

Press Release

Kurt Ryslavy, Collector, Wine Merchant, Sunday Painter. A Conceptual-Sculptural Intervention at the MAK Study Collection Furniture

Opening	Tuesday, 5 April 2011, 8 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Study Collection Furniture MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	6 April – 1 May, 2011
Opening Hours	Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed

Kurt Ryslavy considers himself to be a “Sunday painter.” He is a resident of Brussels, where he has worked selling Austrian wine since 1987. He is currently putting together an exhibition at the MAK, which consists of several conceptually linked parts and integrates an installation from the museum’s collection alongside his own paintings, sculptures and videos. In doing so, Ryslavy is thus setting up an ironic likeness of the art market—which, as an independent artist and a collector of contemporary art, he questions in a critical manner.

From the depot of the Collection Furniture and the MAK’s own inventory of everyday utilitarian items, Ryslavy has selected for the exhibition both art-related and non-art-related objects much like one might find at a flea market—things like simple household items and furniture, some of which exhibit clearly visible patina or even damage. His selection will also include a few magnificent showpieces and treasures—such as a baroque door or a Thonet chair from around the time the museum was founded—as well as rarities and design classics by a range of figures including Josef Hoffmann, Edmund Moiret, Achille Castiglioni, Arne Jacobsen and running all the way to Mario Bellini and Alessandro Mendini. For wine connoisseurs, Ryslavy has also smuggled in two bottle dryers as well as an artistically made carpet of his own design, which reproduces the French text of an old, rusty enamel sign—which warns that urinating and dumping refuse in its vicinity is prohibited.

The combination of the various objects in this installation is intentionally random-seeming, with the objects themselves arranged on worn-out pieces of cloth and “old rugs” as at a flea market. Several of the objects and pieces of furniture have price tags on them, suggesting that they are for sale.

Upon closer inspection, however, one sees that it is not the furniture but the tags themselves that are for sale. Only upon turning the price tags over does it become clear that they are written on the backsides of drawings signed by the artist—it is these that can be purchased for the indicated price. Here, as well, Ryslavy plays with the rules of the system of art, a system, which is becoming ever-more subordinate to the laws of the market and marketing.

This goes above all for one’s first impression when entering the exhibition space at the opening event: at first, it seems less like an exhibition than a sales event put on by a winemaking cooperative. Various Austrian vineyards will offer their wine for tasting here, with visitors being invited to purchase bottles and/or cases of the wine directly from the europallets at farm gate prices. For the duration of the exhibition, the half-empty wine cases will remind one of the opening performance, looking something like intentionally dumbed-down remembrances of the “Brillo Boxes” by Andy Warhol.

Original works by Ryslavy will be placed in direct relation to the installation of furniture from the MAK Collection, an example being his installation “Entrée,” which consists of an oil painting (2006) framed in Plexiglas and hanging on the wall flanked by two kitschy, white 1960s garden chairs. The painting itself, dominated by the color pink, shows a wine tasting at the CCNOA (Center for Contemporary Non Objective Art) in Brussels, where “Entrée” was created as part of an exhibition in 2007.

The walls will be hung with a number of canvases which the artist and “Sunday painter” will paint the Sunday before the opening event on 3 April 2011—and which will be added to on two further Sundays during the exhibition (10 April from 1 to 4 p.m., and 24 April from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.). On these he will paint some of the bills, written up by the winemakers on the opening evening and addressed to the purchasers of wine from the exhibiting vineyards.

The video “It’s Nothing Personal, It’s just Non-Objective” documents a performance that also took place at the CCNOA in 2007. At his Brussels exhibition, Ryslavy sold to the audience simple objects such as worn-out clothes hangers, used furniture, discarded clothing and several signed original works of graphic art by well-known artists of the 1950s, authenticating each item with a certificate.

This exhibition's conceptual arc will be brought full circle by a wine bar designed by the artist himself—the so-called “Verschleißstelle für österreichischen Wein” [Place in Which to Waste Austrian Wine], which was seen at the Palais des Beaux-Arts Bruxelles in 1998 as part of the exhibition “Austria im Rosennetz / L’Autriche visionnaire,” originally curated by Harald Szeemann for the MAK in 1996.

All press material on the exhibition is available for download at www.MAK.at/press.

Press Data Sheet

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Curators:	Marlies Wirth, Curator MAK NITE® Sebastian Hackenschmidt, MAK Curator Furniture and Woodwork
MAK Expert-guided Tour	7 April 2011, 5 p.m. with Marlies Wirth, Curator MAK NITE® Sebastian Hackenschmidt, MAK Curator Furniture and Woodwork
Sunday Painter	The artist will be present at the exhibition as part of the performances on the exhibition's opening evening, as well as on 10 April (1–4 p.m.) and 24 April 2011 (11 a.m.–2 p.m.).
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced € 5.50 Free admission on Saturdays®
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