

27. Juni bis 2. November

Karla Black Sim Kunstraum Dornbirn



Media information

kunstraum dornbirn



Karla Black at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Overview

Press preview [Press preview](#) Wednesday, 25 June 2025, 10:30 a.m.

Download press images → kunstraumdornbirn.at

Events [Opening](#) Thursday, 26 June 2025, 7 p.m.

[Artist talk](#) Friday, 27 June 2025, 2 p.m.

[Exhibition duration](#) 27 June until 2 November 2025

Education [Further dates for our educational work](#) from page 6 onwards.

Teaser With her works “Safety As A Stance” and “Looking Glass (picture grid)” conceived specifically for Kunstraum Dornbirn, Karla Black creates an expansive sculptural configuration that purposefully challenges the boundaries of traditional sculpture. Using seemingly banal, ephemeral materials, the Scottish artist shapes a landscape that permeates the space—delicate, powerful, and imbued with quiet poetry. A finely balanced chromatic structure unfolds, in which light, scale and materiality enter into a subtle interplay. Between fragility and volume, gesture and placement, a space of experience emerges—one in which sculpture becomes tangible as movement, process, and perception. *(681 Characters incl. spaces)*

Contact [Curator](#) Thomas Häusle, Director Kunstraum Dornbirn

[Press contact](#) Sina Wagner, T +43 660 687 04 58,
sina.wagner@kunstraumdornbirn.at

Online @ kunstraumdornbirn
→ kunstraumdornbirn.at

Dense, pastel-coloured and inviting, Karla Black's new work at Kunstraum Dornbirn is a sight to behold. **The Scottish artist has designed a landscape for the former assembly hall that invites visitors to wander, marvel and enjoy.** Using everyday materials, some of which are unusual for art, she creates a space-filling combination of material, form and colour, a blissful experience appealing to all the senses.

From the 11-metre-high ceiling hang countless strips of lightly coloured toilet paper throughout the room. Between them are strings from which hang silhouettes of hemispheres moulded in paper or translucent coloured foils, tied together to form wondrous, graceful shapes. The dangling and floating spheres are visually offset by the standing and reclining forms: in the clearings between the toilet paper and the strings, sculptures are placed that poetically combine standing paper and holding plaster moulds. The toilet paper ends on the floor, on surfaces made of sieved gypsum and pigment powder. The strips run out in these areas, the last, recumbent leaves covered by powder. The edges of the differently coloured areas are framed by crinkled toilet paper. Bath bombs in the form of cake pieces or in a floral design as well as make-up beads are scattered over the coloured ground. These floor works, covering the entire surface, create paths on which we can enter the fantastic landscape entitled "Safety As A Stance". They also give the room a harmonious pastel palette of colours ranging from pink to peach to beige and yellow. When daylight or sunlight strikes the materials, they glow in their pastel hues and colour the entire ambience. This considerably intensifies the holistic experience of material and colour.

Sometimes we catch a glimpse of ourselves in the room: Under the title "Looking Glass (picture grid)", Black has panelled the rear long side of the hall with numerous mirrors in the alcoves of the huge lattice windows. Some of the panels are hand-painted, showing markings and colourful gestures on the reflective surface. The doubling of the mirrored images and consequent enlargement of the room has an expansive effect and dissolves the tangible space into fragments.

The Dornbirn exhibition vividly illustrates the great power that Black infuses into her artistic language, which is based on a formal aesthetic understanding of sculpture, that is, on the pure form and effect of the artwork. She says: **"My work is essentially formal. Its main interest is aesthetic. [...] What goes on in it is the processing and reprocessing of the relationship between colour, form, material and composition."**¹ The depiction is always

¹ Karla Black, *Kunstforum International*, vol. 227 (2014): 209-210.

abstract, never figurative. Physical representation of the human form is exclusively through the bodily presence of visitors or in her gesturally painted mirror works, whose impasto application of paint or occasional omissions manifest indistinct or fragmented reflections.

The work is abstract not only in terms of what is depicted, but also in terms of the materials chosen and how they are used. This is because no fixed and often no permanent form is given them. For example, if gypsum powder is used, it is not mixed with water to form a hardening mass as usual, but is applied in its original state. It is sieved, layered, dusted over foils and much else besides. The fact that the material could potentially have a fixed form in the next step of the process leaves it in a seemingly unfinished state. This example makes clear that the properties and purpose of materials are linked to directives for their use, directives that Black refuses to carry out. This gives her work a very appealing indeterminacy, a state between raw and finished.

The starting point of all Black's work is her enjoyment of working with a particular material. The type of material is not important. The palette employs not only traditional art materials, such as acrylic paint, pigment or plaster, but also incorporates any materials from everyday life that serves the purpose, including plastic film, soap, make-up or toilet paper. By contrast, the medium to which Black assigns her work is clearly defined: it is sculpture. **In her practice, she also experiments with other genres, and her works are impressive spatial experiences drawing freely and uninhibitedly on painting, installation, environment and performance. But despite her forays into other media, Black's presentations are always sculpture exhibitions.** Playfully but precisely put to the test, anchored in material aesthetics, the boundaries and possibilities of the concept of sculpture are constantly submitted to broader interrogation.

Black creates immersive situations in which the ephemeral fragility of materials such as powder or paper is paired with the strength and durability of the meticulously space-filling formats. In Dornbirn, she combines existing works with new creations and with sculptural strategies and elements that seem familiar from previous productions. This sense of recognition allows us to understand the development and function of the new combination within her elaborated formal-aesthetic approach. The method of production derives from the physical conditions, which include her own state of being as well as the architecture and its spatial specifications. Within this framework, Black primarily responds emotionally, drawing on a realm beyond language, such as unconscious intuition. In a careful process of sifting, layering, piling and heaping, knotting, hanging and smearing her materials, Black

gives them form in situ in the exhibition space. The intuitive beginning is accompanied in the next steps by conscious intention, by consideration of those very physical conditions and their final form and effect.

The aesthetic effect – meaning on the one hand beauty, and on the other hand the nature of the materials, the composition of the elements, and the experience and sensory enjoyment of the works – is self-referential and uncompromising, purified of any external meaning, and the most important category. Yet in Dornbirn, we can see that creative references related to content can still play a role: Black's floor installations create a freedom of movement that allows us to enter into them. The surfaces surrounded by toilet paper look like flowerbeds, and the association with garden designs, in which plantings become elaborate ornamental formations, is no accident. Since the beginning of the project, the partially mirrored windows of the assembly hall have been an integral part of the exhibition. Black herself formulates clear references to garden design and the famous Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Not only the structure of the assembly hall's windows resemble the mirrored niches of Versailles – Black's entire form language and colour choice has also been recognisably influenced by Baroque and Rococo design elements. Their playful aesthetics, with flowing lines, billowing fabrics, asymmetry, pastel tones and nature-inspired motifs, found its way into her work. Abstracting these aspects and combing them with her own vocabulary of materials, Black creates the unique formal language that has made her internationally renowned.



Image: Karla Black, Kunstraum Dornbirn 2025, Photo Günter Richard Wett, © Karla Black, Courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne and Modern Art, London.

Karla Black at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Press release

Karla Black was born in 1972 in Alexandria, UK, and lives and works in Glasgow, UK. She represented Scotland at the 57th Venice Biennale (2011) and her work was exhibited at Manifesta 10 at St Petersburg (2014). Her immersive, often site-specific installations have been shown at numerous solo exhibitions, for example at the Bechtler Foundation, Uster (2024), New Art Gallery Walsall (2023), Modern Art Gallery, London (2022), Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2021), Des Moines Art Centre (2020), Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2019), Le Festival d'Automne, Paris (2017), Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle (2017), Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2016), Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2016), Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (2013), Dallas Museum of Art (2012) and Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2012).



Image: Karla Black, Kunstraum Dornbirn 2025, Photo Günter Richard Wett, © Karla Black, Courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne and Modern Art, London.

Karla Black at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Education: dates and formats

Communicating the content of contemporary visual art is an important part of our work. In addition to public guided tours, numerous groups visit the exhibitions, from kindergartens to museum friends' groups. Workshops and educational co-operations with educational specialists such as Christa Bohle and artists such as Matthias Bildstein broaden the focus of our educational work for children and young people.

The following formats and educational information on Karla Black's exhibition are in preparation:

Artist talk

27 June 2025, 2 p.m.

Artist talk

The Scottish artist Karla Black provides an insight into her new work in the historic assembly hall of the Kunstraum Dornbirn, as well as her artistic oeuvre. She is known for her unique formal language and unconventional use of materials, which allows a new perspective on the field of contemporary sculpture. Admission to the talk is free.

After-Work-Tour

21 August and 28
September 2025

After-Work-Tour

Thursdays at 6 p.m.

Short tours through the exhibition provide an insight into the artistic work and the exhibition.

Exhibition text– now also in simple language

Exhibition text– the guide in the exhibition

Visitors are provided with two leaflets that differ in terms of the complexity of language and content, depending on the target group. The 'Kunst Kompagnon' is aimed at specialist audiences and regular exhibition visitors who have insight into or points of contact with the discourses of contemporary visual art.

The light-footed counterpart is called 'Einfach Kunst' ('Simply Art'). This short text is easy to understand and provides a low-threshold insight into selected topics of the respective exhibition and artistic work. The contents can also be viewed online:

www.kunstraumdornbirn.at.

Karla Black at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Education: dates and formats

Guided tour for teachers

2 October 2025, 3 p.m.

[Guided tour for teachers | Pädagogische Hochschule Vorarlberg](#) (University of Education Vorarlberg)

Interested teachers are given an insight into the work of the Kunstverein in terms of concept, programme and communication. A second focus of the event is always the respective exhibition. The exhibited works of the individual artists are used to discuss approaches and thus mediation approaches to the respective medium.

You can find more information here: www.kunstraumdornbirn.at



Images: Christa Bohle in a workshop with kids, Kunstraum Dornbirn 2022, Photos Darko Todorovic

Reiseziel Museum

6 July, 3 August and 7 September 2025

[Reiseziel Museum](#) (Destination Museum)

Families can once again look forward to a great museum summer with 'Reiseziel Museum'! On Sundays on 6 July, 3 August and 7 September 2025, young and old alike can go on a journey. The participating museums in Vorarlberg, Liechtenstein and the canton of St. Gallen will open their doors and bring the museum to life with entertaining family programmes.

Here at Kunstraum Dornbirn, art educator [Christa Bohle](#) prepares a great programme for young and old: immerse yourself in the fabulous landscape of Scottish artist Karla Black. After you have explored it, you can experiment and create your own works of art

You can find more information here: www.reiseziel-museum.com

Karla Black at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Education: dates and formats

Kindersommer

14 – 18 July 2025 and
21 – 25 July 2025

Children's summer in the Stadtgarten - fun and games in a two-week programme

inatura, Stadtmuseum Dornbirn, vai Vorarlberger Architektur Institut and Kunstraum Dornbirn are jointly inviting children to one of Dornbirn's most beautiful areas. Children between the ages of seven and eleven can spend two weeks with us from Monday to Friday as young researchers, artists and architects.

Art educator Christa Bohle organises one workshop per week for the Kunstraum Dornbirn to accompany the exhibition by Karla Black.

You can find more information here: www.kunstraumdornbirn.at/education



Images: Buntes Duo with Matthias Bildstein, Pinguin Workshops, Halle5, Dornbirn, Photos Barbara

Buntes Duo

A format of Double Check. The network for culture and education in Vorarlberg

Buntes Duo

Double Check offers us the perfect framework to actively promote the cultural participation of young people with the 'Buntes Duo'. On the one hand by looking at and experiencing art, on the other hand by becoming active themselves based on the respective exhibition in the Kunstraum Dornbirn. We learn a lot from each other!

From April 2024 to April 2025, the Kunstraum Dornbirn, class 2d/3d of the Mittelschule Markt Dornbirn and 'Pinguin Workshops' (Halle5) have joined forces. The content of the workshops is based on the experience and production of art. Two formats are used: Action tours with art mediator Christa Bohle at Kunstraum Dornbirn and workshops in open studio format with Matthias Bildstein and Manuel Lunardi at 'Pinguin Workshops', Halle5,

Karla Black at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Education: dates and formats

Dornbirn. We will continue this successful cooperation from September 2025 with another school class from Mittelschule Dornbirn Markt.

You can find more information here: www.kunstraumdornbirn.at/education



Image: Buntes Duo with Matthias Bildstein, Pinguin Workshops, Halle5, Dornbirn, Photo Barbara Marte

About us

Kunstraum Dornbirn was founded in 1987 as a non-profit association with the aim of presenting and communicating contemporary art. Since 2003, the exhibitions have found ideal conditions for the showing of large-scale installations in the historic assembly hall of the former Rüscher-Werke, a machine factory in Dornbirn's Municipal Gardens (Stadtgarten). The quality of the architecture in its original, raw state offers space for the presentation of current trends in international art. We show established, internationally renowned artists and newer positions in about four exhibitions every year.

The exhibition history of Kunstraum Dornbirn is marked by international artists such as Toni Schmale (2024), Chiharu Shiota (2023), Monika Sosnowska and Robert Kuśmirowski (both 2022), Tony Oursler (2021), Atelier Van Lishout and Claudia Comte (both 2020), Hans Op de Beek (2017), Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg (2016), Berlinde de Bruyckere (2015), Not Vital and Tue Greenford (both 2012), Jan Kopp (2010) and Mark Dion (2008), and Austrian artists such as Sophie Hirsch (2025), Judith Fegerl (2023), Peter Sandbichler (2021), Bernd Oppl (2019), Thomas Feuerstein (2018) and Roman Signer (2008).

Location and infrastructure

Vorarlberg is located in the four-country region around Lake Constance, with fast routes to and a lively exchange with Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein as well as other parts of Austria. The region is not only scenically attractive for tourism but can also boast the further appeal of the most diverse institutions' dense and high-quality cultural activities in the performing and visual arts.

The large brick assembly hall was built on the grounds of the Rüscher-Werke in 1893. In 1999/2000, the area was redesigned as municipal gardens in an international landscape planning competition. The re-design preserved important buildings of the Rüscher-Werke such as the assembly hall and created an urban recreational and cultural site. With a length of 30 metres and a width of 14 metres, the hall measures a total area of 420 m².

Support

The exhibition programme is realized thanks to the support of our subsidy providers, sponsors and project partners!

Subsidy Provider City of Dornbirn | State of Vorarlberg | Republic of Austria

Main Sponsor Dornbirner Sparkasse Bank AG

Project Partner inatura | Ö1 Club | Proxi Design | Double Check