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AUSTRIAN PAVILION  
BIENNALE ARTE 2022

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PAVILION  
CONCEPT / PUBLICATION  
CONTINUATION OF THE PAVILION  
IN VIENNA IN COOPERATION WITH *PHILEAS*

Preparations for the Austrian contribution to the 59th Biennale in Venice, commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport, are making great strides: the interplay of the groups of works by JAKOB LENA KNEBL and ASHLEY HANS SCHEIRL reflect the symmetrical architecture while the magazine being published to accompany the exhibition reflects its content. The new exhibition space of *Phileas* in Vienna will also allow visitors an adapted version of the Austrian Pavilion presentation.

For the Austrian Pavilion in Venice in 2022, Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl have conceived stage-like installations, entitled *Invitation of the Soft Machine and Her Angry Body Parts*, in which they unfurl their entire artistic cosmos – from paintings, sculptures, textile works, photographs, text and video to a fashion collection and a publication in the form of a magazine. These “spaces of desire” upset conventional notions of museum presentations and subvert the hierarchies of art and design, of high and low. They analyse the operations of the mechanism which becomes a co-producer of constructions of identity as well as the role of desire and sensory experience within this context. By reflecting on the idea of “liberation” from conventions, they open up spaces that viewers can experience by way of play, becoming protagonists in the stage-like environments.

JAKOB LENA KNEBL and ASHLEY HANS SCHEIRL focus on the situation of the symmetrical architecture of the Austrian Pavilion, that is both divided and connected by a colonnade. The two sections each bear the mark of one of the two artists. While distinguishing the two distinct positions, this also ensures that they remain in conversation with each other so as to emphasise the artist duo at appropriate points. Various materials, modes of operation, symbols and forms, for example, appear to oscillate between the two presentations, duplicated and mirrored and translated into the preferred artistic practice in each case.

JAKOB LENA KNEBL's expansive installations elude clear-cut classifications, deliberately breaking with accustomed norms. The artist's current interrogation of the 1970s, the sociopolitical issues and the history of art and design of that decade, reflects their potent influence on the present day. Key aspects in this context include identity and the possibilities of its transformation, the places of its staging, and the question of co-producers and mechanisms of exclusion.

**AUSTRIAN PAVILION · BIENNALE ARTE 2022 · 59TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA**  
**ARTISTS: JAKOB LENA KNEBL & ASHLEY HANS SCHEIRL · CURATOR: KAROLA KRAUS**

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ASHLEY HANS SCHEIRL's installation is a walk-in self-portrait as a painter. As in a theatre proscenium, we see a staggered arrangement of flat pieces of scenery, that are at the same time the layers of this fold-out painting. This scenery is made up of architectural interventions, paintings, printed wallpapers and objects of various materials. It is a walk-in, "accessible" painting and at the same time a theatre stage that is moved into and even under the auditorium, with one of the architectural peculiarities of the Pavilion being that visitors descend two steps from the entrance into the two sunken main rooms.

"The installation is characterised by a dynamic juxtaposition and intertwining of different, seemingly paradoxical spaces, styles and pictogram-style symbols, that all seek to garner the visitors' attention with their own particular devices", says Karola Kraus, curator of the Pavilion. As she goes on to say: "In turn they become protagonists in this piece, setting the scenery in motion with their bodies. This hierarchical division into background / foreground, grand gesture / minor detail, "ingenious" expressionism / décor, object / subject is unsettled so as to test the libidinous economy of power relations on one's own body. We are all excited to see the outcome of this experiment."

"The Biennale Arte in Venice is the most extensive and most important international exhibition of visual art. I am delighted that Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl will be presenting their *Invitation of the Soft Machine and Her Angry Body Parts* at the Austrian Pavilion with accustomed ingenuity in 2022", says Andrea Mayer, State Secretary for Art and Culture. "On many occasions, Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl have demonstrated that they are capable of staging the relevant issues of our time in an exciting and astonishing way. Questions of social identity, artistic expression and formal stringency are negotiated in a self-reflective, open-minded and exceedingly humorous manner. An extensive and accessible education programme is intended to familiarise visitors with the artistic universe of Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl. I would like to thank the curator Karola Kraus for her prudent selection and great commitment in mounting this exhibition and wish the artists every success and visitors an inspiring experience."

## PUBLICATION SOFT MACHINE

For the publication, which will be available at the Biennale and in Walther and Franz König bookstores everywhere, Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl have conceived a glossy magazine entitled *Soft Machine*. Adopting various retro styles from the history of graphic design, the magazine as a medium offers the opportunity to contextualise the complex artistic approaches and, at the same time, to share the stage with designers, theorists, sponsors, and production partners. In addition to texts by Hussein Chalayan, Attilia Fattori Franchini, Daniel Kalt, Guilherme Pires Mata, Susanne Neuburger, Thomas Trummer and others, it will also feature interviews on current discourses and photo spreads that afford an insight into the inscrutable and profound intellectual worlds of Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl and their inspirations.



## A SIDESHOW TO THE AUSTRIAN PAVILION IN VIENNA IN COOPERATION WITH *PHILEAS*

The extensive supporting programme accompanying the 59th Venice Biennale establishes a link between Venice and Austria and is also taking place in Vienna. For the first time, Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl are accompanying the Austrian Pavilion in Venice with a sideshow that is being staged at the same time in Vienna. The venue in Vienna is the new *Phileas* location (Operring 17, 1010 Vienna) that is opening in May 2022, funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport.

In this one-of-a-kind collaboration of the Austrian Pavilion and *Phileas – A Fund for Contemporary Art*, Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl continue their endeavours to use their work to offer a space of resonance to as wide an audience as possible. In their works the artists consciously explore educational methods that are intended to enable a low-threshold entry point.

“I am particularly pleased that we are making this innovative exhibition space possible and that we are able to present a version of the Biennale exhibition at the same time in Vienna”, says Andrea Mayer, State Secretary for Art and Culture, gratified by this additional presence. “This will give a wider audience in Austria the opportunity to experience an adapted version of the elaborate Austrian Pavilion presentation – not as a substitute for Venice, but as a kind of appetizer.”

The exhibition showcases the works of Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl in conjunction with those of their students at the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts. The exhibition of student works, chosen and installed personally by Knebl and Scheirl, will be modified several times during its run, very much in keeping with the collaborative strategy pursued by the artists for their project in Venice. A rich and lively programme of public events will accompany the exhibition, including a concert, a film screening, the presentation of the Biennale Magazine and a panel discussion. This programme has received additional funding from the City of Vienna.

At their location in Operring, in future *Phileas* will be presenting an ongoing exhibition programme, bringing selected projects co-produced by *Phileas* at biennials and in museums around the world (generally in collaboration with the Austrian Ministry of Culture) back to Austria. Although these international projects are of great importance for the Austrian artists involved, they often remain largely unknown to the Austrian public because of the geographical distance involved. In addition, the new location will also serve as a hub of all *Phileas* activities – a place for public events and research into contemporary Austrian art and as the organisation’s office.

For more information about the activities of the organisation *Phileas – A Fund for Contemporary Art*, please see:  
[www.phileasprojects.org](http://www.phileasprojects.org)

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