



## Eagle plays with Wiener Werkstätte

### The corporate design of Kunsthalle Wien

The corporate design of Kunsthalle Wien has been developed by the Belgian graphic designer and artist Boy Vereecken. Vereecken's approach links two different design elements associated with the city: the grid of the Wiener Werkstätte and the eagle from the federal capital's coat of arms. The logo of Kunsthalle Wien combines a graphically contentual derivation with an ironically playful execution to take account of an institution that always questions itself, experiments, and changes.

Nicolaus Schafhausen has described the graphic concept as "brutal, but sexy": "the corporate identity corresponds quite precisely to what the Kunsthalle Wien will be in the next years: style-defining, discursive, but also provocative and – which I think is very important – a venue conveying vast amounts of self-irony and fun."

The cubic functionalism of the Wiener Werkstätte stands for a pioneering design which took up the Jugendstil geometric vocabulary of forms and extended it toward a matter-of-fact geometric style with grid-like structures in printed matter.

Next to the lion, the eagle is the classical animal of heraldry and is used in many coats of arms such as that of Vienna, which shows a black eagle with a breast-plate. Vereecken's design draws on this idea of the eagle in Vienna's coat of arms, yet refrains from laying down a definite representation. In accordance with the programmatic orientation of Kunsthalle Wien, the eagle adopts a different form with each exhibition and, in its various visual manifestations, features as a synonym for the institution's versatility. In line with this logic, the eagle not only rises from Kunsthalle as a noble bird of prey, but also as a cartoon character.

Each of the eagles of very different origins forms an ensemble with a graphic grid incorporating the typography. The approach translates the former wordmark "Kunsthalle Wien" into an open concept flexibly adjusting to various contexts. This will lead to an identification of the image of the eagle with Kunsthalle Wien in the long run.

The graphic concept also alludes to Marcel Broodthaers's famous "Department of Eagles," a conceptual museum expressing a critical attitude toward traditional art institutions. An outstanding artistic project that questions the profile of art institutions and pleads for new formats and functions, the "Musée d'Art Moderne. Département des Aigles" provides both an inspiration and a possible reference for the corporate design of Kunsthalle Wien.

Boy Vereecken (born in 1982) teaches graphic design at the Sint Lucas College of Art in Antwerp. He lectured at the Marmara Üniversitesi in Istanbul as well as the Università Iuav di Venezia, the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, and the Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles.

Vereeckens's interest in graphic art and design centers on the study of visual signs as part of a semiotic system that differs according to medium and genre and generates different meanings. Sign systems of this kind are not just means of communication, but construct realities of their own.

#KunsthalleWien #NicolausSchafhausen #BrutalButSexy #Design #Eagle

Press release

Kunsthalle Wien GmbH  
Museumsplatz 1  
1070 Vienna, Austria

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Press office  
Katharina Murschetz  
+43 (0)1 5 21 89 - 1221  
[katharina.murschetz@kunsthallewien.at](mailto:katharina.murschetz@kunsthallewien.at)

Marketing  
Katharina Baumgartner  
+43 (0)1 5 21 89 - 1223  
[katharina.baumgartner@kunsthallewien.at](mailto:katharina.baumgartner@kunsthallewien.at)