

14. November 2025 bis 1. März 2026

ANNA HULÁČOVÁ KUNSTRAUM DORNBIRN

dornbirn kunstraum

DORNBIRN

■ Bundesministerium
Wohnen, Kunst, Kultur,
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Anna Hulačová at Kunstraum Dornbirn

Overview

Press preview

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Press preview Tuesday, 11 November 2025, 10:30 a.m.

→ kunstraumdornbirn.at

Events

Opening Thursday, 13 November 2025, 7 p.m.

Artist talk Friday, 14 November 2025, 2 p.m.

Exhibition duration 14 November 2025 until 1 March 2026

Teaser

With “Bucolica”, Anna Hulačová (*1984, Sušice, Czech Republic) creates a world infused with ancient narrative traditions, mythological symbolism and references to art history, while engaging deeply with themes of agriculture and ecology. Her sculptures take the form of hybrid beings and machines, crafted from concrete, ceramics, wood and honeycomb. In an exciting interplay of industrial aesthetics and natural materials, the artist explores in a formally playful manner the depths of the conflict between idealisation and industrialisation of agriculture, civilisation and nature, community and individualism, tradition and progress. *(637 characters incl. spaces)*

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The exhibition “Bucolica” by Anna Hulačová (born 1984, Sušice, Czech Republic) at Kunstraum Dornbirn opens up a world that seems technologically futuristic and yet is steeped in ancient narrative tradition, mythological symbolism, and references to the history of images, profoundly probing the themes of agriculture and ecology. To this end, Hulačová develops a narrative dialectic of reality and fiction, utopia and dystopia. Her sculptures take the form of hybrid beings and machines that oscillate in transitory modes between the representational and the abstract. She combines concrete, ceramics, wood, and honeycombs in a masterly craftsmanlike style. Through the exciting interplay of industrial aesthetics and natural materials, she formally and playfully addresses the depths of the conflict between the idealisation and industrialization of agriculture, civilization and nature, community and individualism, tradition and progress.

In the historic assembly hall at Dornbirn, we are greeted by a bustling scene: people are sowing, weeding and harvesting, taking breaks, operating mysterious tools, carrying a calf, sharing a meal. The figures are human in form and made of concrete, with a mottled grey appearance. Clothing, headgear and hairstyles are roughly contoured. Faces are replaced by ornamental, glossy glazed ceramics or monochrome drawings. Some limbs are unformed: where hands should be doing heavy work, the arms merely taper to a point. In places, honeycombs replace central organs, as in the figure entitled “Calf Bearer” (2025). During the production of the work, the artist placed it in her home garden and her bee colony colonised the empty spaces and gaps in the concrete bodies and floral carving. Thus, in a sense, the sculptural body is reclaimed as a living part of the hive by being incorporated into the bees’ natural building instinct during swarming season. In the ancient concept of “bugonia”, honeycombs represent the mythological symbolism of cyclical renewal and the preservation of life. The sculpture “To Eternity”, a cow’s head lying on its side with honeycombs growing out of its open throat, illustrates this myth: the ancient Greeks and Romans believed that bee colonies were resurrected from the carcasses of animals. The bees connect the realm of the dead with the world of the living, representing the survival of the spirit and, through their contribution to the cycle of nature, ensuring the survival of Earth’s inhabitants.

For almost a decade, Hulačová’s interest in these ancient legends has shaped her sculptural work. She brings the narrative into the present by linking it with formal echoes of the stylised and inflated depiction of workers in Socialist Realism, thus weaving together ancient legends, cultural-historical references, and a unique, forward-looking design and material aesthetics in a very exciting way. In the figure of “The man with the

Hoe" (2025), the honeycombs in his abdominal cavity are combined with the use of a tiny wooden hoe. In pictorial history, this tool was a medieval emblem of peasant labour in harmony with natural cycles, symbolising harvest, fertility and sustenance. We are here somewhere between everyday realism and heroisation, but the sculpture still clearly refers to hard physical labour conforming to the rules of nature. Through the use of machines that span out a field of tension between work, the body, technological progress and ideology, Hulačová's sculptures reflect the transition to industrial work. They spell out traditional depictions of agricultural workers: beginning with the medieval use of tools, through the glorification of agriculture workers operating machines in industrialisation, then on to the utopian visions of progress in Socialist Realism, the avant-garde fusion of body and machine, and finally today's hybrid forms. Hulačová's work encourages us to reflect critically on industrialised agriculture.

In her exhibition at Dornbirn, the Czech artist also explores the theme of agricultural buildings conquering the landscape: her numerous figures and machines populate an area in the historic assembly hall set in front of tall buildings made of shiny sheet metal. A large building with a five-metres high tower and an adjoining nave to which two funnel silos are attached forms the core of the architectural ensemble. On either side of the building stand two cylindrical silos with conical roofs. At the rear right is a storage building composed of several square elements. The metallic, unadorned and shadowy elements allude to the functionalism of agricultural architecture and its monumental effect. In a 1933 essay, Le Corbusier celebrated these buildings as models of modernism, embodying a spirituality that stems from their formal resemblance to ancient temples. Agricultural architecture, he argued, must meet the requirements of industrial production to ensure efficient ways of supplying the world's growing population. Completely detached from all things earthly, a small flying object piloted by a person wearing a peaked cap hovers above.

Like the faceless aviator, all the figures seem to have a purpose, a task, and a direction. They blend in individually and unemotionally with the communal farming work and way of life. There is a vibrant hustle and bustle and, at the same time, a standstill in the rigid concrete of the bodies, as if a film had been briefly paused, or as if they illustrated a narrative. The exhibition title "Bucolica" comes from the ancient poems of Theocritus and Virgil. Bucolic poetry revolves around the idyllic rural life of shepherds and herdsmen in harmony with nature. The influence of this idealising literary form has persisted over the centuries to the present day, stylising nature in art as well as literature as a place of

longing and a source of inspiration, or as a threatened refuge, the antithesis of the urbanised and digital world. With their references to social and political circumstances, the motifs and elements of bucolic poetry are a mirror of their times, now as then.

Hulačová is interested in the facets of rural and peasant life as heritage and as vision of the future, as motivic co-optation and as reality check. She examines agricultural developments and their traditional narratives in relation to the present, shaping them into beings and machines whose corporeality and function have been transformed. The figures are driven by the demands of productivity, yet held back by the dysfunctionality of the machines and bodies. What keeps the capitalist system running is here only hinted at. Thus the idealisation of rural work, production and community, the harmony with nature invoked in Virgil's poetry, continuing through to the beginnings of industrialisation in the 19th century, the definition of functional elements in Le Corbusier's aesthetic language, the futuristic utopias and today's dystopias – all this is cast into a chart of epic proportions. In Hulačová's work, everything has existential weight: when it comes to the tension between man, machine and nature, nothing less than the relationship between past, present, and future is at stake.

But the work does not content itself with backward-looking idealisation of monocultural agriculture or reappraisal of collectivisation in former Czechoslovakia. On the contrary, the artist reaches into a dystopian future, parts of which have long since become our present. Christian elements such as the breaking of bread in "Klučov Eaters" (2023) stand alongside figures such as the "Jester with Toaster" (2025) – the latter a jester carrying a toaster, recognisable by his typical clothing and the motifs of playing cards on slices of bread. Chance, fate, play, or deception encounter the domestic sphere of everyday objects serving essential needs. The connection is humorous, bittersweet, perhaps caricaturing. The jester seems to embody a bet on our future. But Hulačová packages the bet so masterly in sculptural traditions, in folkloric craftsmanship and an outstanding formal language and aesthetics, that she is able to add a dimension of hope to the dystopian future.

Communicating the content of contemporary visual art is an important part of our work. In addition to public guided tours, numerous groups visit the exhibitions, from kindergartens to museum friends' groups. Workshops and educational co-operations with educational specialists such as Christa Bohle and artists such as Matthias Bildstein broaden the focus of our educational work for children and young people.

The following formats and educational information on Anna Hulačová's exhibition are in preparation:

Artist talk

14 Nov 2025, 2 p.m.

Artist talk

The Czech artist Anna Hulačová provides an insight into her new work in the historic assembly hall of the Kunstraum Dornbirn, as well as her artistic œuvre. Admission to the talk is free.

After-Work-Tour

27 Nov 2025 and
26 Feb 2026

After-Work-Tour

Thursdays at 6 p.m.

Short tours through the exhibition provide an insight into the artistic work and the exhibition.

Exhibition text – now also in simple language

Exhibition text – the guide in the exhibition

Visitors are provided with two leaflets that differ in terms of the complexity of language and content, depending on the target group. The "Kunst Kompagnon" is aimed at specialist audiences and regular exhibition visitors who have insight into or points of contact with the discourses of contemporary visual art.

The light-footed counterpart is called "Einfach Kunst" ("Simply Art"). This short text is easy to understand and provides a low-threshold insight into selected topics of the respective exhibition and artistic work. The contents can also be viewed online:
www.kunstraumdornbirn.at.

Guided tour for teachers

18 Nov 2025, 3 p.m.

Guided tour for teachers | Pädagogische Hochschule Vorarlberg (University of Education

Vorarlberg)

Interested teachers are given an insight into the work of the Kunstverein in terms of concept, programme and communication. A second focus of the event is always the respective exhibition. The exhibited works of the individual artists are used to discuss approaches and thus mediation approaches to the respective medium.

You can find more information here: www.kunstraumdornbirn.at

Buntes Duo

A format of Double Check. The network for culture and education in Vorarlberg



Images: Buntes Duo with Matthias Bildstein, Pinguin Workshops, Halle5, Dornbirn, Photos Barbara

Buntes Duo

Double Check offers us the perfect framework to actively promote the cultural participation of young people with the 'Buntes Duo'. On the one hand by looking at and experiencing art, on the other hand by becoming active themselves based on the respective exhibition in the Kunstraum Dornbirn. We learn a lot from each other!

From September 2025 until July 2026, the Kunstraum Dornbirn, class 3a of the Mittelschule Markt Dornbirn and 'Pinguin Workshops' (Halle5) have joined forces. The content of the workshops is based on the experience and production of art. Two formats are used: Action tours with art mediator Christa Bohle at Kunstraum Dornbirn and workshops in open studio format with Matthias Bildstein and Manuel Lunardi at 'Pinguin Workshops', Halle5, Dornbirn. We will continue this successful cooperation from September 2025 with another school class from Mittelschule Dornbirn Markt.

You can find more information here: www.kunstraumdornbirn.at/education

About us

Kunstraum Dornbirn was founded in 1987 as a non-profit association with the aim of presenting and communicating contemporary art. Since 2003, the exhibitions have found ideal conditions for the showing of large-scale installations in the historic assembly hall of the former Rüschi-Werke, a machine factory in Dornbirn's Municipal Gardens (Stadtgarten). The quality of the architecture in its original, raw state offers space for the presentation of current trends in international art. We show established, internationally renowned artists and newer positions in about four exhibitions every year.

The exhibition history of Kunstraum Dornbirn is marked by international artists such as Toni Schmale (2024), Chiharu Shiota (2023), Monika Sosnowska and Robert Kuśmirowski (both 2022), Tony Oursler (2021), Atelier Van Lishout and Claudia Comte (both 2020), Hans Op de Beeck (2017), Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg (2016), Berlinde de Bruyckere (2015), Not Vital and Tue Greenford (both 2012), Jan Kopp (2010) and Mark Dion (2008), and Austrian artists such as Sophie Hirsch (2025), Judith Fegerl (2023), Peter Sandbichler (2021), Bernd Oppl (2019), Thomas Feuerstein (2018) and Roman Signer (2008).

Location and infrastructure

Vorarlberg is located in the four-country region around Lake Constance, with fast routes to and a lively exchange with Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein as well as other parts of Austria. The region is not only scenically attractive for tourism but can also boast the further appeal of the most diverse institutions' dense and high-quality cultural activities in the performing and visual arts.

The large brick assembly hall was built on the grounds of the Rüschi-Werke in 1893. In 1999/2000, the area was redesigned as municipal gardens in an international landscape planning competition. The re-design preserved important buildings of the Rüschi-Werke such as the assembly hall and created an urban recreational and cultural site. With a length of 30 metres and a width of 14 metres, the hall measures a total area of 420 m².

Support

The exhibition programme is realized thanks to the support of our subsidy providers, sponsors and project partners!

Subsidy Provider City of Dornbirn | State of Vorarlberg | Republic of Austria

Main Sponsor Dornbirner Sparkasse Bank AG

Project Partner EHG | inatura | Ö1 Club | Proxi Design | Double Check