

Invitation to the Press Conference and Opening of

VILLA KARBACH

How Surrealism Comes into the World

An art & nature expedition across Lake Traunsee by boat from Villa Pantschoulidzeff (Traunkirchen) to the Karbach quarry on the eastern shore of Lake Traunsee in cooperation with the European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024

Friday, 17 May 2024

Press conference 10.30 am – 2 pm

Meeting point

Loidl landing stage, Traunkirchen town square at the swing sculpture 'Swing Theory of Hegel' (2018/2024) by Fernando Sánchez Castillo (ES)

Departure with the Villa Karbach ship at 10.30 am

Punctuality and registration are requested: c.werner@salzkammergut-2024.at

Return to the Villa Pantschoulidzeff at 12.30 pm with a guided tour through this part of the exhibition

Speakers

Elisabeth Schwegger | Artistic Director European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024
Paolo Bianchi and Martin Sturm | Curators

Saturday, 18 May 2024 Opening 2 – 6 pm

Speakers

Ulrike Feichtinger | Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Gmunden

Iris Loidl | Head of the municipality

Elisabeth Schwegger | Artistic Director European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024

Jürgen Hesz | Landlord Villa Pantschoulidzeff

About the project

Paolo Bianchi and Martin Sturm | Curators



Artistic programme

Erich Josef Langwiesner reads Walter Pilar (on the hour)

Bioresonance quartet: Kurt Druckenthaner – 1st violin, Herbert Riedler – 2nd violin, Johanna De Hoop – viola, Barbara Bade – violoncello (unannounced performances, on the terrace with a view to Karbach)

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Press | Christina Werner, European Capital of Culture Bad Ischl Salzkammergut 2024,
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Photos



Swiss Curator Paolo Bianchi takes a look at Villa Pantschouldidzeff in Traunkirchen and to Mountain Traunstein © Villa Karbach, courtesy Martin Sturm

For the first time in the history of art, “Surrealism” will be born in three places at the same time. The Villa Pantschouldidzeff in Traunkirchen, the factory premises in the Karbach quarry on the eastern bank of Lake Traunsee and the town square in Traunkirchen will become the joint venue for an exhibition of contemporary art full of discovery. The show brings together 100 unconventional works by 16 contributors from different backgrounds and disciplines. Among them are Lara Almarcegui (ES/NL), BERG artist group (Clemens Bauder, Felix Ganzer, Ella Raidel) (AT), Jonas Burkhalter (US), Fernando Sánchez Castillo (ES), Thomas Feuerstein (AT), Siegfried A. Fruhauf (AT), Anita Gratzner (AT), Otto Hainzl (AT), Anna Katharina Laggner (AT), Walter Pilar (AT), Peter Putz (AT), Otto Saxinger (AT), Barbara Signer (CH), Monika Sobotik (AT), Andrea Sodomka (AT), Isa Stein (AT). The thematic group exhibition is curated by Paolo Bianchi and Martin Sturm, who were jointly responsible for *Höhenrausch* in Linz.

The VILLA KARBACH exhibition shows where the real and the bizarre meet, where bizarre realism enters the world. This neologism was coined by Ebensee writer Walter Pilar (1948–2018), the ‘instigator’ of the art project. A villa was built above Klosterplatz in Traunkirchen around 1850 for a Georgian-Russian princess's daughter – a meeting place for famous musicians and writers. Now works by contemporary artists can be seen there, such as the main work ‘Karbach-Hochalter’ by Walter Pilar in the garden hall. In the Salon, Bedroom and Cabinet, guests can experience works that are fascinating and irritating, humorous and serious at the same time. On display are heart performances, root worlds, sleeping sperm whales, bell caps and an endless necklace. From the terrace, the mountain world on the other side of Lake Traunsee looks like the background landscape in Leonardo da Vinci's ‘Mona Lisa’. The journey to the Karbach quarry is made by boat. High-quality white limestone was quarried

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here from 1890 to 2016, 'the mountain was transported across the lake' (according to Pilar) and processed into soda in Ebensee. Guests encounter artistic interventions, such as an alchemist's laboratory, a sound performance with singing stones ('Rolling Stones'), the alpenglow underground and the symbiosis of nature, art and industrial culture. It's romantic, wild and quirky.

VILLA KARBACH

How surrealism comes into the world

Opening hours Fri, Sat, Sun, 10 am - 6 pm

Location Villa Pantschoulidzeff, Klosterplatz 8, AT-4801 Traunkirchen

Villa Karbach Tour – boat trip to Karbach and guided tour of the villa

Times Fri, Sat, Sun, 10 am and 2.30 pm

Meeting point landing stage Loidl / Traunkirchen town square

Duration approx. 3 1/2 hours, with accompanying person

Admission € 24,- to 30,-

[Tickets](#)

Group tours always on Thursday at 3 pm

Admission € 24,- to 29,- (admission to the exhibition, Villa Pantschoulidzeff incl. boat trip to the exhibition in the Karbach quarry)

[Tickets](#)

Information & contact T +43 (61 32) 23 88 4, buero@salzkammergut-2024.at

Artists and their works

The video installation 'Buried House, Dallas' (2013) by **Lara Almarcegui** (ES/NL) can be seen. In the seven-minute video, a bulldozer buries a house, leaving a slight dent in the ground that suggests a grave. Lara Almarcegui's video work corresponds harmoniously with the seven-line poem 'The most beautiful house of Traumkirchen!' by Walter Pilar (1948–2018) – both in formal and narrative terms. The poet changes the first line 'This house is the most beautiful house in Traunkirchen!' seven times in such a playful way that at the end it simply reads: 'Siedes Sauh is da schönst Bau vo Krauchtier!'.

In the video 'BERG' (2016/2024), the **BERG artist group** (Clemens Bauder, Felix Ganzer, Ella Raidel) (AT) shows a courageous team on a platform moving a wooden mountain on Lake Traunsee. It is a journey into a real, but also seemingly bizarre world with a self-built vehicle in a legendary setting. In the video, an off-screen voice whispers: 'Berg ahoy!' (Mountain ahoy!) – and rightly so. Because if 'ahoy' is a traditional sailor's greeting that is used both as a greeting and as a farewell, then it is ideally suited to Karbach. White limestone was quarried here from 1890 to 2016. What's more: 'The mountain was transported across the lake', as you can read in Walter Pilar's book, and processed into soda in Ebensee.

Jonas Burkhalter (US) presents 'Deep Sleep' (2021), a mobile-like sculpture of sleeping sperm whales with their very special sleeping behaviour. Sperm whales sleep vertically, close to the surface and always in groups. Burkhalter's unique underwater work refers to Walter Pilar's idea of what it means to work with 'language' above the water's surface and to engage with bottom fish from the water's bottom. In Pilar's understanding, the surface of the water marks a 'narrative boundary'. Both Jonas Burkhalter and Walter Pilar inspire our imagination with their works, enabling us to visualize the absent – a wondrous act.

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Fernando Sánchez Castillo (ES) is represented with two key works: the bronze swing sculpture 'Swing Theory of Hegel' (2018/2024) and the water cannon video 'Pegasus Dance' (2007). What Castillo realized with his floating figure applies exactly to Pilar's reference to what can be whimsical, such as the floating gait. The video shows the circus-like manoeuvre of the heavy companions, a classic symbol of oppression, the strongest weapon against any violation of human rights, realized with humour and beauty.

In the former workshop building in the Karbach quarry, **Thomas Feuerstein** (AT) is showing the newly created multi-part series 'ULTRAMARINA. Drinking up the lake' (2024). In the light blue flooded exhibition space ULTRAMARINA, green and diatoms grow in the sculpture POLYPHORE. Here, diatoms from Lake Traunsee and limestone from local mines will be processed into a new pigment. A process developed by biologist and chemist Thomas Seppi especially for the exhibition forms the basis for the chemical synthesis of this special 'Traunsee blue'.

Siegfried A. Fruhauf (AT) has developed the installation 'Alpenglühen Karbach' (2024) for the VILLA KARBACH exhibition, which is based on rethinking cinema in a new and endless way. The Austrian artist attempts to bring the sun underground and stage the sunrise in a tunnel. Fruhauf's artistic approach of leading the sun from the outside to the inside, bringing it down so that it can work upwards, refers to Walter Pilar's aesthetic experience of reality, which is characterized by a dialectic of inside and outside as well as below and above, as demonstrated in an incomparable way in Pilar's poem 'Unten Oben'.

Anita Gratzer (AT) visualizes with 50 photographs under the title 'Kopf-Körper-Kleid' (head-body-dress) (2017–2024) and the impressive headdress 'Half a Sun' (2023), which is reminiscent of the custom of the *Glöcklerlauf* with its autochthonous development. Gratzner expands the stubbornly conventional aesthetics of Ebensee customs with foreign cultural and lifestyle patterns. Her photographic works and her sculpture correspond with Pilar's drawing 'Hyperglöckler' (1981). The artist was enthusiastic about this tradition throughout his life.

Otto Hainzl (AT) presents the large-format colour photograph 'Untitled' (2023). It is striking how a Jesus cross hangs high up on the wall between two doors, right next to it are two pipes covered in aluminium foil. The single image from the 'WIR' series (2023) is a key image for the artist – for the chance discovery and artistic highlighting of an everyday world that appears hyper surreal. This picture is proof of why "surrealism" is better than Jesus – and art better than the Holy Spirit.

The multi-part text work entitled 'Liebe Arbeit Untergang' (love-work-demise) (2024) by Anna **Katharina Laggner** (AT) is on display. The artist's handwritten words can be read on 16 black and white signs. The content is based on clues that Laggner found on the walls in Karbach and fragments from the Leander legend of Lake Traunsee, her tragic story of two lovers who were denied a life together and both ultimately met their deaths.

Walter Pilar (1948–2018) (AT) is one of Austria's outstanding contemporary writers and artists. He was interested in the 'absurd', that which does not belong together and yet forms a unity. His main work of art, the 'Karbach High Altar', is a window frame with three-part mullioned windows (inner and outer sashes), a suspended sheet metal tub with a capacity of 330 litres on a table frame with a sturdy base with turned legs resembling stuffed wood. In the 'Karbach High Altar' – on display in the Karbach quarry on the east bank – Pilar has created a multi-layered, 'contradictory' object that brings together the aspects of water, earth and air and – in the medieval visual tradition of the triptych – simultaneously depicts and visualizes them.

Peter Putz (AT) edited ten short video sequences for the VILLA KARBACH show, which are dedicated to the life and work of Walter Pilar. They are spectacular-unspectacular recordings, each showing the writer and artist in

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a situation where he is 'at home'. The focus is on Pilar's 'different homes', which come together in a special way in the villa in Traunkirchen in a videographic realization created by Putz. It seems as if Pilar is the landlord here and we can look over his shoulder during everyday performances from the years 1980 to 2013. The earliest video shows a silent film of Pilar setting the table in the garden of his house in Langwies near Ebensee.

Otto Saxinger (AT) combines a selection of his artistic 'backwards' photographs with documentary footage taken in 2023 in the house of Walter Pilar in Linz, who died in 2019. In Saxinger's picture montages 'Axes of the Moment' (2024), Pilar encounters completely different pictorial worlds in which Saxinger, similar to the poet's poetic process, both explores the possibilities of marvelling and looking and creates a wealth of images that are body-related and saturated with reality.

With the sculpture 'Endless Necklace (The law of plastic harmony', 2023), **Barbara Signer** (CH) shows a subtly bizarre super-sign that is superficially reminiscent of the endless column by the Romanian-French modernist sculptor and photographer Brâncuși. In Signer's work, however, it becomes enigmatic, as the necklace has both a feminine connotation and a completely different polarisation. With her work, the artist aims less at a purely linear process of addition and instead plays with a circular idea of the world. She takes the path from western linearity to the ecstatic figure of rotation.

Monika Sobotik (AT) shows four excavations, all vivid exhibits of the otherwise invisible physiognomy of plants. In the context of climate change and climate policy, her excavations represent key works beyond the dichotomy of nature and culture. Plants are co-living beings that make up 85 % of the organisms on our planet, and humans must enter into an improved co-existence with them, not least because our survival depends on them.

Andrea Sodomka's (AT) new sound installation 'Rolling Stones' (2024) is an audio experience that addresses heat and dust, noise and silence as well as the concentrated work of machines. The artist creates her sounds in spaces in between, thus generating a 'virtual nature'. She creates a harmonious soundtrack for a lost place that will be brought back to life in 2024.

Isa Stein (AT) – videos and photographs from the project 'The Heart of the Matter' (2021). In these works, we experience how the artist herself is a spatial being that forms a space and at the same time spans a space. The span of her range of action is achieved by drawing a heart with the use of her whole body. Each of her locations, whether in the soft snow or on hard tarmac, becomes a place of loving appropriation, a locus amoenus. In June, she will have a rock face in Karbach painted with a heart by rock climbers.

Contributors

Artists Lara Almarcegui (ES/NL), BERG Künstlergruppe (Clemens Bauder, Felix Ganzer, Ella Raidel) (AT), Jonas Burkhalter (US), Fernando Sánchez Castillo (ES), Thomas Feuerstein (AT), Siegfried A. Fruhauf (AT), Anita Gratzner (AT), Otto Hainzl (AT), Anna Katharina Laggner (AT), Walter Pilar (AT), Peter Putz (AT), Otto Saxinger (AT), Barbara Signer (CH), Monika Sobotik (AT), Andrea Sodomka (AT), Isa Stein (AT)

Project Management, Curators Martin Sturm, Paolo Bianchi

Cooperation Partner NATURSCHAUSPIEL

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Production Marian Holz Müller

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