

PUBLIC MATTERS

CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE BELVEDERE GARDEN

13 May to 1 October 2023



Goshka Macuga, "I could have gone on flying through space forever but I have always loved a window, especially an open one.", 2023
Courtesy Goshka Macuga, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, Kate MacGarry Gallery, London, Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich
Photo: Johannes Stoll / Belvedere, Vienna

Art—a public matter? In a large outdoor sculpture project, the Belvedere is placing contemporary art in the spotlight of its 2023 anniversary.

Stella Rollig, General Director: *It is the most ambitious project of this anniversary year: True to the spirit of their original dedication, the grounds of the Belvedere will be permeated with art—radically current, surprising, site-specific. Contemporary artists sharpen our gaze at the past through the lens of the present.*

Ever since their opening to the general public in the 1780s, the Belvedere Gardens have been used extensively as places for recreation and communality. The fact that they are clearly also places for art is highlighted by *Public Matters*. Works by thirty-three local and international contemporary artists connect all the museum's gardens—from the main courtyard of the Lower Belvedere and the Privy

Garden to the grand Baroque gardens of the Upper Belvedere and the modernist sculpture garden of the Belvedere 21—and help us to see these spaces as an ensemble that has evolved over time.

Both site-specifically developed as well as already existing artworks reflect the full scope of what sculpture can be today: performative, installative, process- and time-based works are displayed alongside traditional forms of sculpture, underlining the expanded concept of sculpture to which the exhibition refers. Moreover, integrating these different artistic approaches in the historical setting of the Belvedere Gardens opens up fresh, critical perspectives on public forms of representing power and prestige through the ages. This is conveyed particularly vividly by the allusions of individual works to the historical structural and functional elements in the gardens. Art—as the various works lucidly demonstrate—always reflects the social conditions of its time.

Participation and individual ways of experiencing art are central to the project. These are further emphasized by the free admission to the grounds: Visitors can decide themselves when, how often, in which ways, and how extensively they engage with the works on display.

Luisa Ziaja, Chief Curator: *The title Public Matters refers both to matters of public concern and to the social importance of the public sphere. Both readings are present in this exhibition: The works address current topics of today, such as ecology, migration, gender issues or world concepts. In the interplay between the historical ensemble and contemporary interventions, a place of negotiation, and thus ultimately a public sphere, is created both with and through art.*

Alongside well-known artists such as Louise Bourgeois, VALIE EXPORT, Dan Graham, Thomas Houseago, Brigitte Kowanz, Hans Op de Beeck, Kara Walker, Lois Weinberger, Lawrence Weiner, Franz West, and Fritz Wotruba, the exhibition presents new site-specific works by Verena Dengler, Thomas Geiger, Iman Issa, Kapwani Kiwanga, Goshka Macuga, Toni Schmale, and Kateřina Šedá. The selection is completed by key examples from the collection and existing works by Thomas Baumann, Renate Bertlmann, Carola Dertnig, Fria Elfen & Wil Frenken, Roland Goeschl, Alfred Hrdlicka, Anna Jermolaewa & Manfred Grübl, Hans Kupelwieser, Marko Lulić, Ingeborg G. Pluhar, Maruša Sagadin, Socratis Socratous, and Heimo Zobernig.

The Belvedere would like to thank the Austrian Federal Gardens, the Burghauptmannschaft, and the Federal Monuments Authority for their support and fruitful collaboration.

This project is accompanied by a comprehensive publication featuring essays and texts about the exhibited works.

CATALOGUE

Public Matters. Contemporary Art in the Belvedere Garden

Editors: Stella Rollig, Luisa Ziaja

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	<i>Public Matters. Contemporary Art in the Belvedere Garden</i>
Curatorial team	Christiane Erharter, Georg Lechner, Sergey Harutoonian, Axel Köhne, Claudia Slanar, Luisa Ziaja
Assistant curators:	Miroslav Haňák, Andrea Kopranovic
Duration	13 May to 1 October 2023
Venue	All the museum's gardens—from the main courtyard of the Lower Belvedere and the Privy Garden to the grand Baroque gardens of the Upper Belvedere and the modernist sculpture garden of the Belvedere 21
Opening hours	Monday to Sunday 7 am to 7 pm
Tickets	free
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For more information on the exhibition and high-resolution press photos, please visit belvedere.at/en/press.