

Press release
Zurich, 9 June 2011

Kunsthhaus Zürich presents «Enter the Orbit» with new works by Roman Ondák

From 10 June to 28 August 2011 the Kunsthhaus Zürich is mounting a solo show of works by Slovakian artist Roman Ondák – the first such exhibition at a museum in Switzerland. Ondák, one of the leading proponents of a new conceptual art, has been invited to contribute to the 2011 Venice Biennale. His two new works about the first satellite in orbit, Sputnik 1, were created especially for the Kunsthhaus and are on show exclusively in Zurich.

Born in Zilina in 1966 and living in Bratislava today, Ondák produces works that confound audiences' expectations and playfully question the mechanisms of perception. He views solo exhibitions not simply as the presentation of individual works, but rather as conceptually coherent wholes in which everything relates to and complements everything else. His project for the Kunsthhaus Zürich involves the creation of a universe that revolves around a central idea, addressing issues of time and history, imagination, myth and reality.

SPUTNIK AS THE CENTRAL MOTIF

The leitmotif and starting point of the exhibition «Enter the Orbit» is the satellite Sputnik, the first to be launched into Earth orbit on 4 October 1957. It signalled the start of Soviet space travel and the exploration of the universe. The satellite burned up as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere, but Sputnik became a symbol of technological progress. Its shape – a sphere with four long antennae – has imprinted itself on our collective memory. Today countless satellites circle the Earth, yet the public at large are unaware of their names or what they look like. They have also long since ceased to be symbols of progress, and are instead viewed with scepticism as instruments of constant surveillance.

SYMBOLS OF HUMAN HISTORY

Sputnik's story is linked to the aged-old desire of people to access the inaccessible – a subject that repeatedly informs Roman Ondák's oeuvre. Yet in this case Ondák is concerned with something more: a symbolic moment in human history that is deeply embedded in collective memory, and the way in which it is generally imagined. For the central piece in the exhibition he invited artist-friends to produce with him models and sculptures of the satellite that

reflect their conception of it. This collaborative approach is typical of Ondák's work. Through it, he questions not only the status of the artist and the process of artistic creation, but also that of the original and of the artist's individual style.

SCULPTURE AND TIME TRAVEL

Central installation about Sputnik deals with the topic of sculpture; through this and other specially produced works Ondák links back to the sculptures of Alberto Giacometti, which are on display next door to this exhibition. A total of 96 miniature Sputniks were created for the Kabinettraum and will be displayed in perfect order around the whole room, thus creating sensation as if the sputnik is being there in orbit together with the visitor. The original satellite took 96 minutes to circle the globe. Time, travel and time travel are recurring themes in Roman Ondák's production; the exhibition designed by curator Mirjam Varadinis offers audiences a guided historical tour through both art and time.

Supported by Swiss Re – Partner for contemporary art,
as well as by the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation and the Dr. Georg and Josi Guggenheim Foundation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthhaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Open: Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m. For public holiday opening see www.kunsthhaus.ch

Admission free to visitors 16 and under. Adults CHF 16 / 11 (concessions and per head for groups of 20 or more). Registration required for schools and groups.

Advance sales: SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by ground line), www.sbb.ch. Magasins Fnac: www.fnac.ch.

NOTE TO MEDIA

To download visual material go to: www.kunsthhaus.ch > Information > Press.

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