

The Jewish Museum Vienna at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York

The inaugural exhibit under the helm of new director Michael Haider showcases the work of two photographers to draw attention to forgotten aspects of Jewish history in Austria



Yvonne Oswald, *The Südbahnhotel #5, Waldhof Room*, 2012, from the Series "Magic Mountain."
Tatiana Lecomte, *Blue Bird-of-paradise*, 2013 © Bildrecht Wien, 2019.

Exhibition:

VOID – YVONNE OSWALD & TATIANA LECOMTE

March 12 – June 16, 2019

Austrian Cultural Forum New York
11 East 52nd Street, New York
open 7 days a week, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Opening Reception: March 11, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Artists: Yvonne Oswald, Tatiana Lecomte

Curators: Danielle Spera, Director of the Jewish Museum Vienna
Astrid Peterle, Chief Curator of the Jewish Museum Vienna

The Austrian Cultural Forum New York is pleased to present the upcoming exhibition **VOID**, uniting two photographers, **Yvonne Oswald** and **Tatiana Lecomte**. The show, curated by the Jewish Museum Vienna, marks the first under the helm of new director Michael Haider. On view from March 12 to June 16, **VOID** draws attention to forgotten aspects of Jewish history in Austria and questions the possibility of coming to terms with traumatic experiences through images.

The exhibition juxtaposes Yvonne Oswald's photographs of deserted rooms of a former grand hotel in the Austrian Alps with Tatiana Lecomte's pictures of mounted birds from the collections of the Natural History Museum in Vienna.

By bringing together these different artistic positions, curators Danielle Spera and Astrid Peterle, Director and Chief Curator of the Jewish Museum Vienna respectively, prompt a discourse about commemoration, its representability and communication—aspects of the work of remembrance with which the Jewish Museum Vienna is confronted on a daily basis. The Austrian Cultural Forum New York is an ideal place to conduct this discourse in a global context—not least because of its roots in the “Austrian Institute” which was decisively influenced by Austrian Jewish émigrés.

Oswald's work captures the absence resulting from the expulsion and murder of Jews after the so-called *Anschluss*. The once luxurious *Südbahnhotel* on the Semmering mountain pass was the cultural hub of the *fin de siècle* society outside Vienna and, until 1938, a meeting place for numerous Jewish guests. Personalities such as Arthur Schnitzler, Sigmund Freud, Karl Kraus, Peter Altenberg, Gustav Mahler, Franz Werfel, Stefan Zweig, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, all of whom decisively shaped the cultural and intellectual life of the twentieth century, were closely connected with the Semmering and the *Südbahnhotel* in their work. Lecomte, in turn, explores issues of pictorial memory through studying the "unrepresentable" quality inherent in every photographic representation. Her photographs of mounted birds call key aspects of photography such as the accurate reproduction and documentation of reality into question. Concerned with the adequacy of reproductions to communicate memories, these photographs become a reflection on the pictorial representability of the unimaginable experiences of the Shoah.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Yvonne Oswald, born in Salzburg, studied graphics and photography at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, the Parsons School of Design in New York, and the School for Artistic Photography in Vienna. Her works have been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions. She has published fourteen photo-text books on various topics and regularly photographs for various international magazines. She lives and works in Vienna.

Tatiana Lecomte was born in 1971 in Bordeaux. She studied at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Lyon, at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, and at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam. In addition to photography, the artist also works with film and interventions in public space. She lives and works in Vienna.

ABOUT THE JEWISH MUSEUM VIENNA

The Jewish Museum Vienna is a place of encounter, confrontation, and understanding, which seeks to raise awareness of Jewish history, religion, and culture. It preserves and interprets one of the largest European collections of Judaica—the legacy of the third-largest Jewish community in Europe before the Holocaust. By collecting, exhibiting and communicating this heritage, it bears testimony to the past and the present of the city of Vienna—both of which have been greatly influenced by many and varied forms of migration. www.jmw.at/en

ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM NEW YORK

With its architectural landmark building in Midtown Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York is dedicated to innovative and cutting-edge programming, showcasing the best of Austrian contemporary art, music, literature, performance, and academic thought in New York and throughout the United States. In addition to presenting three group exhibitions per year in its multi-level gallery space and housing around 10,000 volumes of Austriaca in its library dedicated to Frederic Morton, it hosts over 100 free events per year in its own auditorium and supports at least as many projects at partner institutions across the nation. www.acfny.org

MEDIA CONTACT

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LOCATION, HOURS AND ADMISSION

Austrian Cultural Forum New York
11 East 52nd St. (btw. 5th & Madison)
New York, NY 10022
(212) 319 5300
Open daily, 10 AM – 6 PM
Admission to exhibitions, concerts and other events is free

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