

SEAWORLD VENICE

WWW.INYOURPISS.AT



INSIGHT & THANKS

Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

1. THE PROJECT: SEAWORLD VENICE

The Austrian choreographer and performance artist Florentina Holzinger represents Austria at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia with *SEAWORLD VENICE*, a bold new interdisciplinary commission curated by Nora-Swantje Almes (Gropius Bau, Berlin). Known for her genre-defying work that challenges socio-political conventions, Holzinger conceptualises the Austrian Pavilion as, at once, a sacred building, underwater theme park and sewage treatment plant. Visitors' bodily fluids are turned into living quarters for performers inhabiting the Austrian Pavilion, while also actively contributing to the pavilion's flooding. On view from May 9 – November 22, 2026, the project features a permanent live installation at the Austrian Pavilion, alongside site-specific *Études* – an ongoing body of work the artist has been developing since 2020, consisting of performative actions in public space. The *Études* mark the opening and closing moments of *SEAWORLD VENICE*.



Water, levels rising; water that we drink and excrete in countless cycles every day; water, vital, life-sustaining natural resource and highly managed commodity; water, to plunge in, dive in, and emerge from, transformed. In *SEAWORLD VENICE*, Holzinger explores concepts of purity and impurity, cleanliness and dirt, which are integral both to the water world and to societal and religious belief systems. Purification cycles and rituals are deemed necessary to restore order. Here, the artist makes these visible and proposes that order itself is unstable.

In the flooded pavilion, a jet ski makes its rounds as a monument to the ecological catastrophe driven by turbo-tourism, which continues to collide with a sinking city. Opposite, a monumental weather vane pierces the architecture. Historically used to predict the weather and often adorned with mythological figures in ancient

Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

times, weather vanes were installed on churches from the ninth century onward before being replaced by modern meteorological technologies.



Here, it substitutes the fixed monuments of the past with a rotating, female-led “Deposition of Christ”. This symbol of a holy descent transforms into a revolving monument of collective strength.



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at



At the back of the pavilion, the promise of progress continues to unfold as a “Frankensteinesque” dystopia: robot dogs move through rising water behind glass, acting as mechanical watchdogs for a central sacrificial altar: a large aquarium flanked by toilets. In the courtyard, a performer lives inside a water tank sustained by visitors’ urine, inhabiting the Austrian Pavilion continuously throughout the Biennale. Living in this reservoir, the performer strips away the inherited romanticism of Giorgione’s *Sleeping Venus* (1510) – art history’s first known reclining nude, painted in Venice. She is no longer a silent muse resting on velvet, but a survivor staring out from the wreckage of a civilisation dissolved in urine. In a city where mass tourism collides with ecological fragility, the idea of “beauty” in Venice cannot be separated from the waste it produces.

In response to the Biennale’s theme, *In Minor Keys*, SEAWORLD VENICE employs the abject to subvert polished spectacles of power and progress. By orchestrating a forceful collision between flesh and machinery, Holzinger ruptures “perfect” aesthetic surfaces to confront the raw, visceral realities of social and ecological breakdown. Within these “minor keys,” the pavilion becomes a site of radical feminist resistance, where the body is reclaimed to dismantle hierarchies and assert agency in a collapsing world.



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

Alongside its presentation at the Giardini della Biennale, *SEAWORLD VENICE* features a series of performances titled *Études*, through which the project becomes an open-ended exploration that evolves across multiple formats and locations. The Venice *Études* are co-commissioned by the Bukhman Foundation, Hartwig Art Foundation and Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery. The *Études* series will continue as satellite projects building narratives across different geographies, and will be presented at the Vienna Festival, the Nitsch Foundation, Kunsthhaus Bregenz, TRANSART – Festival for Contemporary Cultures in Bolzano, and Hartwig Art Foundation in Amsterdam. *SEAWORLD VENICE* will be presented in adapted versions at Gropius Bau, Berlin (March 2027) and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (June 2027) and Amant, Brooklyn, New York (spring 2028).

SEAWORLD VENICE has attracted significant national and international media attention. Long queues continue to form outside the pavilion, reflecting the remarkably high visitor turnout of approximately **40,000** during the first three weeks.

THE ARTIST – FLORENTINA HOLZINGER

Florentina Holzinger combines extreme physicality with theatrical precision to probe the limits of corporeal agency. Working across dance, performance, opera, and theatre, and critically engaging with their histories, the artist blends legitimised “high” culture with pop and countercultural currents to unsettle the lines between spectacle and subversion. Her works experiment with endurance and moments of extremity to make power legible at the level of the body. *SEAWORLD VENICE* derives from this ongoing enquiry, entering into dialogue with Venice, a city defined by its entanglement with water, survival, and the consequences of human intervention.

Holzinger’s works have been awarded the Nestroy (*TANZ*, 2020) and DER FAUST awards (*Ophelia’s Got Talent*, 2023) and have been selected by the Theaterreffen Berlin four times in a row (*TANZ*, *Ophelia’s Got Talent*, *SANCTA*, *A Year without Summer*). In addition to her stage productions, Holzinger creates *Études*, an ongoing series of site-specific, one-off performances in public space that have been presented in collaboration with the Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin; Bergen Kunsthall; Berlin Atonal Festival; and the Vienna Festival, among others. Since 2021, she has been an associate artist at Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin. Since February 2026 she has been represented by Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery.

THE CURATOR – NORA-SWANTJE ALMES

Nora-Swantje Almes is a curator with a focus on performance in the visual arts context and on performative exhibition formats. She has been curator of the Live Programme and Outreach at Gropius Bau, Berlin, since 2024. Prior to this, she headed the Live Programme at Bergen Kunsthall, Norway, for three years, where she developed the commissioned work *Harbour Étude* with Florentina Holzinger and her team in summer 2024. In her curatorial career, she has held positions at Glasgow International, Participant Inc., New York; Artangel, London; and the Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin.

Nora-Swantje Almes explains the project as follows: “*At the Austrian Pavilion, Florentina Holzinger depicts humankind’s complicity in collapsing systems, questioning established structures and the apparent order of things—and revealing that order itself is inherently unstable. SEAWORLD VENICE pushes the limits of exhibition-making, redefining the pavilion as a temporal, porous system in constant transformation. The water’s surface becomes a reflective mirror, turning SEAWORLD VENICE into an encounter with the self.*”

Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion

Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes

info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

2. BEHIND-THE-SCENES

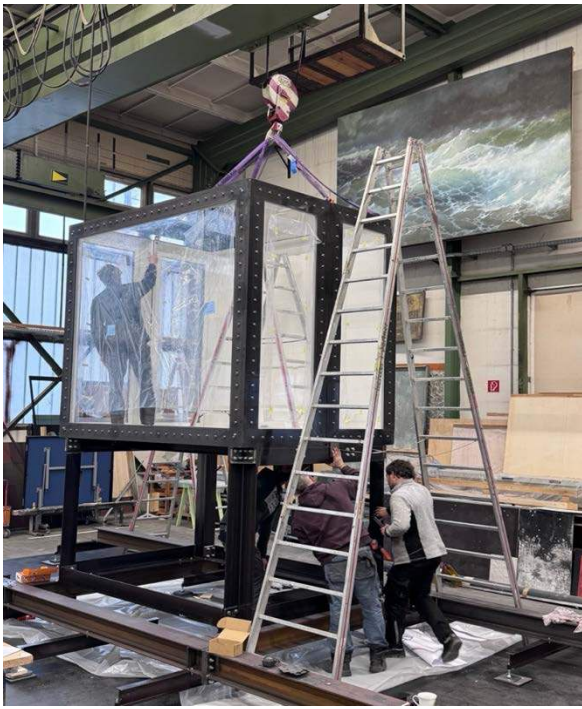
Please note that behind-the-scenes images are confidential.



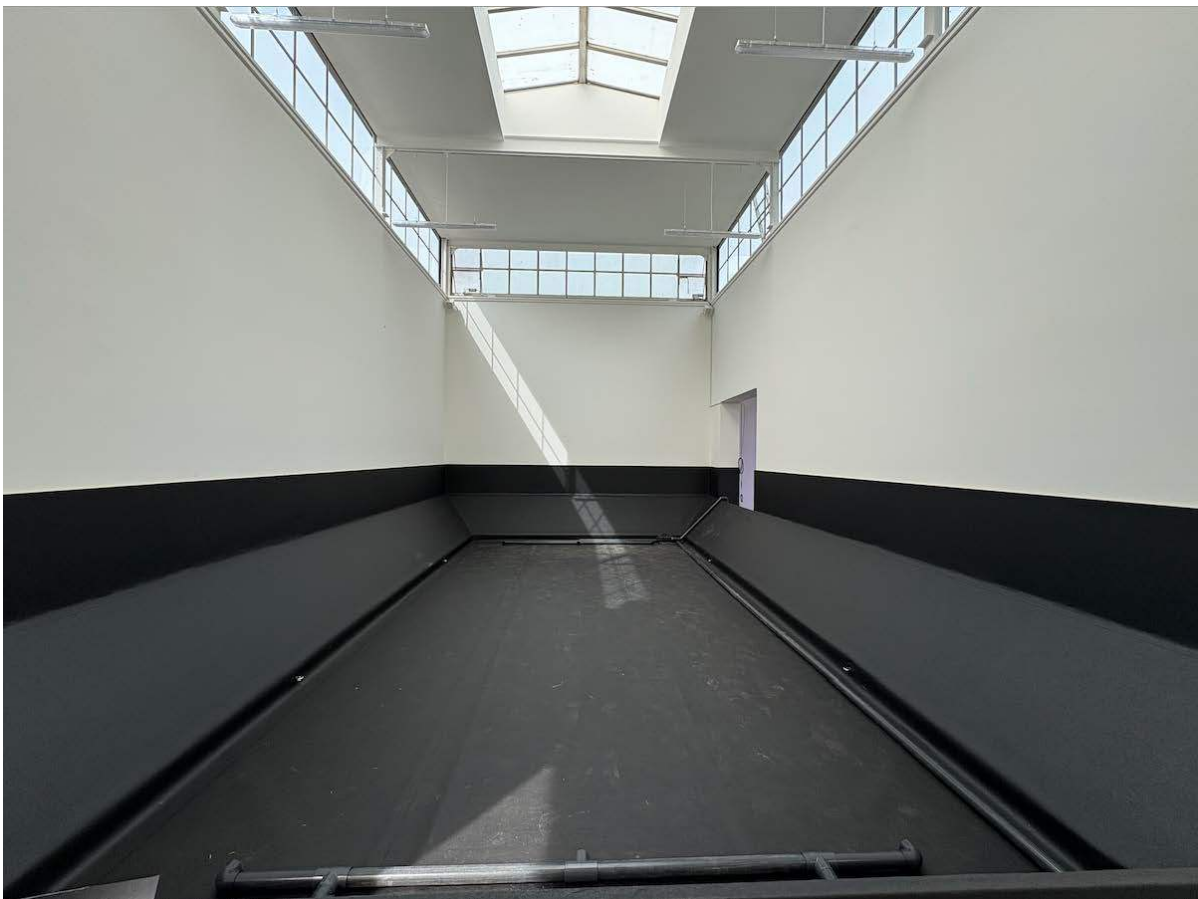
Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion

Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes

info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

3. THE PUBLICATION

On the occasion of Florentina Holzinger's project at the Austrian Pavilion, Bierke Verlag, Berlin, releases **HOLZINGER**—her first major publication—in collaboration with Gropius Bau Berlin and Kunsthalle Wien, edited by Nora-Swantje Almes. The monographic work will bring together perspectives on her artistic practice, visual and choreographic vocabulary, and central themes, and includes texts by Claire Bishop, Caroline Lillian Schopp, Mire Lee, Anna Leon and Nora-Swantje Almes, contributions by Beatrice Cordua, Bettina Kogler, Georg Döcker, Matthias Lilienthal, Sara Ostertag and Felix Ritter, as well as an interview with Florentina Holzinger.

HOLZINGER

softcover

22,5 x 31 cm

176 pages

ISBN 978-3-948546-56-4

German/English

Price: 30 Euro

Editor: Nora-Swantje Almes

Design: Studio Asel Tambay

Publishing house: Bierke Verlag, Berlin



**Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes**

info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

4. THE OPENING

THE OPENING ÉTUDE

The *Opening Étude* serves as an inaugural ritual. Recovered from the lagoon and brought to the Pavilion in a procession, a bell opens the Austrian Pavilion and towers over its entrance: a signifier of the sacred, a marker of the passing of time, a call to gather, a warning. The rhythmic, embodied persistence of a female* performer replacing the clapper, rings out the exhausted structures of patriarchal history and religious authority every hour.

Rising from the depths of the Venetian lagoon and ascending into the city's skies, Holzinger's performers – human and otherwise – reveal the vulnerability and resilience of bodies and the world alike. The artist states, *“In Venice – a city caught in a profound and precarious relationship with water – my ongoing fascination with this element will take on new dimensions. Here, the body will play a central role in exploring the interdependence and interplay between nature and technology.”*



THE OPENING OF THE PAVILION



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

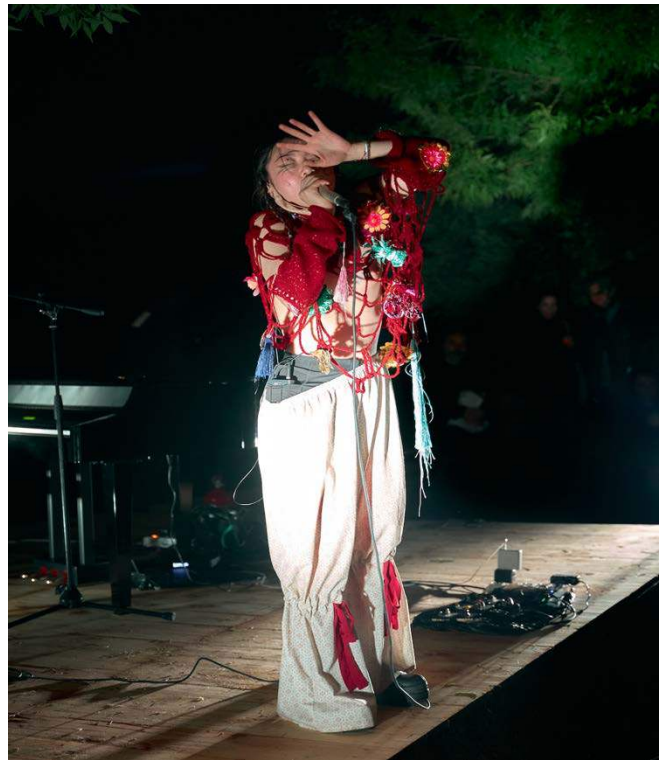
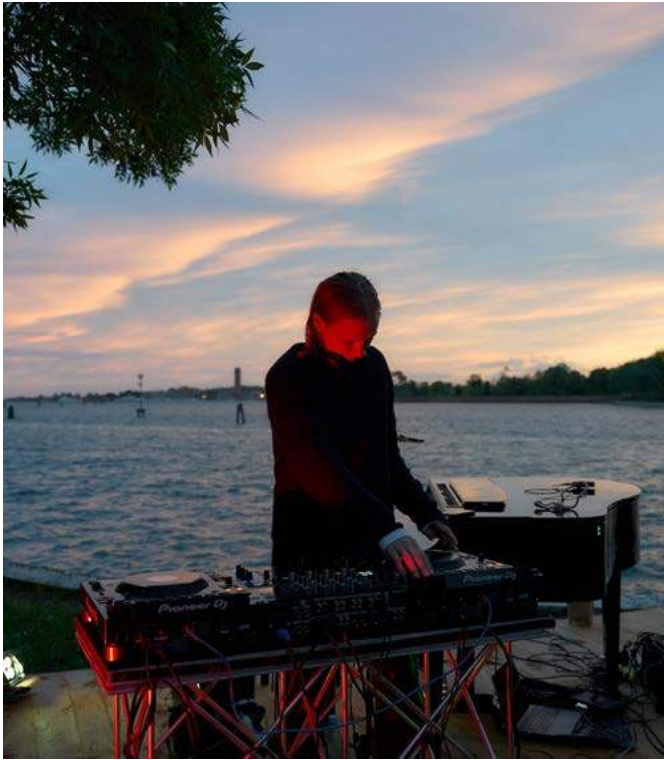


Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

THE PARTY



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion
Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes
info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

TEAM

Commissioner

The Arts and Culture division of the Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport – Republic of Austria

Artist

Florentina Holzinger

Curator

Nora-Swantje Almes

Artistic Team

Space: Nikola Knežević

Composition and Sound: Gibrana Cervantes, Stefan Schneider

Lighting: Max Kraußmüller, with Charlotte Marr

Performance: Achan Malonda, Andrea Baker, Annina Machaz, Audrey Merilus, Bláthin Eckhardt, Bärbel Warneke, Constanza Pérez de Lara, Fibi Eyewalker, Fleshpiece, Florentina Holzinger, Hannah Finn, Helena Botelho Jørgensen, Keity Meier, Laura Pante, Linnéa Tullius, Lucifire Tusk, Luna Duran, Maartje Pasma, Netti Nüganen, otay:onii, Paige A. Flash, Renée Copraij, Renée Eigendorff, Sophie Duncan, Veronica Thompson, Xana Novais

Assistance: Xavier Perez

Dramaturgy Support: Felix Ritter, Michele Rizzo, Sara Ostertag

Production Direction

Sarah Parolin, Katharina Wallisch – neon lobster

Production Management

Martina Merico

Project Management

Julia Bildstein, Katharina Boesch, Leah Diwald, Klara Pilgram – section.a

Technical Production

Technical Direction: Anja Lawrenz, Olaf Lintemann, Stephan Werner

Technical Team: Dörte Wilfroth, Christiane Hilmer, Rozenn Lièvre

Stunt Coordination: Alexander Kusmak (lead), Ronny Horning – Gravity Stunts

Research Partners: Club Sommozzatori San Marco, Freetime Diving

Research Assistance: Edoardo Lazzari, Nadir Zitti Cardenis

Graphic Design

Studio Asel Tambay

Type Design and Production: Robert Janes

Press & Communication

Anna Rosa Thomae, Ena Alva – A R T Communication + Brand Consultancy

Giulia Messia – neon lobster

Fundraising Advisors

The Twentieth

On-Site Support

M+B Studio


Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion

Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes

info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

WE THANK ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

On behalf of

 Bundesministerium
Wohnen, Kunst, Kultur,
Medien und Sport

Lead Partners & Études Commissioners



**Bukhman
Foundation**

**HARTWIG
MUSEUM**

Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Milan Seoul

Partners

FRIENDS OF THE
AUSTRIAN PAVILION
IN VENICE



Robert Ramsauer

Phileas
THE AUSTRIAN OFFICE FOR
CONTEMPORARY ART

Eva Dichand

Institutional Partners

**URSULA
BLICKLE
STIFTUNG**

Berliner Festspiele
**GROPIUS
BAU**

Amant

Kunsthalle Wien

Public Funding



Abt. 14 – Kunst und Kultur



Kultur

Supporters

DOROTHEUM
SEIT 1707



BUNDES
IMMOBILIEN
GESELLSCHAFT

FRANZISKA AND CHRISTIAN
HAUSMANINGER

Gesellschaft der Freunde
der bildenden Künste



Sponsors



BOLLINGER + GROHMANN
Ingenieure



Steuerberatung

LAUFEN

Artbook

In-kind Sponsors



SZIGETI
Don't forget to sparkle.



clean water for the world.

SCHLOSS
Eggenberg

VÖSLAUER



Florentina Holzinger Austrian Pavilion

Curated by Nora-Swantje Almes

info@seaworldvenice.at press@seaworldvenice.at www.seaworldvenice.at

PHOTO CREDITS

- © Nicole Marianna Wytyczak (COVER, 1. THE PROJECT: SEAWORLD VENICE, 4. THE OPENING ÉTUDE)
- © section.a / Agency (2. BEHIND THE SCENES, 4. THE OPENING OF THE PAVILION)
- © Helene Manhartsberger (4. THE OPENING ÉTUDE)
- © Clelia Cadamuro (4. THE OPENING OF THE PAVILION, 4. THE PARTY)