# Creative Salzburg: between tradition and zeitgeist

***Rooted in history yet with its fingers firmly on the pulse of the times – Salzburg is far more than a Baroque city with a world-famous silhouette. In the midst of this cultural mecca, we encounter an exhilarating spectrum of extravagant art objects, refined architecture and contemporary design. Even as a music metropolis, Salzburg provides plenty of space for urban dance as well as new music – when you take a peek behind some of those old familiar stereotypes, you will be amazed what you find.***

Galleries and Art Museums: Centers of Creativity

Summer Academy of Fine Arts

Salzburg’s consciousness for art creation and -reflection extends a long way back. In 1953, Oskar Kokoschka founded the “School of Vision” up at Hohensalzburg Fortress, making it the oldest academy of its kind in Europe. Today, the “Summer Academy of Fine Arts” serves as an educational center and platform for around 300 participants from over 50 countries each and every year. Over the past six decades, Salzburg has been a cradle of contemporary art and culture whose variety is quite beyond compare.

Discover new visual worlds at over 50 galleries

Thaddaeus Ropac plays a leading role in Salzburg’s modern cultural scene. In addition to a gallery in the chic Villa Kast on Mirabellplatz, Ropac operates a second location at the Salzburg Halle as well as galleries in Paris and London. Specializing in contemporary European and North American painting and sculpture, here, the works of internationally acclaimed as well as young up-and-coming artists are shown in the form of solo as well as group exhibitions. *Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac* is generally regarded as one of the 100 most important institutions in the international art world, a fact attested to in the British magazine ArtReview since 2002. By 2018, Ropac was listed at 62 – the only Austrian represented in those rankings. [www.ropac.net](http://www.ropac.net)

The large number of galleries deliver a virtually limitless range of themes and offers: from Pop Art and media art, magazines and art installations, to graphic prints and sketches. Since 2008, the *Leica Galerie & Boutique* has been an additional enrichment to the Salzburg gallery scene. The fact that it focuses on photography, if we consider that it is sponsored by a camera empire, is not particularly surprising. Similarly, the *Fotohof* in the Lehen section of Salzburg is also dedicated to photography. In addition to an exhibition space, it also runs a library as well as its own publishing house. In the bright red *Künstlerhaus* on the banks of the River Salzach, the Salzburger Kunstverein has definitely found a befitting home. Here, interested visitors will find two exhibition rooms, the Ring Galerie, as well as over 20 artist studios and a café. [www.leica-galerie-salzburg.com](http://www.leica-galerie-salzburg.com); [www.fotohof.at](http://www.fotohof.at); [www.salzburger-kunstverein.at](http://www.salzburger-kunstverein.at)

Two strong art museums amid architectural extravagance

Thanks to the two locations of the *Museum der Moderne* *Salzburg* at the *Rupertinum* and on the *Mönchsberg*, Salzburg boasts a robust competency center in matters of modern art. Museum der Moderne Mönchsberg, which opened in 2004, is also the epitome of a photo point: Thanks to a spectacular location at the top of a precipitous cliff high above the Salzburg historical district, the Munich-based architectural firm Friedrich-Hoff-Zwink managed to design a building that would simultaneously become a striking city landmark. Hidden behind the light building facade made of Untersberg marble is a 2300 m² exhibition space as well as *Café-Restaurant M32*. The building of the Rupertinum, for its part, was actually documented all the way back in the year 1350, though the so-called “Tongue Beards” by Friedensreich Hundertwasser on the outside clearly hint at the modern aspects of this institution. The Museum of Modern Art Salzburg is regarded as a competency center for Austrian photography post 1945, housing both its own collection as well as the Austrian National Photo Collection. [www.museumdermoderne.at](http://www.museumdermoderne.at)

Art in the Public Realm: a bridge to tradition

**High-quality “street art” of the Salzburg Foundation**

The ***Walk of Modern Art*** makes it possible for people in Salzburg to experience art in public spaces. With utmost dedication, the Salzburg Foundation succeeded in enticing acclaimed international artists to erect artworks in the heart of the City of Mozart between 2002 and 2011. Every year, elite artists were invited to Salzburg to develop their ideas on-location for an art piece in the public realm. As you track down these sculptures, you are simultaneously led to some of the most beautiful locations in Salzburg, though also to some that are quite secluded and unobtrusive, encountering art in extraordinary forms. The works in the Salzburg historical district are easy to reach on foot and free for the general public to enjoy. In July 2013, the 12 art pieces were entrusted to the management of the international Reinhold Würth Collection, which in turn has put the pieces on permanent loan to the City of Salzburg. In 2017, the “Walk of Modern Art” added yet another artwork, this time in Mirabell Gardens. [www.salzburgfoundation.at](http://www.salzburgfoundation.at)

**Würth Sculpture Garden at Schloss Arenberg**

Also under the care of the Würth Collection, the ***Würth Sculpture Garden*** on the idyllic grounds of Schloss Arenberg – in cooperation with the Salzburg Foundation of the American Austrian Foundation – shows outstanding sculptural masterpieces, freely accessible for the enjoyment of the general public.

Art for Everyone

Since 2018, the grounds of *Hellbrunn* *Palace* have also served as a backdrop for public art. The project was launched by Spanish artist Enrique Asensi. That said, in Salzburg you don’t always have to be in a big park to encounter surprising and exciting art pieces. If you roam the historical district with your eyes peeled, you might well discover, for example, projects that were sponsored by the art initiative *Kunst am Bau*, such as those at the entrance to the DomQuartier and in front of the Salzburg State Theatre.

Creative Events: urban dance and modern festivals

Modern dance on the stages of the city

Salzburg has long been regarded as a genuine insider tip when it comes to contemporary dance. With the founding of *Szene Salzburg* in the late 1960s, they managed to create a strong counterpoint to the already well-established Salzburg Festival. And indeed, over the decades *sommerszene* has developed into an internationally acclaimed festival in its own right, focusing the spotlight squarely on the contemporary dance world for 14 days. Theatre, music, film and the visual arts further enrich the program. [www.szene-salzburg.net](http://www.szene-salzburg.net)

The *Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance* (SEAD) was founded in 1993 by American Susan Quinn. Over the years, what was once a small dance studio has been transformed into an internationally acclaimed dance- and education center for contemporary dance and choreography. Numerous events such as guest performances by international dance companies, projects and shows, though also a diverse program of courses, invites interested members of the public to come watch and participate. [www.sead.at](http://www.sead.at)

Modern Salzburg throughout the year

Aside from “sommerszene”, *Winterfest* in the Volksgarten has also created a permanent space for itself on the annual calendar. Founded in 2001, it has grown into the biggest festival for contemporary circus artistry in the German-speaking world. One look at the city’s event program shows that each and every season has something modern and exciting to offer: In springtime, *Performance Days* and the biennial *Aspekte Festival* capture attention, while in autumn, the focus switches to hip-hop festivals and new music performed as part of *DIALOGE* at the Mozarteum Foundation. In the field of new music, the ö*sterreichische ensemble für neue musik* (oenm) enjoys an extraordinary reputation. It is Austria’s leading orchestra in the performance of contemporary music, with its home base right here in Salzburg. [www.winterfest.at](http://www.winterfest.at); [www.oenm.at](http://www.oenm.at); [www.diagonale.at](http://www.diagonale.at)

Architecture: masterpieces in a Baroque setting

After having suffered significant destruction during the last war, Salzburg first had to focus on rebuilding its infrastructure before it could even consider the luxury of projects involving modern architecture. However, beginning in the 1970s and 80s, several such projects were realized in Salzburg, now considered by many to be some of the most beautiful examples of contemporary architecture in the 20th and 21st centuries. The modern and elegant buildings, which have enriched the Salzburg skyline since the turn of the millennium, are both striking yet unobtrusive.

Steel and glass for modern Salzburg

Beyond a doubt, one of the most outstanding of these is *Hangar-7*. Located right next to the taxiway of Salzburg Airport, it is a complete architectural masterpiece, 14 m high, with 1200 tons of steel and 7000 m² of glass replicating the basic form of a wing. Within its walls, it houses a no-less-spectacular aircraft collection, which in turn provides the backdrop for rotating exhibitions by contemporary artists, as well as for one of the most exciting gourmet addresses in Europe, led by “Chef of the Century” Eckhart Witzigmann and Chef Martin Klein. Salzburg architect Volkmar Burgstaller was responsible for bringing all of the plans to fruition, having also remodeled “The Glass Garden” of luxury hotel *Schloss Mönchstein* with the addition of modern steel and glass elements. [www.hangar7.com](http://www.hangar7.com); [www.monchstein.at](http://www.monchstein.at)

Discovering architecture on theme walks

Salzburg’s so-called Archtours are an outstanding way to discover the modern buildings punctuating this Baroque city. Exploring the theme routes, interested visitors will encounter the fully renovated Bezirksgericht courthouse, the building of Salzburg University as well as Salzburg Main Station. The last of these was reopened in 2014 after being completely remodeled, though its modern and functional architecture still finds a place to honor the past in the form of its historically listed central platform as well as the foyer.

Read more at:

[www.salzburg.info/creative-salzburg](http://www.salzburg.info/creative-salzburg)

[www.creativeaustria.at](http://www.creativeaustria.at)

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