



The Generali Foundation represents an effort in cultural and social responsibility that has remained largely unparalleled in Austria and even internationally: a corporation has lent sustained support for more than two decades to the creation of an accentuated and thematically focused collection of art and moreover backed and frequently initiated a critical discourse that has addressed not only artistic and art-theoretical concerns but also social and political agendas. This engagement has borne fruit in a steady series of exhibitions and publications, ongoing scholarship, and an extensive program of events. In its field, the Generali Foundation has been a crucial actor in Austria as well as on the international stage for many years.

### **Exhibitions and publications**

The Generali Foundation is committed to the classical mission of the museum: to scholarship and the preservation, documentation, and public communication of works of art. Exhibitions are one important instrument for the development of the collection; they are the products of extensive scholarly research into ensembles of works, frequently with an emphasis on underrepresented artists as well as on work that addresses issues of urgent social and art-theoretical relevance. We present two to three solo or group exhibitions—preferably in-house productions, although we also cooperate with other institutions—per year, accompanied by events such as lectures, performances, and film screenings. The exhibition program is conceived in conjunction with our collection efforts: we continually recontextualize works held by the collection by including them in new exhibitions, while conversely designing exhibitions with a view to works we may consider acquiring.

Foundational scholarship and contributions to the historiography of art are the guiding purposes of our publishing program. Publications produced in conjunction with our exhibitions deemphasize the documentation of our own activities in favor of longer-term and editorially demanding contemporary-art-related projects such as editions of previously unpublished writings by artists as well as the compilation and critical analysis of unedited materials.

The collection: preservation, documentation, scholarship, production

The curation and preservation of our collection of international-caliber contemporary art and the scholarly review and documentation of the collection's holdings collection are at the heart of the Generali Foundation's work. The collection currently includes ca. 2,100 works by 170 international artists. Unlike public collections, which aim to present a unified overview of styles and currents, the Generali Foundation's collection derives its prominent profile from an emphasis on individual artistic positions in association with specific topics.

The oldest works in the collection were created in the 1950s, with Conceptual tendencies of the 1960s and 1970s and conceptually oriented work by contemporary artists constituting the core of our collection. More recent acquisitions accordingly tend to be works that reflect on the major accomplishments of conceptually oriented art: the

turn away from the focus on the object (dematerialization) and toward the primacy of language (philosophy of language, structuralism) or idea; the relativization of authorship (Roland Barthes) and the preference for amateurism (deskilling), as well as its revision; process-based and performative registers; and artistic positions that analyze and critically scrutinize the role of media (information technology) and social parameters. The early engagement with sculpture corresponds to the contemporary understanding of this conception of art as a social space and the investigation of the interfaces between art, architecture, and design as well as critical revisions of modernism and postmodernism. The collection accordingly ascribes particular significance to media such as photography, film, video, and installation art that accommodate process-oriented uses and reflect on the "post-medium condition" (Rosalind Krauss), i.e., the eschewal of classical conceptions of the genres.

The collection of the Generali Foundation is not on permanent display. Works are shown at regular intervals as part of our own exhibitions and loaned to institutions in Austria and abroad.

The Generali Foundation has undertaken the scholarly revisitation and restoration of a number of important corpora, including the graphic work and films of Gordon Matta-Clark, the Expanded Cinema group of works by VALIE EXPORT, the group of Prototypes Walter Pichler created in the 1960s, and a number of early video works from Austria and Central-Eastern Europe. On several occasions, artists have produced works especially for the collection. The best-known example is *New Design for Showing Videos* (1995) by Dan Graham, a movable architecture for video viewing that was developed in connection with the Generali Foundation's video collection. Harun Farocki's video installation *Ich glaubte Gefangene zu sehen* (2000), Marjetica Potrč's *Rural Studio: The Butterfly House*, and Angela Melitopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato's *Déconnage* (2011) are more recent joint productions.

In parallel with these activities, the Generali Foundation has systematically built an archive and a library; like the extensive media library (comprising 500 films and videos by the collection's artists and documentation of around 300 accompanying events to date), the archive and the library are accessible to the public in the Generali Foundation's Study Center.

The Generali Foundation is the art association of the Generali Group, based in Vienna; its purpose is the support and promotion of contemporary art. Members are the Generali Holding Vienna AG, the Generali Versicherung AG, the Generali Rückversicherung AG, the BAWAG PSK, the Europäische Reiseversicherung, and the Generali Real Estate S.p.A., Branch Austria.