
KUNST HISTORISCHES MUSEUM WIEN



NOVEMBER 6, 2018
TO APRIL 28, 2019

SPITZMAUS MUMMY IN A COFFIN AND OTHER TREASURES WES ANDERSON AND JUMAN MALOUF

In 2012, the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna initiated a new series of exhibitions for which remarkable creative individuals are invited to present their own personal selections of objects drawn from the museum's historical collections. The museum's collections number more than four million objects, and span a period of five thousand years. The first exhibition, titled *The Ancients Stole All Our Great Ideas*, was selected and curated by the painter and draughtsman Ed Ruscha. This was followed in 2016 by the exhibition *During the Night*, selected and curated by the British ceramicist and writer Edmund de Waal.

The third instalment of the series, opening on 6 November 2018, has been selected and curated by the filmmaker Wes Anderson and his partner, the writer and illustrator Juman Malouf. With assistance from the museum's staff of curators and conservators, Anderson and Malouf have assembled more than 400 objects drawn from all fourteen of the museum's historical collections. Among them are Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities, Old Master paintings, selections from the *Kunstammer* and the *Imperial Treasury*, items from the *Imperial Armoury*, *Coin Collection*, and *Collection of Historic Musical Instruments*, as well as pieces from the *Theatermuseum*, the *Weltmuseum*, the *Imperial Carriage Museum*,

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and Schloss Ambras Innsbruck. A handful of special guests from the Natural History Museum are also included. Particular attention was given to the museum's storage: more than 350 of the objects have been brought from depots, with many of them on public display for the very first time. The result is titled *Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and other Treasures*.

The gathering and arrangement of these treasures – from the earliest, a necklace of ceramic beads strung together in Ancient Egypt, to the most recent, a wooden monkey carved in Indonesia almost 5,000 years later – suggest the spectacular breadth, depth, history and complexity of the Kunsthistorisches Museum's collections.

On the exhibition, the Kunsthistorisches Museum's director Sabine Haag has said: *„My gratitude to Wes Anderson and Juman Malouf for having accepted our invitation to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and for having found a convincing format for their aesthetically highly stimulating presentation of their encounter with our objects. We hope that this spectacular project will inspire many visitors to see our collections in a new light at the Kunsthistorisches Museum.“*

The exhibition is a collaboration between the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna and the Fondazione Prada. The exhibition will be presented at the Fondazione Prada, Milan, from autumn 2019. It is curated by Wes Anderson and Juman Malouf, with assistance from Jasper Sharp (Kunsthistorisches Museum) and Mario Mainetti (Fondazione Prada). It is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with text contributions from Sabine Haag, Jasper Sharp and Wes Anderson.

Exhibition design: Itai Margula (Margula Architects)

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BIOGRAPHIES

Wes Anderson was born in Houston, Texas. His films include *Bottle Rocket*, *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, *The Darjeeling Limited*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. His latest film, *Isle of Dogs*, came out in 2018.

Juman Malouf was born in Beirut, Lebanon and grew up in London. She has designed and illustrated for theatre, film, and fashion in the US and Europe. Her first novel, *The Trilogy of Two*, was published in 2015.

WES ANDERSON ON THE EXHIBITION

While Juman Malouf and I can take no credit for the conception and creation of any of the works of art included in this exhibition, we do harbor the humble aspiration that the unconventional groupings and arrangement of the works on display may influence the study of art and antiquity in minor, even trivial, but nevertheless detectable ways for many future generations to come.

Some of the links are more immediately apparent than others. We situate the seventeenth century emerald vessel in a confined space opposite the bright green costume from a 1978 production of Hedda Gabler in order to call attention to the molecular similarities between hexagonal crystal and Shantung silk; we place the painting of a seven-year-old falconer (Emperor Charles V) next to the portrait of a four-year-old dog owner (Emperor Ferdinand II) in order to emphasize the evolution of natural gesso; a box for the storage of Spanish powdered wigs goes next to a case for the storage of the crown of the king of Italy because both were so clearly shaped and formed by the introduction of the hinge. The list goes on.

True: one of the Kunsthistorisches Museum's most senior curators (educated, of course, at the University of Heidelberg) at first failed to detect some of the, we thought, more blatant connections; and, even after we pointed most of them out, still questions their curatorial validity in, arguably, all instances. But, should our

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experiment fail on these levels, we are, nevertheless, confident it will, at the very least, serve the purpose of ruling out certain hypotheses, thereby advancing the methods of art history through the scientific process of trial-and-error. (In this case, error.)

Our hope, however, is we will shed some light into corners that had previously been too dim for comfortable viewing.

(Text from the exhibition catalogue)

CURATOR
JASPER SHARP
ON THE EXHIBITION

In recent years, the Kunsthistorisches Museum has extended invitations to a handful of remarkable creative thinkers. The invitation is always the same: to spend an extended period of time with the museum's historical collections, in the company of our curators and conservators, with the purpose of making a personal selection of objects for public display in the form of an exhibition. Straightforward, on the one hand, but also somewhat overwhelming, for the collections of the museum number more than four million objects, span a period of five thousand years, and reside in an assortment of treasure palaces spread between Vienna and Innsbruck. Add to that the large number of objects sitting out of sight in deep storage, and the scale of the task begins to take shape.

The idea for this programme originated in a small catalogue found some years ago in a New York bookshop. Documenting an exhibition that travelled between three different museums in the United States in 1969/70, *Raid the Icebox I with Andy Warhol* was a groundbreaking project whose impact continues to reverberate half a century later. Warhol, then forty years old and recovering from a traumatic attempt on his life, was invited by Jean and Dominique de Menil to curate an exhibition drawn from the collections of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art. Prompted by a visit to the museum's overcrowded basement storage, Jean de Menil put forward a series of questions:

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What would happen if some important contemporary artist were to choose an exhibition from the reserves?

If the only organizing principle would be whether or not he liked whatever he saw?

Would the result be different from having a storage show chosen by a curator? Or by anyone?

If the artist who selected the materials were strong enough, would he impose his personality on the objects?

And if he were famous enough, would it not oblige the curious to look?

The selection of objects from the museum's storage that Warhol made and the methods that he chose to present them were provocative and unconventional, assaulting the principles of connoisseurship and established institutional yardsticks for considering the relative value of objects. He could not have known it at the time, but the exercise would establish a lasting template for the reimagining of museum collections through the introduction of an artist as curator.

Our own programme of artist-curated exhibitions was inaugurated in 2012 with a project by the American painter and draughtsman Ed Ruscha, and continued some years later with the British ceramicist and writer Edmund de Waal. Both adopted an intensely personal approach, in their own different ways, and visitors responded by taking up the challenge to try to step into the mind of the person who had made the selection, and to understand the reasoning behind its various decisions.

An answer as to who might follow them came on a cold January morning in 2015, when I was introduced through a mutual friend to the filmmaker Wes Anderson and his partner Juman Malouf, a writer and illustrator. We spent a long morning together at the museum, first in the *Kunstkammer* and then upstairs in the Picture Gallery. It quickly became apparent that they already knew our collections well. A long lunch and a lengthy email conversation later, we began work on the third installment of the series. I had seen enough of Wes' films to know that this was going to be quite unlike anything we had done before, a feeling confirmed when I was given a copy of Juman's debut novel later that same year.

After establishing the basic parameters of the project, Wes and Juman set about dismantling them in the most charming of ways.

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Their approach was governed from the very beginning by intuition and excitement. They visited all of the collections on public display, photographing and making notes as they went, before venturing below ground into a succession of storage spaces. As ideas began to take shape, all sorts of possible approaches were considered. Some months later, on the second of two extended visits, a plan emerged.

The selection of objects, when it began, happened quite quickly. Ideas poured in from our curators, and over several months the contents of the exhibition were sifted and sorted. All fourteen historical collections of the museum were to be represented, including the Theatrumuseum, the Weltmuseum, and Schloss Ambras in Innsbruck, along with a few guests from our twin building opposite, the Natural History Museum. Particular attention was given to objects in the museum's storage. Of the 423 individual objects that make up the final exhibition, more than 350 have been brought out from the depots, several of them for the very first time.

While their exhibitions are markedly different, Wes and Juman have pursued similar lines of thinking to those of Warhol. Objects were selected instinctively, without any detailed or scientific understanding of their rarity, provenance or exhibition history. Objects of great importance that normally sit alone in individual showcases have been grouped together into collective vitrines, bit-part players in an unfamiliar performance. Others have been brought out from the wings and placed centre stage. Objects made by unknown hands in far corners of the world sit next to objects made by some of the greatest masters of European art history. And in many cases, objects that have been housed in the same imperial collection for many hundreds of years are meeting here for the first time. With this in mind, it feels entirely appropriate that the exhibition is being presented within the rooms of the *Kunstkammer*, in whose origins we can find the very earliest strategies of display, systems of order and organization, and play of relationships between objects.

(Text excerpt from the exhibition catalogue)

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PRESS PHOTOS

Press photographs are available in the press section of our website free of charge, for your topical reporting:

<http://press.khm.at>.



Coffin of a Spitzmaus (Shrew)

C. 4th century BC

© KHM-Museumsverband



Coffin of a Spitzmaus (Shrew)

C. 4th century BC

© KHM-Museumsverband

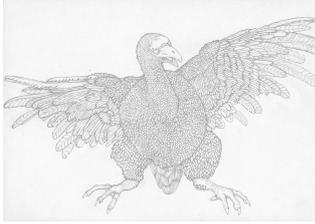


Coffin of a Spitzmaus

Pencil drawing

© Juman Malouf

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Phoenix
Pencil drawing
© Juman Malouf



**Madeleine Gonsalvus,
Daughter of the Hirsute Man Petrus Gonsalvus**
Pencil drawing
© Juman Malouf



Emerald vessel
Pencil drawing
© Juman Malouf



Eve and Adam
Pencil drawing
© Juman Malouf

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„Püsterich“ (Fire Blower)

Pencil drawing
© Juman Malouf



Wes Anderson and Juman Malouf

Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna
© KHM-Museumsverband

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CATALOGUE

Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and other Treasures

Wes Anderson & Juman Malouf

Sabine Haag and Jasper Sharp (Eds.)

(German/English)

Vienna 2018

ISBN 978-3-96098-444-3

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Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König

Price: € 30

Available in the museum shop or online at <http://shop.khm.at>

EDITION

The exhibition is accompanied by the limited edition *Spitzmaus* produced by Juman Malouf.

Price: € 295

Available in the museum shop or at <http://shop.khm.at>

AUDIO GUIDE

An audio guide in German and in English accompanies the exhibition. In both versions, Wes Anderson, Juman Malouf and actor Jason Schwartzman talk about the exhibition in original English language.

PRIVATE GUIDED TOURS

Book a private tour of the exhibition for yourself, for your friends and family, or for your company.

Information & booking: T +43 1 525 24 - 5202

Mon–Fri, 9am–4pm Uhr / kunstvermittlung@khm.at

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„SPITZMAUS“ EXCLUSIVE

Enjoy the special exhibition exclusively outside the opening hours for your private event. Invite your guests or your employees for a glass of champagne or a breakfast and a guided tour of the exhibition.

Please direct your requests at event@khm.at

More information at:

<http://www.khm.at/en/explore/offers/renting-the-museum/>

KUNSTSCHATZI „SPITZMAUS MUMMY“

Tue, Nov. 20, 2018, 7pm to 11pm

Get your ticket online at <http://shop.khm.at/tickets>

Free entry with the Annual Ticket, the Annual Ticket U25 and for the Young Friends of Kunsthistorisches Museum.

WES ANDERSON RETROSPECTIVE AT VOTIV KINO

From Nov. 7, 2018 to February 17, 2019 the VOTIV KINO shows the retrospective *In Focus: Wes Anderson*. For more information on the full programme and tickets please go to www.votivkino.at/wesanderson

All films are shown in original version.

VIDEOS ON THE EXHIBITION

For videos about our exhibitions and series of talks as well as other lectures and interviews, please go to the YouTube channel of the Kunsthistorisches Museum:

www.youtube.com/user/KHMWien

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INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook and get the latest news about the upcoming exhibition and our programme of events and lectures.

Instagram: @kunsthistorischesmuseumvienna

Facebook: www.facebook.com/KHMWien

OPENING HOURS AND ENTRANCE FEES

Until Jan. 13, 2019:

Open daily, 10am–6pm, Thu to 9pm

From Jan. 14, 2019:

Tue–Sun, 10am–6pm, Thu to 9pm

Annual Ticket	€ 44
Annual ticket under 25	€ 25
Adults	€ 15
Concessions	€ 11
Vienna Card	€ 14
Children under 19	free
Group ticket (p.p.)	€ 11
Guided Tour	€ 3
Audio Guide (Ger./Engl.)	€ 5

Buy your tickets online at:

<https://shop.khm.at/en/ticket-shop/>

Prices are subject to alterations.

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