

**PRESS RELEASE****BRIGITTE KOWANZ*****in light of light*****17 December 2011 – 26 February 2012****Press conference: 15 December 2011, 10 am****Opening: 16 December 2011, 7 pm****Speakers at the opening**

DDr. Herwig van Staa, President of the Regional Parliament of the Tyrol

Dr. Beate Ermacora, Director Galerie im Taxispalais

Brigitte Kowanz, who was awarded the Grand Austrian State Prize in 2009, is unique among the artists of recent years. The medium of light has been central to her artworks since the 1980s. She investigates light by combining it with signs, codes and language, accentuating how essential light – an ephemeral substance – is to our perception system. In addition to her artworks for public spaces, conceptual but with an air of poetry, the objects and installations she creates apply the same illumination to the mechanisms of speech. She consistently includes real mirrors in this reciprocal mirroring of light and language; in her installations, reality and the virtual mirror image interpenetrate, and the boundary between the artwork and the observer becomes fluid. The light-and-mirror installations and shadow spaces presented in the exhibition *in light of light* range from artworks from the late 1990s to more recent artwork cycles. Each room presents a different aspect of Kowanz's artistic philosophy – both of its form and of its content.

The installations, which are specially designed for each individual gallery room, are concerned with the interrelations between light, language and reflection, and with the polarity of matter and light. These two elements interact in multifarious ways that also involve the observer. Brigitte Kowanz's conceptual work is based on an abstract, philosophical thought system supported by scientific and technological insight, but extraordinary sensual qualities and an intense atmosphere characterise this thought system's expression in each of her individual artworks, each space installation.

The extensive mirror installation *Tiefenraum* (2011) transforms the exhibition space into a mirror cabinet that visitors can enter. The two mirrored opposing walls open up the real space to create a space of endless depth, in which viewers encounter themselves multiple times as the states of observing and of being observed coincide. This disrupts the boundaries of the three-dimensional, architectonic real space: reality is undermined by the virtual dimension. In the installations *Zeittiefe* (1997) and *Lux* (1998), Kowanz again uses light-and-shadow projections to create imaginary transference spaces that appear magical. Transparent shaded areas created by projections create architecture that one can walk around in. They surround viewers, making new and different sensory experiences available.

The exhibition also features three early illuminated lettering artworks, in which Kowanz references DNA code. In *Discs*, the most recent artwork featured in the exhibition, Kowanz creates fascinating spatial illusions by applying the rhythm of Morse code to light and shadows. Kowanz's evocative artworks spring from the complex interplay of the elements of light and shadow, projections and reflections and nullify spatial boundaries, creating new, virtual spaces.

**Brigitte Kowanz**

1957            born in Vienna, now lives and works in Vienna  
1975 – 1980    studied at the Hochschule für angewandte Kunst, Vienna  
since 1997     Professor at the Universität für angewandte Kunst, Vienna  
2009            Grand Austrian State Prize

Brigitte Kowanz came to prominence with a number of group and solo exhibitions.

Selected solo exhibitions: 2010: *Now I See*, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; Galerie Krobath, Vienna; GALERIE NIKOLAUS RUZICKA, Salzburg; 2008: *Brigitte Kowanz – Spatial Extension*, Häusler Contemporary, Munich; *Intervention: Brigitte Kowanz*, Oberes Belvedere, Vienna; 2007: *VO\_LUMEN*, Kunsthalle Krems; 2005: *Brigitte Kowanz – Energetische Resonanz*, Zentrum für Internationale Lichtkunst, Unna.

Selected group exhibitions: 2011: *Live Theory*, Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery, New York; 2008: *genau+anders, Mathematik in der Kunst von Dürer bis Sol LeWitt*, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; 2006: *Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht*, ZKM – Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe.

**Artist book**

Brigitte Kowanz – in light of light  
Texts (German / English) by Beate Ermacora and Gregor Jansen  
Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2012

**Supporting programme**

**Tues, 10.1.2012, 7 pm**

**Artist Talk**

Brigitte Kowanz interviewed by Beate Ermacora

**Wed, 15.02.2012, 7 pm**

**Lecture**

*Lichtbesprechung und Sprachbeleuchtung (Light expression and language illumination)*  
Rainer Fuchs, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna