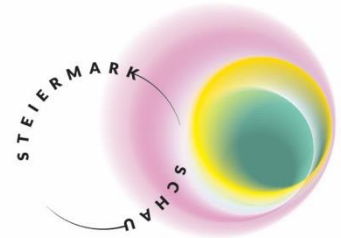


STEIERMARK SCHAU

Die Ausstellung
des Landes

04.2021
10.2021



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how it is Worlds – Changes – Perspectives

Folk Life Museum, Paulustorgasse 11–13a, 8010 Graz

Opening: 09 April 2021

Duration: 10.04.–31.10.2021

Overall management: Claudia Unger

Project management for the exhibition: Birgit Johler

Curated by Birgit Johler with cooperation and contributions from Johannes Maier, Christiane Rainer (Folk Life Museum), the Visitor Services section of the UMJ, and Agnieszka Czejkwoska with the team of the Department of Education and School Research at the University of Graz, Barbara Frischling, Nicole-Melanie Goll and Georg Hoffmann, Heimo Halbrainer, Eva Kreissl, Werner Michael Schwarz, Andreas Vormaiyer, Hans-Peter Weingand

Exhibition design: Benedikt Haid, Pretterhofer Arquitectos – Heidi Pretterhofer, MVD Austria with Michael Rieper

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At the heart of the Folk Life Museum's major renovation and the reorientation of its content lies *how it is*, the new exhibition for SHOWING STYRIA. The entire architectural ensemble also plays a key role in achieving the main aim behind the restructuring – the Folk Life Museum highlights its position as a lively and socially relevant venue. The new exhibition centres on an exploration of the present day, and is shown in a fully renovated building. Taking Styria as an example, the four exhibition modules at the Folk Life Museum examine current social developments and issues. The focus is on the people who live in Styria, stay here or are connected to the region in other ways. What do they identify with, what are they concerned about, how do they shape their lives, environment and society? Within this context, the exhibition also investigates the self-conception and self-images of a European region characterised by prosperity and development.

Lifeworlds, self-images and changes

What does this mean in concrete terms for the new exhibition at the Folk Life Museum? Our present time is marked by profound transformations that worry many people. The Covid-19 pandemic has permeated and changed the whole of everyday life and this process is not yet complete. *how it is* picks up on this and addresses current developments in the various exhibition areas, relating them to Styria: the self-conception and self-images of the region are highlighted through aspects such as cuisine, education, mobility and tourism. Of particular interest are the intentions and uses of these 'Styrian emblems' and their relevance for the people of Styria. Without knowledge of the past, we cannot understand the present – and so the exhibition also considers historical lifeworlds and experiences as well as earlier practices and (Styrian) self-images. How people interact, what makes me who I am, what makes us who we are, and how we want to live with others – these are questions that the exhibition explores through digital biographies of and with young people, through action in the sense of the human rights that have been firmly rooted in Graz and Styria for decades, and through the subject of migration and multiple affiliations. This area offers the opportunity both for visitors to engage in discussion and for people who have left their place of origin and had to settle in a new environment to express their views.

Exchange about the past and present

Time and again in the past, people were also confronted with radical changes and sought ways to cope with these disruptions to their everyday lives – the exhibition tells of these experiences in selected historical periods. Among other things, this section looks at faith as a response to crisis, and also the transformations seen in the Upper Styrian industrial region at the end of the 20th century. In addition, the museum takes an experimental approach by merging one part of the exhibition with a café. Museum visitors and guests of 'Café Grün' are invited, with free admission, to join a discussion about objects that are 'green' or have 'Styrian' connotations and their stories.

Looking at the present means a range of new themes and objects for the Folk Life Museum.

Alongside items from the museum's own collection, such as those related to religious folk life, this exhibition was made possible thanks to many external loans and the involvement of experts and partners (including the Department of Education and School Research at the University of Graz). This new exhibition actively engages the museum in social discourse and interaction with the public.

A place of encounter

The Folk Life Museum is embedded within a unique historic setting that includes the Church of St. Anthony, the Heimatsaal and a number of gardens. Part of the redesign creates a place for scientific, artistic and socio-political discussion, for exchange, cooperation and encounter: in the museum, access to the inner courtyard and the Church of St. Anthony allows visitors to experience new paths and perspectives. During SHOWING STYRIA, 'Café Grün' offers a special experience as a café in the middle of the exhibition. A refreshments area run by a committed partner will offer a great improvement for the venue in the long term.

The Heimatsaal will undergo a technical upgrade, receive a lift to make it barrier-free (by architects Rapposch&Rapposch) and from May onwards will be available mainly for various cultural events. The gardens around the museum will be opened gradually. Visitors will be able to join small garden tours, raising awareness of the unique complex at the foot of the Schloßberg.

During SHOWING STYRIA, a variety of events will take place at the Folk Life Museum from April onwards. In addition to talks with well-known figures and controversial discussions on topics from the exhibition, there will be in-depth special lectures and collaborations with cultural institutions, as well as special one-day events that activate the whole museum site.

Statements

Christopher Drexler, Minister for culture, Government of Styria

Looking splendid after a major redesign just in time for SHOWING STYRIA, the fully redesigned Folk Life Museum focuses on the question of *how it is*. Although it might at first sound trivial – after all, we ourselves experience Styria and the world as they are every day – SHOWING STYRIA 2021 delves much deeper, with an exhibition that takes stock of the present social situation and current developments. We encourage people to take a thorough look at our Styrian lifeworlds, to examine them and challenge them so that we can gain a greater understanding of the many facets of our present-day lives. This kind of understanding is the basis for any further social development and a well-informed view looking towards the future. By looking at how ‘today’ originates from profound changes and constant transformation as well as past and present perspectives, the exhibition at the Folk Life Museum creates a seamless link between the exhibitions exploring ‘how it was’ at the Museum of History and ‘what will be’ at the Kunsthaus Graz. I would like to welcome you to SHOWING STYRIA at the Folk Life Museum from 9 April and invite you to explore contemporary Styria in the light of current social developments, while also enjoying the redesign of a true jewel of a museum. With its innovative concepts and refreshing mix of exhibitions, the new Folk Life Museum is set to give us much pleasure across its whole site, and far beyond SHOWING STYRIA.

Claudia Unger, Director of the Folk Life Museum

As part of SHOWING STYRIA, the Folk Life Museum presents its new overall concept. As a place of knowledge, our new exhibition promotes discourse and exchange; as a place of culture, we support networking with art; and as a place to relax, we simply offer a wonderful setting in the complex at the foot of the Schloßberg. With a focus on contemporary issues, the museum wants to set the pace with innovations in the region and beyond Styria. I am sure that the Folk Life Museum will greatly appeal to many people, because we aim to be one thing above all: a lively and socially relevant place.

Birgit Johler, Curator of the Folk Life Museum

Centred on an exploration of the present day, the Folk Life Museum begins with a shift in perspective: the focus is no longer on rural life in the 19th century, but on the social themes, issues and cultural phenomena that concern us today. Our approach here is not to view culture and society as something static – instead we see them as a process, as being in a state of constant change, while also asking how we arrived at today. The focus is on people in and from Styria and the question of how they shape their lifeworlds in times of change and social transformation. The exhibition at the Folk Life Museum therefore acts as a hinge between ‘how it was’ – the exhibition at the History Museum – and ‘what will be’ – the exhibition at the Kunsthaus Graz. We also establish connections with the Mobile Pavilion and their focus on examining ‘who we are’.