

MEDIA INFORMATION

KATHARINA BRANDL NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE KUNSTRAUM NIEDEROESTERREICH FROM 2019

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The future course of the Kunstraum Nideroesterreich is set! The selection committee has appointed curator and scientist Katharina Brandl as the new artistic director of the Kunstraum Nideroesterreich. Brandl follows her predecessor Christiane Krejs, who will retire in January 2019 after 13 successful and intensive years in this function. In her work Brandl addresses critical and provocative issues in contemporary society and has made a name for herself in both artistic and scientific projects. Just recently she curated the captivating exhibition *Magic Circle* for the Kunstraum, which focused on the figure of the witch and queer-feminist reception of witch practices in contemporary art. The appointment of Katharina Brandl spans from 2019 to 2021. In her first press talk on November 6, 2018, she spoke about her future plans for the institution.

The selection committee assessed 57 applications, the majority of them from Austria, eight from Germany, and two from Switzerland. The jury explained its decision as follows: “Katharina Brandl is well-connected in Austria and abroad and stands out with her sense for topical issues in the arts of our time. Her previous career evidences her active engagement in collaborative and interdisciplinary art projects as well as her enthusiasm and communicative talent.”

In the past 13 years the Kunstraum Nideroesterreich has established itself as a platform for young contemporary art forms and as an initiator and supporter of the performance scene. The jury believes Brandl’s appointment will further hone the institution’s profile: for example, strengthening the performative in the arts, facilitating transdisciplinary projects, advancing and shaping current art discourses, and sustained cooperations between the Kunstraum Nideroesterreich and art universities and other national and international art institutions, to name just the key points.

In her statement on the occasion of her appointment Katharina Brandl highlights the artistic orientation of the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich and her own strategic focus: “For me, the interesting aspect of the Kunstraum’s profile is its commitment to contemporaneity. In my understanding, first and foremost, this means to contemplate: In what times are we living actually? What does it mean when we say we live in an algorithmized present?”

Brandl proclaims a focus on the pressing concerns and transformations in society, such as “the digitalisation of our co-existence and our work world, the simplification strategies in an ever more complex world, or the ways in which social differences are negotiated.” Visitors to the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich are already acquainted with the curator through the successful exhibition project *Magic Circle* (co-curated by Daniela Brugger), which was realised in spring 2018 and dealt with the feminist reception of witch cultures in contemporary art.

Career path

Katharina Brandl, born 1986, has earned a reputation as curator, scientist, and author. She studied political science and art history at the University of Vienna and critical studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. After several years of work in research funding she has been active as a project leader and researcher in the cultural sector, e.g. for the Austrian contribution for the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2014. Together with Therese Kaiser she initiated *Sorority* in 2013, now the largest women network in Austria, where she was the co-chairwoman till beginning of 2017. Also with Therese Kaiser, she founded the festivals *Business Riot* (since 2015) and *Rrriot* (since 2018), which enthused a total of 5000 visitors in March 2018 with their focus on gender justice in the job market and in the cultural field. Katharina Brandl has been living in Basel since 2016, where she first worked at the University of Basel as a research assistant and as a fellow at *eikones – Center for the Theory and History of the Image*. Presently she is active as a teacher and research assistant at the Department of Art Theory of the Art History Seminar with a focus on digital art, feminist art histories, and performance as a medium of fine arts.

The Kunstraum Niederoesterreich hosted a first press talk with Katharina Brandl on November 6, 2018.
A detailed introduction to the 2019 programme will take place on January 29, 2019 at 10:00 pm.

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