

With *Marisa Merz. Il cielo è grande spazio / The Sky Is a Great Space*, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg presents for the first time in Austria and after more than ten years in the German-speaking countries a comprehensive retrospective of the oeuvre of the outstanding Italian artist Marisa Merz (b. Turin, IT, 1926).

The Museum der Moderne Salzburg celebrates Marisa Merz, who was born in Turin, Italy, in 1926, with a comprehensive retrospective of the oeuvre she has built in five decades. In the 1960s, Merz translates the interplay between her roles as artist, wife, and mother into a unique creative idiom. Defying the formal conventions of visual art, she largely relies on pliable materials such as aluminum, copper wire, nylon, wax, and unfired clay. To the artist's mind, her work is not a chronological succession of self-contained objects; she leaves most of her pieces untitled and undated and remakes and transforms shapes and elements of works in varying arrangements.

Marisa Merz is regarded as the only female protagonist of Arte Povera, a loose association of artists working in Genoa, Turin, and Rome that also includes her husband Mario (Milan, IT, 1925 – Turin, IT, 2003). The Poveristi—the label was coined to describe their work in 1967—draw attention with works based on “poor” and mundane materials. The monumental aluminum “Living Sculpture” (1966), which came into being in Marisa Merz's apartment and grew into a sprawling installation, is first on public display in Turin in 1967. Although she articulates the unity of art and life perhaps more radically than any other artist, her work and her influence on others are not widely recognized in the international art world until fairly late in her career.

With this exhibition—the title quotes a poem by the artist—the Museum der Moderne Salzburg is the first institution in Austria to host Marisa Merz's art in a literal “great space.” The most recent pieces are the point of departure for an exploration of the oeuvre that includes her paintings, drawings, and enigmatic sculptural heads and faces from the 1990s and 1980s and reaches back to the artist's beginnings in the 1960s. Marisa Merz's poems in the original Italian round out the installation.

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