistic richness reminiscent of old masters. She cites artists like Jan van Eyck and Diego Velázquez as influences, and draws inspiration from Orthodox church ceremonies.

Descent, 2014

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of Collection Hugo Voeten

7 **ARON DEMETZ**

Aron Demetz from Val Gardena in South Tyrol – a region renowned for its Christian wood-carving tradition – transcends its often limiting conventions, employing a contemporary visual language while retaining the human figure and exploring themes of corporeality and soul. Through masterful sculpture, he renders human fragility and the constraints of our condition palpable in wood. His works – whether male and female figures facing each other in an Adam and Eve composition, a charred figure clad in white armour (in the exhibition section on the “Cross”), or evocations of the Pygmalion myth* and having the power to create a human figure – always seem imbued with spiritual resonance.

- * Pygmalion is a legendary figure from Greek mythology: a sculptor who created a statue of such beauty that he fell in love with it. The goddess Aphrodite eventually brings the statue to life, and Pygmalion marries her.

7a *Ohne Titel*, 2025
Wood and acrylic paint

7b *Ohne Titel*, 2020
Maple wood

8 **SISSA MICHELI**

In Sissa Micheli's *The Folds of the Soul – The Female Jesus* (2024), a young woman stands with a red cloth tossed into the air, unfurling before her face like a sculpture. The textiles draping across face and body in the photographs navigate the tension between concealment and revelation, protection and vulnerability. Micheli draws inspiration from the eternal fold, as in Gilles Deleuze's notion of the fold – a central motif in baroque metaphysics encompassing both "folds of matter" and "folds of the soul" that are distinct yet interwoven.*

* Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

The Folds of the Soul – The Female Jesus, 2024
Archival pigment print

9 **SYLVIE RIAANT**

Sylvie Riant produces fragile and enigmatic artworks by exploring myths and fairy tales through a personal, intimate lens. She fashions a wing relief from her favourite medium – wax – that, when backlit with neon, resembles a melancholic found object, evoking both the ill-fated Icarus of Greek mythology and angelic figures of Christian iconography. In the video *Clays swell and shrink or EMETH METH EMETH* (2025), Riant references creation myths in which a human man is formed from clay (as in Mesopotamian, Judeo-Christian, and Islamic traditions), but here the created being is female, confidently celebrating the creative power of women. In *plus étrange que* (2024), inspired by biblical scripture, Riant seeks imaginative visual interpretations of creation.

9a *Rafanielo III*, 2025
Microcrystalline, paraffin textile, plexiglass, iron, LED lights

9b *Clays swell and shrink or EMETH METH EMETH*, 2025
Video, 5:11 min
Camera: Roland Seppi
Editing: Sylvie Riant, Roland Seppi
With Petra Massardi

9b *plus étrange que*, 2024
Video, 7:56 min
Camera: Sylvie Riant, Walter Laner
Editing: Sylvie Riant, Walter Laner
Grading: Roland Seppi
With Petra Massardi, Patrick Lanznaster

10 **MARKUS WILFLING**

With *O. T. (Gott würfelt nicht)* (God Doesn't Play Dice, 2008), Markus Wilfling invokes Albert Einstein's remark rejecting the idea of a personal god while also refusing to accept pure chance as the ultimate principle. The minimalist sculpture consists of 44 white dice arranged in two intersecting double rows, their upward faces determined by chance. The cross shape evokes the divine; the strict geometry of the cubes suggests peace and order. Yet the randomness of their arrangement alludes to the mysteries of faith and the unknowability of the world.

O. T. (Gott würfelt nicht), 2008

Plastic dice

Courtesy of Sammlung Johannes Messner

11 **MANFRED ERJAUTZ**

Can a toy become both artwork and devotional object? Manfred Erjautz's Lego cross, created for Vienna's Jesuit Church in 2004, provoked lively debate. Four years later, it was destroyed and partially stolen. "Lego has great value for children," the artist observes, adding that religious themes deserve to be approached with seriousness and respect. Yet Lego is also fragile: what is built can be taken apart – but also rebuilt. This fragility is central to his choice of material for the cross. The version shown here – a cross incorporating an *Apollo* capsule and landing module – prompts further reflection: "Where is God? Is God in outer space?"*

* Manfred Erjautz in conversation with the author in his studio on 16 December 2024.

Cross: Apollo grey, 2005

Lego, aluminium

12 **PHILIPP HASLBAUER, MARCO SCHMID, ALJOSA SMOLIC**

"In the present era of increasing advancement of artificial intelligence into the existential realms of meaning and faith, the installation *Deus in Machina* (2024/2025) provocatively asks whether an AI-driven machine might serve as a spiritual interlocutor – capable of providing solace or engaging deeply in questions of faith. The interactive installation invites viewers to converse with an AI manifesting as Jesus – not as a technological gimmick but as a serious partner in exploring one's personal and spiritual concerns. Participate in the experiment and discover whether this digital Jesus is nothing more than mere spectacle or able to foster genuine religious experience!"

Deus in Machina, 2024

AI installation

Courtesy of Peterskapelle Luzern / Hochschule Luzern (IRRL)

Art Partnership: Brigitte Löw-Radeschnig

13 JOHANNES RASS

In his photo series *These Viennese Saints* (2021/2025), Johannes Rass draws on familiar Christian motifs – saints, Pietà (the Mother of God with the dead body of Jesus), Adam and Eve – reimagining them through charged poses, gestures, and symbols such as the apple and the snake to craft visually compelling images that interrogate gender roles and stereotypes. *Furry Drops* (2021/2025) is presented as a photographic work and an installation (in the section on the “Cross”). Both refer to “Mary’s miracle” of blood-weeping Madonna figures, and to the apple, the forbidden fruit of paradise: Adam and Eve ate the apple from the tree of knowledge, thus bringing sin into the world. This original sin, inherent in all human beings at birth, causes humanity to be separated from God. In Christian belief, Jesus’ death on the cross was to atone for this guilt and reopen the way to God.

These Viennese Saints, 2021/2025

Mixed media, action (9 Nov. 2021), photograph,
relief print with partial lacquer finish on Aludibond
Concept, realisation: Johannes Rass, Faina Willenig
Digital post-processing: Johannes Rass
Photographs: Jolly Schwarz

14 BILLI THANNER

Billi Thanner created her installation *Himmelsleiter* (Ladder to Heaven) for St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna in 2021. The neon ladder began at the baptistery, pierced the vault, and continued outside to the summit of the south tower. This vivid work of light art attracted widespread positive attention and brought the artist recognition far beyond Austria’s borders. Thanner’s work draws inspiration from the Old Testament story of Jacob’s dream while fleeing, where “a stairway was set upon the earth, and its top reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending” (Genesis 28:12). God promises Jacob salvation, a future, hope, and blessings for himself and his descendants. Thus the ladder, or stairway, becomes a symbol connecting heaven and earth, the divine and the human, as well as one of hope and peace.

Himmelsleiter, 2024

Neon, aluminium

(FALSE) HOLYNESS

Martin Kippenberger's sculpture *Fred the Frog Rings the Bell* (1990) – depicting a crucified green frog – is the focal point of this exhibition section. In 2008, at the opening exhibition of Museion – the new museum for modern and contemporary art in Bolzano (South Tyrol, Italy) – it provoked an art scandal that dominated public discourse for months. Many felt that their religious values had been affronted. Accusations of blasphemy hung in the air, and the indignation among large sections of the public and political establishment was considerable. Countless letters to the editor were written, public protests were staged, and prayer vigils – such as an “hour of atonement with a cross” – were held in opposition to the work. Even Pope Benedict XVI, on summer holiday in South Tyrol, intervened, declaring that the piece “hurt the religious feelings of many people who see the cross as a symbol of God's love and our salvation.”* The Museion's management failed to convey the intended meaning of the work or to build a constructive dialogue with the public. Calls from citizens and politicians to remove the sculpture went unheeded, though during the exhibition it was at one point hidden behind a wooden casing (!) and then later relocated from the entrance hall to a small upper-floor gallery room. It is surprising how little progress was made in fostering a substantive theological discussion about the cross, as well as on contemporary artistic practice. For Kippenberger, the crucified comic figure was his response to the Jesus kitsch he had encountered during a stay at a spa in Tyrol. And there is indeed still lively activity – some of it quite boozy – under the crosses tucked into so-called “Lord's Corners” today. The artist commissioned a religious woodcarver to produce several versions of the frog – conceived as an ironic self-portrait and pointed provocation against hypocrisy and hollow piety.

* In a letter to South Tyrolean SVP politician Franz Pahl, quoted in: “Papst kritisiert ‘gekreuzigten Frosch’”, *Die Presse*, 9 September 2008, <https://www.diepresse.com/409673/papst-kritisiert-gekreuzigten-frosch>.

Siggi Hofer
Thomas Sterna
Martin Kippenberger
Deborah Sengl

15 SIGGI HOFER

In *Gott ist aus Gold* (God is Made of Gold, 2009), the gable roofs, balconies, and dark wood of Siggie Hofer's house fragments are reminiscent of the traditional farmhouses of South Tyrol, where the artist is from. On the exterior wall, the word "GOTT" (GOD) is emblazoned in oversized white capital letters, while along the lowest gallery, the inscription reads "Gott ist aus Gold". Do the plain architecture and modest materials of these models embody the traditional Christian value system, and does the word "God" point to the (ostensibly) profound significance of religion and faith? Do the fragile remnants of the house reflect the vulnerability of belief, or perhaps the hypocrisy of religious life? And what is suggested by the noble colour gold, so richly charged with symbolism in the sacred sphere? This is a work open to many interpretations.

Gott ist aus Gold, 2009

Gott ist aus Gold, 2009

Wood, partially stained, fired clay

Courtesy of Dom Museum Wien, Otto Mauer Contemporary,

Acquired by Otto-Mauer-Fonds

16 THOMAS STERNA

Thomas Sterna's photograph *Ohne Titel (Froschtattoo)* (Untitled (Frog Tattoo), 2009) depicts the bare lower leg of a man adorned with a tattoo of Martin Kippenberger's crucified frog. With this image, the artist delivers a sly, tongue-in-cheek commentary on the Museion art scandal in Bolzano (see above). At the 2013 exhibition *Crux – Das Symbol des Kreuzes* (The Symbol of the Cross) at the Diocesan Museum in South Tyrol's Hofburg Brixen, the work was met with a different reception: it was removed from display at the instigation of the then Vicar General, Josef Matzner. Sterna's neon piece *Frosch fromm fröhlich frei* (Frog Pious Cheerful Free, 2013) offers a wry yet playful reflection on the social conditions shaping artistic production, while also serving as a spirited plea for artistic freedom.

Ohne Titel (Froschtattoo), 2009

Digital photograph

Frosch fromm fröhlich frei, 2013

Neon scripture

17 MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

See introductory text “(False) Holyness“

Fred the Frog Rings the Bell, 1990

Wood, varnish, nails

Courtesy of Ansammlung Lebenberg

Kippenberger Superstar, 1992

Plastic

Courtesy of Sammlung Johannes Messner

18 DEBORAH SENGL

“Art cannot and should not proselytise or therapise, but it should reveal and portray what is wrong with our world,”* emphasises Deborah Sengl. In *Von Schafen und Wölfen* (Of Sheep and Wolves, 2008), a hybrid being dressed in priestly liturgical robes, bearing the real head of a sheep and the bared teeth of a wolf, exposes the hypocrisy of religious dignitaries. “I use animals as metaphors because I think portraying people is distracting. Physiognomy is distracting; everyone begins to form a subjective opinion of the person.” Animals, by contrast, “are simply representative of a character trait, a form of action, a behaviour,”*** Sengl explains.

* Deborah Sengl in conversation with Günther Oberhollenzer and Andreas Hoffer, in: Essl Museum (ed.), *Deborah Sengl. Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, exhibition catalogue, Klosterneuburg: Edition Sammlung Essl, 2014, pp. 130–138, here p. 138.

** Ibid., p. 136.

Von Schafen und Wölfen, 2008

Compound, wax, textiles, prayer stool

Courtesy of Georg Thaler

CROSS

The cross is a transcultural, universal symbol of life, connection, orientation, and transcendence. In Christianity, it is the central symbol of faith. It commemorates the death of Jesus on the cross, through which, according to Christian belief, humanity was redeemed from sin and death. It stands for suffering, sacrifice, love, redemption, and hope. Although originally an instrument of torture, it became a symbol of new life and reconciliation with God. Those of Christian faith wear it, pray before it, and adorn their churches and homes with it. The depiction of Jesus on the cross has undergone significant change over the course of art history: in the Romanesque period, he appeared as a divine victor; in the Gothic era, as a suffering human – marking the shift from distant God to compassionate redeemer. In the Renaissance and Baroque, the scene was idealized or dramatized; in the twentieth century, it became a symbol of human suffering and social crisis. Today, the cross is an ambiguous symbol; it can bear religious, political, existential, or critical meaning, and its use in art ranges from expressive figuration to minimalist abstraction, depending on the artist and context.

Arnulf Rainer
Aron Demetz
Christian Eisenberger
Manfred Erjautz
Johannes Rass
Andres Serrano
Esther Strauß
Adrian Paci
Hermann Nitsch
Timm Ulrichs

19 **ARNULF RAINER**

Arnulf Rainer incorporates the cross as a central formal element in his informal and spontaneously intuitive style of painting. Crosses recur throughout his entire oeuvre. Yet Rainer does not intend to create sacred art, avoiding theological dimensions and religious considerations. When asked what makes depictions of Christ's head and the cross so compelling for him – why he is continually drawn to paint them – he once replied: “Constant embarrassment and mental destitution. I usually can't find specific motifs in this world that give me enough impetus to work. [...] It's no particular religious calling that drives me to do it.”* Whether one believes him remains open to question.

* Arnulf Rainer, quoted by Otto Mauer, in: Friedhelm Mennekes (ed.), *Arnulf Rainer. Umkreisen und Durchdringen. Christusgesichter*, Stuttgart: Verlag katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986, p. 23.

19a *Kreuz mit grünem Handschuh*, 1985
Oil on wood with appliqué
Courtesy of Galerie Ruberl

19b *Drei Kreuze*, 1993–1995
Oil on wood with appliqué
Courtesy of Ronald Koppelent

20 **ARON DEMETZ**

See text at number 7

Ohne Titel, 2021
Charred wood and plaster

21 **CHRISTIAN EISENBERGER**

For Christian Eisenberger, anything can become art. His work ranges from exuberant, playful, and humorous to pared-back, minimalist, and to the point. Crosses are a favourite subject. Alongside *Zuckerkreuz* (Sugar Cross, 2009), *O. T.* (2007) can be seen, an old double-leaf door found in a Viennese apartment, cut to form a cross and mounted on a pedestal – a work of clarity and simplicity. Was the artist thinking of Jesus' words “I am the door”? (John 10:9)

21a *O. T.*, 2007
Wooden door
Courtesy of Gustav Schörghofer

21b *Zuckerkreuz*, 2009
Sugar on canvas
Courtesy of Ronald Koppelent

22 **MANFRED ERJAUTZ**

Eisenberger's piece directly engages with that of Manfred Erjautz: a historic ivory figure of Christ, vandalised and missing its left arm. The artist replaced the arm with a gilded door handle. The precious cross usually hangs on the high altar of the Church of St. Andrä in Graz.

Opener, 2022

300-year-old ivory carving, glass and brass cross, brass doorknob with protective plate
Courtesy of Alois Kölbl

23 **JOHANNES RASS**

See text at number 13

Furry Drops / Dass Du einkehrst unter mein Dach, 2021/2025

Wood, steel, copper, lead, faux fur, felt, earth

24 **ANDRES SERRANO**

Andres Serrano is best known for provocative photographs exploring religious themes. The artist uses religious iconography to interrogate power structures, hypocrisy, and society's relationship with faith, while at the same time maintaining a sincere engagement with spirituality and the impact of sacred imagery. In his work cycle *Holy Works* (2011), Serrano stages Christian figures including Jesus, Mary, and Mary Magdalene in highly stylised studio shots reminiscent of classical religious art (see also the sections on "Resurrection" and "Madonna"). Compared to his earlier, more confrontational works, these are approached with greater reverence, though without relinquishing his critical examination of the staging of religion.

Two Christs, 2011

From the series *Holy Works*

Cibachrome

Courtesy of Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

The Nail, 2011

From the series *Holy Works*

C-Print

Courtesy of Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

25 ESTHER STRAUß

High in the exhibition space hangs a liturgical vestment in the form of a cross: *Schweiss Blut Urin Milch Kot* (Sweat Blood Urine Milk Faeces, 2024), is the title of the work by Esther Strauß. While it invites comparison to the work of Vienna Actionism, especially Hermann Nitsch, important differences emerge. The vestment is not that of a priest but a birthing gown, sewn for the artist and worn during the birth of her second child, the cloth still bearing the ingrained traces of her bodily excretions. By contrast, the Actionists' performances seem almost contrived. Strauß confronts the persistent taboos around the natural process of childbirth and the bodies of birthing women, particularly in religious contexts.

Schweiss Blut Urin Milch Kot, 2024

Birthing gown made of pink cotton fabric with plain weave

26 ADRIAN PACI

In *Home to go* (2001), Adrian Paci depicts himself kneeling, wearing only a loincloth, with the roof of a house upon his back. In this performance, documented in photographs, Paci reflects on his own migration story and his connection to his origins. The image inevitably evokes Christ carrying the cross – or perhaps a fallen angel. Is the roof a symbol of home and protection, or of oppressive burden? Is carrying the roof a metaphor for the weight of remembering?

Home to go, 2001

Photographs

Courtesy of KULTUM – Zentrum für Gegenwart, Kunst und Religion in Graz

27 HERMANN NITSCH

"I have always seen art as a religious debate," proclaimed Hermann Nitsch.* One of the principal figures of Vienna Actionism, he had pursued his Orgy-Mystery-Theatre (OMT) since the 1960s – a celebration of existence conceived as a total work of art, engaging all the senses. Incorporating all forms of art including painting, architecture, and music, alongside sacrificial rituals and Catholic liturgy, he used flesh, entrails, and blood like paint, pouring and spilling it over bodies and canvases. Following his conviction that practicing art was comparable to the work of a priest, Nitsch wore robe-like painting garments during his performances and presided over them as a "master of ceremonies".

* Hermann Nitsch, cited in: Gabriele Bösch (ed.), *Nitsch – eine Retrospektive. Werke aus der Sammlung Essl*, exhibition catalogue, Klosterneuburg: Edition Sammlung Essl 2003, p. 32.

Aktionshemd, year unknown
Blood on cotton, rope, wood
Courtesy of Ronald Koppelent

29. Aktion, Moosach 11.12.1968, 1968
Vintage silver print
Photo: Stefan Moses
Courtesy of Galerie Johannes Faber

28 TIMM ULRICHS

"I declare GOD to be my art object!" wrote Timm Ulrichs on a leaflet in 1961.* Known as a "total artist", the conceptual and performance artist enjoys playing with language, everyday objects, and iconic motifs. In *Nehmet, esset; das ist mein Leib (II) / (My Sweet Lord)* (1994), he forms a cross out of chocolate – a provocative nod to Christ's words at the Last Supper that combines religious connotations with the sensual allure of a luxury food. The edible cross also recalls the tradition of gifting chocolate bunnies at Easter.

* A facsimile can be found in: Matthias Reichert (ed.), *Timm Ulrichs. Ich, Gott & die Welt. 100 Tage – 100 Werke – 100 Autoren*, exhibition catalogue Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin, Vienna: Verlag für moderne Kunst 2020, p. 13.

Nehmet, esset; das ist mein Leib (II) / (My Sweet Lord), 1994
Wood with chocolate icing on white-stained MDF board

RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Christ symbolizes victory over death and the promise of eternal life. Early depictions often present angels or an empty tomb, while Byzantine iconography shows Christ as the saviour of the underworld. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Christ rises triumphantly from the grave, frequently idealised and bearing a victory banner. Baroque art heightened the drama and divine grandeur, whereas modern and contemporary interpretations often treat the resurrection in symbolic or abstract terms. Despite its central role in Christian belief, the resurrection has never matched the crucifixion in the breadth of its artistic representations.

Andres Serrano
Paolo Gallerani
Thomas Riess
Paul Sebastian Feichter

29 **ANDRES SERRANO**
See text at number 24

Pietà, New York, 2012
From the series *Holy Works*
C-Print
Courtesy of Galerie Johannes Faber

30 **PAOLO GALLERANI**

Paolo Gallerani's sculpture *Meditazione I–V* (1997) draws inspiration from Vittore Carpaccio's painting *Lamentation of Christ* (1510). Gallerani sculpted the body of Christ, lying upon a stone table, as a clay relief before creating negative plaster moulds – a highly complex process that gradually demolishes the original clay sculpture. Five plaster casts were made from the negative moulds, each of which was then cast in bronze. The five bronze pieces show the progressive destruction – or rather: disintegration of the sculpture, although new details, such as a shroud, are also added. On the back side of the first sculpture, a Latin inscription reads: "For since through man came death, through man also comes the resurrection from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:21).

Meditazione I–V, 1997
Bronze
Courtesy of Gustav Schörghofer

31 **THOMAS RIESS**

The paintings of Thomas Riess evoke half-remembered moments or dream images that can no longer be precisely named or understood, indistinct and nebulous at the edges of perception. Figurative elements dissolve seamlessly into abstraction; objects and bodies lose definition; faces are stripped of their individual features and become blurred. In *Transsurfing* (2024), a figure wrapped in white fabric appears to dissolve into pure light. Is Riess capturing the moment of transition from the material realm into the transcendent one?

Transsurfing, 2024
Oil on canvas

32 PAUL SEBASTIAN FEICHTER

Paul Sebastian Feichter's monumental *Lux* (2013) – rays of light rendered on a large scale – unmistakably recalls the visual language of divine light in art history. In Christian iconography, such light symbolises divine presence, holiness, and truth. Light is often used to make the supernatural or transcendent visible through halos, radiant apparitions, or – like here – beams of light. In Feichter's second work on display, a found wooden fragment of a resurrected Christ with only a single foot touching the ground, creates a striking dialogue between the two pieces.

Auferstehung, 2024

Painted wood, glass

Lux, 2013

Wood, paint, hammered metal

DIVINITY

In the Christian tradition, God is the one almighty creator who, according to the New Testament, reveals himself to humanity as the loving Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit: the Trinity. God is considered just, merciful, and holy, at once standing above the world (transcendent) and acting within it (immanent). Christians believe they can enter into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ – in prayer, in the Bible, and through the sacraments. God the Father is conventionally depicted as a dignified elderly man with a long white beard, often wearing regal robes, enthroned or hovering above the world – symbols of wisdom, omnipotence, and eternity. Contemporary artists, particularly women and non-binary creatives, increasingly question these conventions and seek new images for God and the divine.

Ursula Beiler
Siegfried Anzinger
Margot Pilz, Victoria Coeln
Evelyn Kreinecker

33 **URSULA BEILER**

In 2008, Ursula Beiler created a large roadside sign reading “Grüss Göttin” (“Greetings, Goddess”). From 2009 to 2016, it stood at the Kufstein Nord motorway entrance to Tyrol, and since 2019 it has been installed at the Innsbruck-Mitte motorway roundabout. The work sparked debate, sometimes running hot, with views ranging from conservative outrage to progressive support. The sign was repeatedly sprayed, painted over, plastered with paper, and damaged. Each time, it was repaired and reinstalled. With wit and directness, Beiler playfully challenges the male-dominated image of God and the ingrained linguistic and religious glorification of masculinity, offering a feminist intervention into public space intended to stimulate reflection and dialogue.

Replik der Tafel „GRÜSS GÖTTIN“, 2020

Coated aluminium plate with adhesive letters

Courtesy of Verein Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck

34 **SIEGFRIED ANZINGER**

In his paintings, Siegfried Anzinger portrays God the Father as an old man with a beard, yet stripped of regal grandeur and otherworldliness, appearing instead entirely human – in one work, he casually creates a duck while sitting in a bathtub. For Anzinger, execution is more significant than subject matter: if viewers immediately recognise the theme, he hopes they will take the time to pause and reflect on the artistic choices, such as the relationship between, for example, the figures of God the Father and the animal.

Erschaffung eines Hasen, 2000

Erschaffung einer Ente, 2001

Distemper on canvas

Courtesy of ALBERTINA, Vienna – The Essl Collection

35 **MARGOT PILZ, VICTORIA COELN**

The light sculpture *Göttin schuf Eva* (Goddess Created Eve, 2021/2025) by media artist Margot Pilz and light artist Victoria Coeln reimagines the creation story from the Book of Genesis. In the biblical account, “The Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken from the man, and he brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:22). Pilz considers this an affront. In a loose drawing that is not without humour, the artist reinterprets the act of creation, visually referencing Michelangelo’s famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel in Rome (*The Creation of Adam*, 1508–1512). Presented as a light projection onto the Vienna River during the *Wiener Lichtblicke* festival 2021, the work casts the creation act in a decidedly feminist light.

Göttin schuf Eva, 2021/2025

Light art installation in situ, 2 diachromes, 2 analogue projectors

36 EVELYN KREINECKER

Evelyn Kreinecker increasingly found herself alienated from the idealised and doctrinal images presented as religious truths – particularly the prevalence of male creators, redeemers, saviours, and saints. This led to her series *S/E* (She, 2020), depicting a woman in the traditional poses of Christ as healer, saviour, blessing, and teacher. “These images are much closer to reality,” the artist notes, “because in our world, it is mostly women who heal, give life, save, care, comfort, teach, and bless.”* Kreinecker paints self-assured portraits of strong women, drawing freely from art history with boldness, no excessive respect, and a goodly portion of pathos.

- * Evelyn Kreinecker in conversation with the author in her studio, 19 February 2021.

Die Weisheit, 2020

From the series *S/E*

Acrylic, lacquer, charcoal, oil on canvas

MADONNA

The Madonna is one of the most powerful and symbolically charged motifs in art history. For centuries, images of the Virgin Mary have shaped not only religious imagination but also social ideals of femininity. In Christian iconography, she is most often portrayed as serene, gentle, and transfigured – a virgin mother who is pure, passive, loving, and suffering. This image is deeply rooted in culture and has been idealised in art for centuries. Mary Magdalene is considered to be the contrasting figure – a repentant sinner, often eroticised, referencing “bad” femininity. This Madonna/Whore dichotomy, as feminist theory has long emphasised, reduces women’s identity to two opposing extremes: morally pure but sexually disempowered, or sexually active but socially condemned. From the perspective of feminist art criticism, the Madonna is therefore not an “innocent” religious image, but a projection surface for patriarchal norms – an ideological construct and ideal image shaped by male artists to reinforce control over women’s bodies and role models. New images of the Madonna are urgently needed, and several are presented here.

Leslie De Melo
Anouk Lamm Anouk
Guillaume Bruère
VALIE EXPORT
Marina Abramović
Ina Loitzl
Julia Krahn
Andres Serrano
Bettina Rheims
Irene Andessner

37 **LESLIE DE MELO**

Leslie De Melo is “an artist with truly global interests,” says Berthold Ecker. “This may be due to his origins – Africa, India, and Europe provided him with diverse cultural opportunities, meanings, and perspectives – as well as to his nature that is characterized by an unusual openness, which breaks through firmly established cultural entities, questions conventions, and amalgamates them into new connections.” This sensibility extends to his religious imagery. Ecker points out that his vividly coloured Madonna with Child, while recognisably the Mother of God, incorporates symbols that expand the statement, such as the mythical world tree and pronounced female sex(ual) characteristics – affirmations of sensuality and fertility.* De Melo seeks to demystify these devotional images and instead “create a new, more universal image of the mother and child.”**

* Berthold Ecker, “On Leslie De Melo’s Work as a Painter”, in: Berthold Ecker, Semirah Heilingsetzer (eds.), *Leslie De Melo. A Song in Praise of Beauty. Works from 1995 to 2018*, Weitra: Bibliothek der Provinz 2019, pp. 6–9, here p. 6 and p. 8.

** Email from the artist to the author, 1 February 2025.

Madonna, 2002

Madonna, 2002

Oil on canvas

38 **ANOUK LAMM ANOUK**

“No age, no gender, no origin” is the credo of Anouk Lamm Anouk. Church, religion, and iconography are themes that Anouk has repeatedly reflected on and taken up in their work for many years. *Quaint Sunday/Mary’s Penis N°3* (2024) presents a reimagined Pietà in which Mary is depicted as a trans woman. She cradles the dead body of her son, as in the traditional image, but has a penis, which in turn is held by Jesus. Blood flows from Mary’s arm. The work offers both a critical and tender re-examination of Christian iconography and its traditional roles.

Quaint Sunday/Mary’s Penis N°3, 2024

Acrylic on linen

Courtesy of Studio Anouk Lamm Anouk

39 GUILLAUME BRUÈRE

Guillaume Bruère reinterprets motifs from medieval Christian art with emotional intensity and a contemporary sensibility. He describes his process of painting in front of the originals in the museum, as “I am there, and it paints within me.”* Bruère has worked in museums in Zurich, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, and Berlin. The three works shown here were drawn in 2018 in the medieval collection of the Alte Galerie in Graz for a solo exhibition at KULTUM in Graz. They were inspired by a Christmas picture from Admont made in 1470. The artist varies the degree of abstraction, always using his expressive strokes.

- * Cf. Johannes Rauchenberger, “Guillaume Bruère”, in: Katrin Bucher Trantow, Johannes Rauchenberger, Barbara Steiner (eds.), *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung. Zeitgenössische Kunst reflektiert das Christentum*, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh 2018, p. 179.

14.02.2018, 2018

15.02.2018, 2018

16.02.2018, 2018

Oil pastel, coloured pencil, and watercolour on paper

Courtesy of KULTUM – Zentrum für Gegenwart, Kunst und Religion in Graz

40 VALIE EXPORT

VALIE EXPORT implements her feminist art to deconstruct Madonna images as a patriarchal ideal. In her photographic series with titles like *Die Putzmadonna/Die Putzfrau* or *Die Geburtenmadonna* (Cleaning Madonna or Birth Madonna, 1976), the artist shows the Holy Mary in the poses of canonical Madonna paintings by Michelangelo and Titian, but replaces the Christ child with household appliances – a washing machine, an iron, a vacuum cleaner. This is VALIE EXPORT's way of playfully yet pointedly challenging the images of women shaped by ecclesiastical art, which to this day is strongly dominated by a male perspective: the bourgeois ideal of the housewife and mother.

Die Putzmadonna/Die Putzfrau, 1976

Ohne Titel, 1976

Photographs

Courtesy of VALIE EXPORT

Die Geburtenmadonna, 1976

C-Print

Courtesy of VALIE EXPORT

41 **MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ**

Marina Abramović frequently engages with spiritual and religious themes, describing herself as spiritual rather than religious. In performances and images reminiscent of Madonna iconography, she explores motherhood, femininity, protection, sacrifice, and their intersections with pain and devotion. In *Vladka* (2007), the performance artist appears as the Holy Mary, pointing resolutely to the female sex of her infant Jesus. The photo was taken when a family asked the artist to look after their daughter. Abramović sentimentally remarked that if she had a daughter, she might have one day become a famous artist. With the consent of the parents, she was photographed with the child.*

* This anecdote can be found in the short text of an exhibition poster by Galerie Krinzinger showing this photo, available in the gallery's web shop, see <https://www.galerie-krinzinger-shop.at/art-poster-shop/kunst-plakate/#cc-m-product-14855879022>.

Vladka, 2007

Pigment print on Harman gloss

Courtesy of Marina Abramović Archives and Galerie Krinzinger Wien

42 **INA LOITZL**

Ina Loitzl also draws on religious iconography to explore and critically reflect on cultural and social taboos – particularly those connected with the female body. *Madonna Lactans* is a popular art-historical motif showing the Virgin Mary breastfeeding the baby Jesus, emphasising her role as a life-giving mother. Loitzl adopts this motif, portraying herself as a Madonna with bare breasts and her son, but feeding him with a bottle. In doing so, she questions the role of breastfeeding in motherhood and the pressure that is often placed on women. In an animated tableau vivant, she and her adult son pose as a Pietà. Everyday realities replace religious content: the pain of separation between mother and child instead of mourning the death of Christ.

Pietà, 2015

Video, 0:42 min

Madonna Lactans, 2016

Photo abrasion (monotype) on handmade paper and gold leaf, textile frame

Courtesy of Manfred Kohl

Hinter Glas, 2004

Kruzifix, 2004

Mixed media, photograph, acrylic

Art Partnership: Kilian Kropiunik

43 JULIA KRAHN

In the photo *Mutter* (Mother, 2009), Julia Krahn takes on the iconic motif of the Madonna and Child: the artist depicts herself as a mother figure with a linen cloth and carefully arranged fabric, but the child is absent – she tenderly holds only empty space in her arms. Instead of idealised maternal love, Krahn addresses loss and unfulfilled wishes.* Krahn often uses her own body in staged self-portraits to poetically reflect on familial, social, and religious ideals. In *Vater und Tochter* (Father and Daughter, 2012), she reinterprets the Pietà, placing the father in the role of the son.

* Cf. Johannes Rauchenberger, *No Museum Has God: Religion in Art in the Early 21st Century, Vol. 2: Essays IV–VI, Rooms 03–06*, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh 2015, pp. 804–805.

Mutter, 2009

Bubble print on aluminium

Courtesy of KULTUM – Zentrum für Gegenwart, Kunst und Religion in Graz

Vater und Tochter, 2012

Analogue photograph, colour print on aluminium

Courtesy of KULTUM – Zentrum für Gegenwart, Kunst und Religion in Graz

Mother's United, 2012

Video, 6:24 min

44 ANDRES SERRANO

See text at number 24

Portrait of Mary, 2011

From the series *Holy Works*

Cibachrome

Courtesy of Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

Blood Madonna, 2011

From the series *Holy Works*

Pigment print

Courtesy of Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

45 **BETTINA RHEIMS**

With the series *I.N.R.I.* (1997), photographer Bettina Rheims and philosopher Serge Bramly provoked a major controversy in France, leading even to accusations of blasphemy. Both are concerned with translating the Gospel into a contemporary visual language through photography. The triptych of the Crucifixion, showing a woman on the cross on the left panel (also the cover of a photo book of the same name published in 1998), was seen as a provocation. The crucified Man of Sorrows as a woman? Or is he “just” one of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus?

I.N.R.I., 1997 – Kreuzigung, 1997

C-Print mounted on aluminium

Courtesy of ALBERTINA, Vienna – Familiensammlung Haselsteiner

46 **IRENE ANDESSNER**

In Málaga, over 40 different statues of the Virgin Mary exist, each with a distinct name, symbolic meaning, and protective function – from distress and worry to love and good health. During Holy Week (Semana Santa), they are carried through the city in elaborate processions. Irene Andessner's *Madonna del Arte/Virgen* (2007/2008) creates the missing patron saint of art. At first glance traditional, the figure is, on closer inspection, skilfully constructed entirely from materials used for art transportation: packing blankets, bubble wrap, straps, cardboard, and wooden clamps. Photographed at the mumok in Vienna, the work comments on the post-Renaissance detachment of art from its religious origins.

Madonna del Arte/Virgen #1–4, 2007/2008

Polaroids

Courtesy of JM Gallery, Málaga

Madonna del Arte/Virgen #5, 2007/2008

Light box

Courtesy of JM Gallery, Málaga

Madonnen-Krone, 2007

Paper, wood, and plastic

Design: Ute Neuber

LAST SUPPER

The Last Supper is the meal that Jesus shared with his twelve disciples on the evening before his crucifixion. According to biblical tradition, it took place during the Jewish Passover festival in Jerusalem. Jesus broke the bread, saying: "Take, this is my body" (Mark 14:22), then passed the cup of wine and said: "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mark 14:24). With these words, he foretold his impending death and instituted what would later become the Eucharist or Holy Communion in Christianity. The Last Supper has been a popular subject throughout art history and is frequently referenced by contemporary artists. Leonardo da Vinci's mural in the monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan (1494–1498) remains the most famous depiction and continues to inspire reinterpretations. Much speculation surrounds the figures in his work – whether, for example, the person seated to the right of Jesus, traditionally identified as John, might instead be Mary Magdalene, or whether Leonardo himself is portrayed as the Apostle Thaddeus at the end of the table.

Timm Ulrichs
Irene Andessner
Margot Pilz
Sylvie Riant
Aron Demetz

47 TIMM ULRICHS

Timm Ulrichs, Irene Andessner, and Margot Pilz all reflect on the cultural and historical roles of those depicted in Leonardo's masterpiece. In 1976, Timm Ulrichs staged *The Last Supper* with friends and fellow students at the Kunstverein Hannover. Playing the role of Jesus, Ulrichs sat before a cake in the form of an open book, part of it already eaten. The words "Take. Eat, this is my body. Timm Ulrichs" were still legible. Ulrichs was among the first artists to stage the Last Supper as a reenactment and to directly quote da Vinci, paving the way for many others to come.

Lebendes Bild mit Torten-Buch, 1976

Following Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper (1493/1499), Kunstverein Hannover, 9.4.1976

Fine art pigment print on Aludibond

Photo: Ursula Reuter

48 IRENE ANDESSNER, TIMM ULRICHS

Thirty-five years later, performance artist Irene Andessner collaborated with Ulrichs on several communion performances, organised at the invitation of the Museum of Modern Art Carinthia. Three 15-minute *tableaux vivants* were enacted before a live audience. Andessner reverses the genders of the guests at the table: she takes the role of Jesus, while Ulrichs assumes the place of Mary Magdalene or John. The apostles are portrayed by women from the Carinthian art scene, alongside artists and collectors from throughout Austria, as well as Venice, Munich, and Berlin.

ABENDMAHL MMKK #3, 2011

Fine art pigment print on Aludibond

With Lisa Huber, Christine Wetzlinger-Grundnig, Barbara Kaufmann, Gertrud Strausz, Ursula Neugebauer, Timm Ulrichs, Irene Andessner, Barbara Edlinger, Ingrid Drescher, Barbara Rapp, Marinella Biscaro, Margot Fuchs, Elisabeth Rimmer
Courtesy of Galerie Walker, Klagenfurt

49 MARGOT PILZ

With members of IntAkt, a feminist artists' network, Margot Pilz staged *Das letzte Abendmahl – Hommage à Kremser Schmidt* (The Last Supper – Homage to Kremser Schmidt, 1979/2025) as a performative action reminiscent of a *tableau vivant*, photographing it in her studio. One photograph carries a handwritten note: "My homage [...] questions the religious ideas of patriarchy and is at the same time a dedication to female artists struggling for their independence." In Pilz's version, all the male figures are replaced by women: Eva Arzberger, Linda Christanell, Heidi Grundmann, Christa Hauer-Fruhmman, Monika Hubmann, Grita Insam, Angelika Kaufmann, Doris Lötsch, Frigga Lucchinetti, Helga Arietta Perz, Inge Pronay-Strasser, Cora Pongracz, Nora Petritsch, and Jana Wisniewski. The photo shown here was taken in parallel to the "official" twelve-part series and is distinctive in marking the women's children in green. Pilz, the Creator, stands behind the camera.

Das letzte Abendmahl – Hommage à Kremser Schmidt, 1979/2025

Fine art print on Aludibond

50 SYLVIE RIAN

In the video *MANDÉT* by Sylvie Riant, five people with dirty clothing and bodies wash themselves and each other with care and devotion. In the biblical account of the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, drying them with a cloth. The act of washing feet, still performed in many Christian churches on Maundy Thursday, is part of the liturgy and symbolises radical humility and service to one's fellow human beings. Riant's video translates this gesture into a secular context, yet retains its quiet dignity and message of compassion.

MANDÉT, 2024

Video, 7:56 min

Camera: Walter Laner

Editing: Sylvie Riant, Walter Laner

Grading: Roland Seppi

With Ulrike Trojer, Patrick Plattner, Werner Winkler, Christine Illmer, Kathrin Untersteiner

51 ARON DEMETZ

See text at number 7

Kelch, 2015

Wood and gold

IMPRINT

Du sollst dir ein Bild machen

Künstlerhaus

23.10.2025–8.2.2026

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Unless otherwise noted, all artist position texts were written by the curator based on conversations and correspondence with the artists and their statements.