

The Brigitte Kowanz retrospective is a part of a series of exhibitions that the MUMOK is putting on dealing with internationally successful Austrian artists. With the consistent depiction of light and language Kowanz's work is an exception, in both a local and international context. This is the first time that her varied and complex oeuvre from 1984 up to the present has been honoured to this extent with a presentation of representative wall pieces, installations, and interventions in architectonic space. The essential elements of her current creative work are compressed into an intensive light-space experience in a 450 m<sup>2</sup> 'mirrored hall'. During the exhibition encounters with Kowanz's work in public space have been made possible by two light projects - one on the façade of the MUMOK and one on the Uniqa Tower.

### Light colours and Light Projections

The starting point of her work in the early 80s was the rejection of the conventional definitions of picture and work achieved by the use of phosphorescent colours and coloured lights. After she—together with Franz Graf—thematized the virtual and flickering images of the world of a media society, light as a medium of time and space gained a place of central importance in her oeuvre. For this volatility and boundlessness of light Kowanz creates, in her objects and installations, projection surfaces and architectural spaces that are precisely structured and at the same time poetically charged. At the beginning, fluorescent tubes and glass bottles served as transparent containers for the light both as depictions in their own right qua objects and in imaginary light and shadow rooms.

### Light — Language — Mirror

One result was that light was then combined with signs and language in order to accentuate the scale for perception and visibility. Thus, in an allusion to the tradition of visual and concrete poetry, Kowanz created luminous poetic installations and wall works which possess analytical clarity, talk of light, and illuminate the mechanisms of language at the same time. The mutual reflection of light and language is finally joined by a (literal) mirror—in many different forms—a further medium of the reflection of visibility and perception. The interplay of light, language, and mirrors finally leads to objects and spatial scenarios in which reality and its virtual mirror image manifoldly interpenetrate. As a result, the depiction and visual description of the limitlessly flowing light also leads to the dissolution of borders between the work and its viewer(s).

### Virtual Boundlessness

Using selected works the exhibition makes this development clear and also shows a current

perspective on the oeuvre in new, room-filling mirror installations: a synthesis and potentiation of the dissolving boundaries that has been achieved up till now takes place in a space that appears infinite but is broken up by real and virtual props. Viewers are not only atmospherically clothed in light, but, mirrored to infinity, also see themselves as a part of this scenario and its motive too.

#### Now I See Outside

Brigitte Kowanz, who is also known internationally for her numerous projects in public space, realized two exterior installations for the exhibition — one for the MUMOK façade and one for the Uniqa Tower in the city centre. Thus the architecture of the MUMOK will become the sculptural vehicle for a dynamic, metric depiction of light affixed to its façade in progressively increasing intervals. In the process the architecture itself is being measured and its proportions thematized. In order to insert (literally) the volatility of language into the urban surroundings, the artist makes use of the dynamic light technology of the Uniqa Tower to implement a light-related text.

A richly illustrated catalogue in German and English with articles by Riccardo Caldura, Rainer Fuchs, Edelbert Köb, Peter Weibel and Anton Zeilinger will be published for the exhibition by the Walther König Vienna publishing house.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*