

# Lentos Kunstmuseum

## **Female Sensibility Feminist Avant-garde from the SAMMLUNG VERBUND 24 Sept. 2021 – 9 Jan. 2022**

**The exhibition “Female Sensibility“, with its 200 feminist works of art by 82 artists from the 1970s, queries the construction of femininity and casts light on the pioneering achievements of what is commonly referred to as the “Feminist Avant-garde“. The Lentos adds a total of thirty-four artworks by artists based in Latin America, North America, Asia and Western and Eastern Europe to an exhibition that has already been shown in Rome, Madrid, and London.**

The show at the Lentos features an artistic movement that has not been given its due by art history up until now. For the first time in the history of art these female artists, who were dispersed all over the globe, created a new “image of woman” from a feminine perspective. The founding director of the SAMMLUNG VERBUND, Gabriele Schor, has coined the term “Feminist Avant-garde“ for this movement to make sure that this collective pioneering achievement is no longer denied the place it is owed in art history.

In the Lentos show entitled “Female Sensibility. Feministische Avantgarde aus der SAMMLUNG VERBUND“ three new areas of special interest vie for the attention of visitors. Afro-American artists are subjected to multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, racism and social standing. Today’s Black Lives Matter movement highlights their precarious situation. This intersectional discrimination finds striking expression in the works of several Afro-American female artists. These include Howardena Pindell, Lorraine O’Grady, and Elizabeth Catlett. We see how women of colour are wracked with anxiety for their children, who are exposed to increasing levels of street violence.

Communist regimes used to proclaim the social equality of men and women. This – and years of Stasi surveillance – did not prevent artists such as Gabriele Stötzer from pursuing her feminist art. It was surprising, given that she was cut off from the Western feminist discourse, that she staged her photos in ways that closely resembled those of female photographers “on the other side”. Stötzer for instance pressed her naked body against a pane of glass or swaddled herself with bandages from head to toe like a mummy to express a sense of being locked in.

Years of research resulted in retrieving artworks by seventeen Austrian female artists, which is a powerful testimonial by international standards to feminist art, demonstrating, incidentally, that feminism was alive and well in Austria and was reaching out beyond the traditional boundaries of art. Public performances by VALIE EXPORT, such as the “Tapp- und Tastkino“ (TAP and TOUCH Cinema) of 1968 were powerful and much needed provocations in the sense of “actionist feminism“. However, it remained largely below the radar of public attention that at the same time poetical performative works emerged by artists such as Renate Bertlmann, Linda Christanell, Birgit Jürgenssen, Karin Mack and Friederike Pezold. Margot Pilz, who has had a biography published recently, has brought a sociological perspective to her social criticism. Auguste Kronheim is remarkable for the literary undertow in her work.

Against the backdrop of the student movement of ’68, the civil rights and anti-war movements and the “sexual revolution” a second women’s movement came into being in Western countries.

Women realised that that their so-called “private” problems were not ordained by nature. Instead, they were the result of social structures of power and domination. Women revolted against discrimination enshrined in the law, against such received wisdoms as that the man was the head of the family with sole discretionary powers in matters such as whether the wife was entitled to take up gainful employment outside the family, what schools the children were supposed to attend and whether they were allowed to travel abroad. The conviction had taken root that the private is in fact political.

The exhibition at the Lentos Kunstmuseum is proof that these issues exercised the hearts and minds of the female artists. The international show is subdivided into five chapters: the revolt against the one-dimensional perception of the exclusive role of “mother, housewife and wife”; the sense that results from this of “being locked in” and of wanting to escape; the revolt against the “dictate of beauty” and against the fixation on the female body; the exploration of the potential of “female sexuality”; and, lastly, the design of multifaceted female identities using “role plays”. “It is fascinating to note that many of these artists, while not aware of each other, followed similar pictorial strategies”, says the curator of this exhibition, the director of the SAMMLUNG VERBUND Gabriele Schor.

The artists quite deliberately turned to new media as yet unencumbered by historical associations, such as photography, film and video, and used performance as a means of artistic expression. It was often the artists’ own body which was made use of as material, code or cypher in the context of art. Remarkable for their sense of humour and their irony they deconstructed in subtle and provocative ways the traditional iconography of femininity. “For the Lentos”, as the museum’s artistic director Hemma Schmutz notes, “it is a matter of high priority to familiarize a broad audience with the revolutionary agenda of feminist artists and to lend weight to the political demands linked to it”.

As female artists were treated to scant attention on the basis of their gender, they decided to get organised. They staged demonstrations outside museums that refused to include works by female artists in group exhibitions, they wrote manifestoes and founded journals, collectives, and galleries. In 1972 Judy Chicago und Miriam Schapiro founded the feminist exhibition venue Womanhouse in California. Mary Beth Edelson initiated the first large-scale conference of women in the visual arts in Washington. At the same time, the women’s group “Aktion Unabhängiger Frauen” (AUF) saw the light of day in Vienna. In 1975, in the International Women’s Year, the New York A.I.R. Gallery went on stream. In the same year VALIE EXPORT was the curator of the legendary exhibition “MAGNA. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität” in the Galerie nächst St. Stephan. In 1977 the network “Internationale Aktionsgemeinschaft bildender Künstlerinnen” (IntAkt) was founded in Vienna, which is still going strong.

Since the show “Women” (2017) at Vienna’s mumok, which was likewise realised in collaboration with the SAMMLUNG VERBUND, the number of female artists involved in the exhibition has almost doubled. The Lentos is now offering an opportunity to see works by all the eighty-two artists from Latin America, North America, Asia and Western and Eastern Europe for the first time. In addition to well-known artists and works of art, the exhibition at the Lentos features some that still await discovery.

# SAMMLUNG VERBUND

The SAMMLUNG VERBUND was founded in 2004. As a major stakeholder ready to accept social responsibility, VERBUND supports projects in the fields of social affairs, sports and culture. As far as art is concerned, the Board of Directors has decided in favour of 'hands-on cultural work'. "For VERBUND, the company's commitment to contemporary art is part of its corporate culture", according to VERBUND CEO Michael Strugl. "The SAMMLUNG VERBUND has set its sights on discovering artists and works of art that have hitherto remained undiscovered, lend them visibility and make them imprint themselves lastingly upon our cultural memory".

## Exhibitions of the SAMMLUNG VERBUND

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, Italy  
19 February – 16 May 2010

Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain  
3 June – 1 September 2013

BOZAR – Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium  
18 June – 31 August 2014

Mjellby Konstmuseum, Halmstad, Sweden  
20 September 2014 – 11 January 2015

Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany  
13 March – 31 May 2015

The Photographers' Gallery, London, England  
6 October 2016 – 8 January 2017

mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria  
4 May – 10 September 2017

ZKM – Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany  
18 November 2017 – . April 2018

Stavanger Kunstmuseum, Stavanger, Norway  
15 June – 14 October 2018

Dům umění města Brna – The Brno House of Arts, Brno, Czech Republic  
11 December 2018 – 24 February 2019

CCCB – Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
19 July 2019 – 6 January 2020

## Next stop of the SAMMLUNG VERBUND exhibition tour:

May 2022 – June 2022

Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad, Serbia

An integral part of European Capital of Culture 2022

# Artists

Helena Almeida (1934–2018, PT)  
Emma Amos (1937–2020, USA)  
Sonia Andrade (\*1935, BRA)  
Eleanor Antin (\*1935, USA)  
Anneke Barger (\*1939, NL)  
Lynda Benglis (\*1941, USA)  
Judith Bernstein (\*1942, USA)  
Renate Bertlmann (\*1943, AT)  
Tomaso Binga (\*1931, IT)  
Dara Birnbaum (\*1946, USA)  
Teresa Burga (\*1935, PE)  
Marcella Campagnano (\*1941, IT)  
Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012, USA)  
Judy Chicago (\*1939, USA)  
Linda Christanell (\*1939, AT)  
Veronika Dreier (\*1954, AT)  
Orshi Drozdk (\*1946, HU/USA)  
Lili Dujourie (\*1941, BE)  
Mary Beth Edelson (1933–2021, USA)  
Renate Eisenegger (\*1949, DE/CH)  
Rose English (\*1950, UK)  
VALIE EXPORT (\*1940, AT)  
Gerda Fassel (\*1941, AT)  
Esther Ferrer (\*1937, ES)  
Marisa González (\*1945, ES)  
Eulàlia Grau (\*1946, ES)  
Barbara Hammer (1939–2019, USA)  
Margaret Harrison (\*1940, UK)  
Lynn Hershman Leeson (\*1941, USA)  
Alexis Hunter (1948–2014, NZ/UK)  
Mako Idemitsu (\*1940, JPN/USA)  
Sanja Iveković (\*1949, HR)  
Anne Marie Jehle (1937–2000, AT/LIE)  
Birgit Jürgenssen (1949–2003, AT)  
Kirsten Justesen (\*1943, DNK)  
Auguste Kronheim (\*1937, AT)  
Ketty La Rocca (1938–1976, IT)  
Leslie Labowitz (\*1946, USA)  
Suzanne Lacy (\*1945, USA)  
Katalin Ladik (\*1942, SRB/HU)  
Suzy Lake (\*1947, USA/CA)

Brigitte Lang (\*1953, AT)  
Natalia LL (\*1937, PL)  
Lea Lublin (1929–1999, PL/FR)  
Karin Mack (\*1940, AT)  
Dindga McCannon (\*1947, USA)  
Ana Mendieta (1948–1985, CU/USA)  
Annette Messenger (\*1943, FR)  
Anita Münz (\*1957, CH/AT)  
Rita Myers (\*1947, USA)  
Senga Nengudi (\*1943, USA)  
Lorraine O'Grady (\*1934, USA)  
ORLAN (\*1947, FR)  
Florentina Pakosta (\*1933, AT)  
Gina Pane (1939–1990, FR)  
Leticia Parente (1930–1991, BRA)  
Ewa Partum (\*1945, PL)  
Friederike Pezold (\*1945, AT)  
Margot Pilz (\*1936, NL/AT)  
Howardena Pindell (\*1943, USA)  
Ingeborg G. Pluhar (\*1944, AT)  
Lotte Profohs (1934–2012, AT)  
Àngels Ribé (\*1943, ES)  
Ulrike Rosenbach (\*1943, DE)  
Martha Rosler (\*1943, USA)  
Brigitte Aloise Roth (1951–2018, AT)  
Suzanne Santoro (\*1946, USA/IT)  
Carolee Schneemann (1939–2019, USA)  
Lydia Schouten (\*1948, NL)  
Elaine Shemilt (\*1954, UK/USA)  
Cindy Sherman (\*1954, USA)  
Penny Slinger (\*1954, UK)  
Annegret Soltau (\*1946, DE)  
Anita Steckel (1930–2012, USA)  
Gabriele Stötzer (\*1953, DE)  
Betty Tompkins (\*1945, USA)  
Regina Vater (\*1943, BRA)  
Marianne Wex (1937–2020, DE)  
Hannah Wilke (1940–1993, USA)  
Martha Wilson (\*1947, USA)  
Francesca Woodman (1958–1981, USA)  
Nil Yalter (\*1938, EG/FR).

# Programme

## **Guided Tours**

Thurs 6 pm

Sun 4 pm

Guided tour € 3 plus admission, duration: 1 hour

## **The Making-of**

Thurs 11 Nov. 21 6 pm

Thurs 2 Dec. 21 6 pm

A glance behind the scenes of the exhibition with the Founding Director of the SAMMLUNG VERBUND, Gabriele Schor, and Lentos Artistic Director Hemma Schmutz

Guided tour € 3 plus admission, duration: 1 hour

## **Express Tour**

Every 1st Sat in the month 4pm

This tour offers an insight into the Lentos. It looks at the museum's history and its art collection and includes highlights of the current special exhibition.

Language: English

Ticket: € 2 plus admission, duration: 45 minutes

## **Lange Nacht der Museen / Long Night of the Museums**

Sat 2 Oct. 21 6 pm–1 am

For details of the programme, go to [lentos.at](http://lentos.at)

## **Jaskaran Anand: L-INKE**

Thurs 4 Nov. 21 6 pm

What happens when we leave body, sexuality, gender norms behind us? A joint exploration using different works of art and different modes of communication at the exhibition venue.

Admission free

## **The Future is Female\***

Thurs 25 Nov. 21 6 pm

A roundtable with and for women's organisations and activists from Linz. What inspiration may we draw from the history of the new women's movement and from the proposals female artists have contributed?

Admission free

## **Eintauchen: Lentos Podcast**

Wed. 6 Oct. 21


with Gabriele Schor, curator of the exhibition and Founding Director of the SAMMLUNG VERBUND

Thurs 4 Nov. 21

with Hanna Hacker, sociologist, historian, and an expert on Feminism, Queer Studies and Postcolonial Theory

The Lentos Podcast provides an opportunity to delve deeper into the socio-political issues the exhibition raises. This podcast and others may be accessed above at [lentos.at](http://lentos.at) and Spotify from the dates mentioned

# Dates & Facts

<b>Title of the exhibition</b>	Female Sensibility Feministische Avantgarde aus der SAMMLUNG VERBUND
<b>Duration</b>	24 Sept. 2021 – 9 Jan. 2022
<b>Curator</b>	Gabriele Schor, Director SAMMLUNG VERBUND, Vienna
<b>Exhibition Design</b>	Klemen Breitfuss
<b>Ausstellungsort</b>	Great Hall
<b>Exhibits</b>	More than 200 works of art: drawings, lithographs, photographs, sculptures, installations, videos and films plus documentataion material incl. Timeline (1968-1980), journals, books, photos, post cards
<b>Publikation</b>	The two-volume Lentos exhibition catalogue <i>Feministische Avantgarde der 1970er-Jahre</i> “, ed. by Gabriele Schor, unites for the first time all eighty-two artists and more than 600 works on 736 pages. This reference work is available only the Lentos Museum Shop. Price: € 49
<b>In Kooperation mit</b>	An exhibition in collaboration with the SAMMLUNG VERBUND.  
<b>Exhibition Venue</b>	Tue–Sun 10 am–6 pm, Thurs 10 am–8 pm Mon closed For special opening hours, go to <a href="http://www.lentos.at">www.lentos.at</a>
<b>Admission</b>	€ 8, concessions € 6 / € 4.50

**Presse Officer**

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