

Media Release

Austrian Film Museum: New Location for Conservation Center and Digital Lab in Vienna

Opening of the new Filmmuseum LAB planned for autumn 2024

The Austrian Film Museum is entering a new era: this summer building will commence for a new storage vault and conservation center in central Vienna.

Filmmuseum LAB will establish a center of excellence for film preservation, digitization, study, and education on the grounds of the historical "Arsenal" barracks managed by ART for ART, a federal arts company. The project is made possible by an increase to the Film Museum's annual funding through the Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport (BMKÖS) and the Arts, Culture and Science Department of the City of Vienna (MA 7). In 2024, the Film Museum will relocate its collections from its current location in the suburbs of Heiligenstadt to the new facility.

"Our film heritage is a vital cultural asset that must be preserved and, above all, made accessible. Filmmuseum LAB is an innovative project allowing the Austrian Film Museum to take considerable steps towards even more effectively fulfilling its missions of preservation and education. The newly created facility will be a dynamic site for studying, accessing, and promoting the Museum's diverse collections. The Arsenal and its cultural facilities offer great potentials for synergy, which is why the Ministry is pleased to support the project as a funding body," says State Secretary of Arts and Culture Andrea Mayer.

"Vienna gains another cultural hotspot: Filmmuseum LAB will be a hub bringing together both analog and digital cultural heritage. A key objective is educating young people about film since they will play an even more significant role in the future. Offering a plethora of potential synergies, the Arsenal provides an ideal location for this project. Together with the new photography gallery "Foto Arsenal Wien," a new and unique cultural hub is in development for the people of Vienna and for filmmakers from around the world," enthuses Vienna's City Councilor of Culture Veronica Kaup-Hasler.

"We are very pleased that the completion of this project will validate the importance of our work promoting film as an artform and cultural technology. With Filmmuseum LAB, it will be possible to preserve, curate and research our unique collections of film and documentation sustainably and Vienna will gain a new hotspot for film culture," says Michael Loebenstein, Director of the Austrian Film Museum. "For the first time, artists, researchers, and our partners in the educational and cultural fields will have a central location in Vienna for working with film, carrying out digitization projects, and actively integrating analog and digital film into their own creative and educational activities. We see Filmmuseum LAB as a major step towards modernization and sustainability," Loebenstein adds.

Project Details

An approx. 1,500 m² modern storage facility for film elements, film ephemera, and digital collections will be built at the current site of Arsenal's "Objekt 19" heritage building. A "living archive" and "artistic laboratory," the building will also serve artists and creators, researchers, curators, and other public and non-profit organizations as a center of expertise for studying, conserving, and digitizing film in Vienna. For the first time, the site will also provide the appropriate conditions for the many training and continuing education programs offered by the Film Museum in collaboration with many universities. Filmmuseum LAB represents a solution for the often-discussed structural challenges of sustainably preserving and promoting film's cultural heritage between its analog traditions and the possibilities and challenges of digitization. The project thus sends an important cultural and political message.

The new Filmmuseum LAB will be constructed in collaboration with the ART for ART Theaterservice GmbH, a subsidiary of the National Theatre Company (Bundestheater Holding). ART for ART owns the property where rehearsal spaces for the State Opera and Burgtheater are located alongside costume and props workshops, and a depot. As part of the development of the site, ART for ART plans to establish a "cultural hub" for the visual and performing arts, photography, and film in collaboration with a variety of actors and institutions.

"Filmmuseum LAB paves the way for a cultural hub at Arsenal. In the past few years, the State Opera, Bundestheater, and ImPulsTanz Festival have already given the Arsenal a cultural makeover. The arrival of the Film Museum's storage site and laboratory inaugurates a diversified use of the complex. This encompasses members of the cultural heritage and contemporary art fields as well as the restaurant industry and locations for all kinds of cultural initiatives," sums up Petra Höfingler, ART for ART's general manager.

Planning and building will commence in summer 2022 with an estimated construction time of two years. The additional funds required for its operation (€400,000 per annum) will be borne equally by the Ministry of the Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport and the City of Vienna (MA 7) in the form of an increased annual subsidy.

The Collections of the Austrian Film Museum

Located at Heiligenstädter Straße 175 (1190 Vienna) since 1982, the collections of the Austrian Film Museum encompass more than 500,000 objects (film, photography, documentation, and digital collections). The film collection includes a comprehensive selection of significant film works of all genres and periods, as well as thousands of historical filmic records. The collection of ephemera includes valuable materials contextualizing film history, from estates of film artists to promotional materials and press reviews.

The Film Museum is the repository of the collections of significant international artists including Dziga Vertov, VALIE EXPORT, Gustav Deutsch, Maria Lassnig, and Michael Haneke, and, since 2020, the Film Museum has overseen the mandatory deposit of digital film works funded by the Federal Governments "Innovative Film Austria" program.

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