

**MEDIA INFORMATION**

**THE TWO HALVES OF MARTHA WILSON'S BRAIN**

Solo Exhibition

**Opening**

**with performance:** THU 07 06 2018, 7:00 pm

**Duration:** FRI 08 06 2018 – SA 28 07 2018

**PRESS TOUR:** THU 07 06 2018, 10:00 am

**PRESS and**

**IMAGE MATERIAL:** [www.kunstraum.net/en/press](http://www.kunstraum.net/en/press)

**Artists:** Martha Wilson (US) and the artists of the Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

**Curators:** Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein (AT)

**Exhibition design:** Dorit Margreiter (AT)

**SIDE PROGRAMME**

**Curators Tour:** TUE 26 06 2018, 6:00 pm

**Martha Wilson in conversation**

**with Carola Dertnig:** THU 07 06 2018, 5:30 pm

**Workshop with**

**Martha Wilson:** SA 09 06 2018. Martha Wilson is a guest at the Performatorium – Laboratory for a Contemporary Performative Practice

### ***Martha Wilson – The Pioneer of Performance Art is in Vienna!***

*The Kunstraum Niederoesterreich presents a unique showcase of the extensive creative work by Martha Wilson. The exhibition The Two Halves of Martha Wilson’s Brain explores two important sides of this vivacious artist personality and performance pioneer: It features a selection of Wilson’s own works since the 1970s, comprising subversive and original interventions into art and politics. The other key field of Wilson’s activities is Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc., which she founded in 1976. Franklin Furnace provided an experimental space for the then marginalised New York art and performance scene, where she collected and exhibited artist’s books and works by emerging artist colleagues. Today Franklin Furnace ranks amongst the most important reference points in the history of American performance art. The exhibition about Franklin Furnace Archive, which was already on display at different stations in the USA, will now be shown in Europe for the first time. Hence, the Kunstraum offers its local audience a unique opportunity to see and experience Martha Wilson’s two inextricably linked “brain-halves” at the same time. Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein is the curator of The Two Halves of Martha Wilson’s Brain and has made the exhibition possible at the Kunstraum. Together with Dorit Margreiter, who developed the exhibition concept, Thun-Hohenstein has consolidated focused insights into Martha Wilson’s activities as an artist, archivist, curator, and publisher.*

*The Two Halves of Martha Wilson’s Brain exemplifies how productive the subversive approaches of the performance artist were and are. Her artistic works evolved parallel to supporting and collaborating with other female artists. With Franklin Furnace as a platform, this bred a viable network for feminist, societal, and aesthetic issues over the course of the past four decades.*

*“Select documents from the archive correlate with a representative cross-section of the artist’s oeuvre, which can certainly be read as a sublime cartography of the history of feminist performance art,” says curator Felicitas Thun-Hohenstein. Martha Wilson’s artistic work, which she has continuously pursued since the 1970s, is marked by a dissecting, humorous-serious investigation into gender roles, which manifested in satirical performances, photo series, and films.*

*In her feminist-artistic work Martha Wilson plays with diverse forms of humor—however, self-ironic and introspective navel-gazing is one of her main strategies. Merciless, she interrogates the roles that she plays in her life and in the art world and regularly becomes her own object of research; she plays the roles that her personal life holds—from private ones like daughter, mother, wife, friend, and lover to the public like activist, artist, and producer. She dissects and analyzes them, demasking stereotypes and uncovering the traps we women fall into all too easily.*

*(excerpt from catalogue text by Berenice Pahl)*

Between 1979 and 1982 she also did this with her all-girl art punk band DISBAND: None of its members—Martha Wilson, Ilona Granet, Donna Henes, Diane Torr, at times also Barbara Kruger,

Ingrid Sischy, Barbara Ess, Daile Kaplan, amongst others—could play an instrument. DISBAND used plastic bags, newspapers, hammers, and other found objects to make their music. With scathing wit, dry humour, and odd vocals the artists exposed the social injustices and stereotype roles that women have to fight against.

Franklin Furnace Archive Inc.

In 1976 Martha Wilson founded the art space Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc., which has served as an internationally unique showcase for artist's books and a site for performative art production since this time and counts amongst the most important reference points in performance history. Thun-Hohenstein: "Franklin Furnace's performance programme gave esteemed artists like Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson, Carl Andre, Jennifer Bartlett, Renate Bertlmann, Dara Birnbaum, Karen Finley, Jenny Holzer, Lee Breuer, and William Wegman a first opportunity to experiment in a way that would have been inappropriate for mainstream venues that attracted a larger audience."

The Franklin Furnace programme included many historically significant exhibitions of time-based art—for example, exhibitions with Cubist books and prints and shows about Fluxus and Russian Samizdat art; exhibitions which were celebrated by critics and have made a contribution to art historical sciences. In 2006 Franklin Furnace entered into a partnership with ARTstor, a project by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in order to offer researchers around the world online access to the archived documents.

Hosting the exhibition *The Two Halves of Martha Wilson's Brain* is of great interest to the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, owed to Wilson's critical and feminist but also humorous attitude and her focus upon the ephemeral medium of performance. Moreover, the intention of Franklin Furnace was to establish a performance art programme for emerging artists and exhibitions of time-based arts with site-specific works and to facilitate experimentation in the arts—which represents an important precedent for the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich.

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Image material: [www.kunstraum.net/en/press](http://www.kunstraum.net/en/press)

**Opening hours:**

Tuesday–Friday, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm, and Saturday 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Free entrance