

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE & LISTING

**C O N S T R U C T I N G P A R A D I S E**

Paul GAUGUIN  
Oskar KOKOSCHKA  
Jean-Michel BASQUIAT  
Mark DION  
Nives WIDAUER  
Kara WALKER

Mathias KESSLER  
Mickalene THOMAS  
Marissa LÔBO  
Christian Kosmas MAYER  
Hugo CANOILAS  
Moussa KONE

Open daily, 10 AM – 6 PM      Free admission

**FEB 1 –  
APR 24  
2017**

## Exhibition: **CONSTRUCTING PARADISE**

FEBRUARY 1 – APRIL 24, 2017  
Austrian Cultural Forum New York  
11 East 52nd Street, New York

Artists on view:

**Paul GAUGUIN, Oskar KOKOSCHKA, Jean-Michel BASQUIAT, Mark DION, Nives WIDAUER, Kara WALKER, Mathias KESSLER, Mickalene THOMAS, Marissa LÔBO, Christian Kosmas MAYER, Hugo CANOILAS, Moussa KONE**

Curated by Dieter BUCHHART | Curatorial Advisor: Mathias KESSLER

### **JANUARY 31: EXHIBITION OPENING**

6 PM – 7 PM | Artist talk  
7 PM – 9 PM | Reception featuring a performance by Marissa Lôbo

*New York, December 2016* - The Austrian Cultural Forum New York is pleased to present **Constructing Paradise**, a group exhibition curated by **Dieter Buchhart** and **Mathias Kessler** exploring the themes and history of the “exotic” and its interpretation in contemporary art.

The rapid industrialization and urbanization in the late 19th century led society to yearn for a sense of newness and otherness in the face of the modernizing world. As artists like Gauguin became entranced by faraway places, a novel category of imagery illustrating a previously unseen and “undiscovered” part of the world began to pervade the Western canon. The idea of a “wild, untouched exotic” emerged as a product of colonialism, as many of the same justifications for colonial rule also fueled Western curiosity of these foreign lands, making way for a revised colonial narrative: creating desire-worlds to fulfill Western dreams and desires.

**Constructing Paradise** exhibits contemporary reinterpretations of notions of the “exotic” by artists based in Austria and the United States. Taking artworks such as Paul Gauguin’s *Noa Noa* and Oskar Kokoschka’s *Tiger Cat* as starting points, the show assembles a diverse range of work from early contemporary to more recent artistic responses to the modernist imprint of desire and fantasy on contemporary culture. Particularly when juxtaposed with hyperbolized images of modern-day advertising, the exhibition explores the psychological impacts of the modernist image on image culture and the Western psyche.

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

**Dieter Buchhart** is a curator and art theorist. He completed his doctoral studies in art history and restoration science, and has curated numerous exhibitions in renowned international museums and art spaces. He has served as director of the Kunsthalle Krems near Vienna, and has been known for his critical work, contributing to several monographs and art publications such as *Kunstforum International*. As an art theorist he has contributed many catalogue essays, magazine articles, and lectures, his research focus ranging from Expressionism to contemporary art.

Curatorial Advisor **Mathias Kessler** received his MFA in Art Practice from the School of Visual Arts in 2012. He has exhibited internationally, including solo exhibitions at the Kunsthall Rotterdam; Site:Lab, Grand Rapids; Rosphot National Museum for Photography, St. Petersburg; GL Holtegaard Museum, Copenhagen; and Kunstraum Dornbirn. His work has also been featured in international publications and media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *Blouin Artinfo*, *Eikon*, *Kunstforum*, *Camera Austria*, *Die Zeit*, and *Forbes*.

## ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM

With its architectural landmark building in Midtown Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York is dedicated to innovative and cutting-edge programming, showcasing the best of Austrian contemporary art, music, literature, performance, and academic thought in New York and throughout the United States. In addition to presenting three group exhibitions per year in its multi-level gallery space and housing around 10,000 volumes of Austriaca in its state-of-the-art library, it hosts over 100 free events per year in its own auditorium and supports at least as many projects at partner institutions across the nation. Visit [www.acfny.org](http://www.acfny.org) for more information.

Austrian Cultural Forum New York  
11 East 52nd St. (btw. Madison & 5th)  
New York, NY 10022 (212) 319 5300  
Open Daily 10 AM – 6 PM  
Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events is free.

### Directions

#### Subway:

E, M Train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street  
B, D, F, M Train to 47-50 Street/Rockefeller Center  
E, M, 6 Train to 51st Street/Lexington Avenue

#### Bus:

M 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to 53rd Street

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## MEDIA CONTACT

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