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Temporary Enchantment – boundless knowledge

(February 2006 until March 2007)

Harald Szeemann's 3-year exhibition cycle, "Temporary Enchantment", goes into its third and final year at the Swarovski Crystal Worlds in Wattens with its focal point "boundless knowledge". Until March 2007, Una Szeemann's audio visual installation on this theme and the newly adapted internet project, [thecrystalweb](#)^o, will be accompanying both the permanent works of art in the display, Ingeborg Lüscher's "Amber Room" and Peter Bissegger's "Prometheus Dome".

Una Szeemann's audiovisual area, which she created in homage to Harald Szeemann in 2006, will be rearranged this year on the theme of "boundless knowledge". The sensually perceivable pictures in the installation depict the overwhelming, almost boundless variety and fascinating beauty of materials that can be found in the cosmos in a crystalline form. These include, for example, vitamins, testosterone and oestrogen, caffeine and LSD, snowflakes, galaxies such as crystal geodes, geometric-mathematic puzzles and molecular microclusters.

The prevailing amount of solid matter in the universe is crystalline. Science attempts to precisely define and describe these substances: crystal can be understood as a homogenous body composed of three dimensional-periodically arranged elementary cells. As a result of pressure and temperature conditions, the free atoms are forced into an arranged, formal structure, meaning nothing more than they *crystallise*. Viewed scientifically, the process of crystallisation is a sign that a material exists in a pure form.

Liquid crystals form the basis of LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays), for example, and are a type of optical indicator for displaying digitally stored information. They are used in various types of screen, from computer monitors to mobile telephone displays. They thereby involve crystalline structures within a liquid

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substrate of polymers (macromolecules). By measuring his body height, pulse or hand temperature, the visitor can experience the operating function of LCDs first hand.

The open approach to the object of “crystal” is also displayed by the virtual museum, the **crystalweb**^o, which has been set up as a website as well as a fixed installation in a room next to the Crystal Showcase. By equipping this area with touch screens as well as the information system *Liquid*, it is possible to traverse the web of thought associations through touch. Crystal therefore becomes comprehensible in art, science, technology and everyday life in all its facets and associations. In the virtual exhibition, “Natural Beauty Crystal Art”, the **crystalweb**^o lures you into the depths of water, the heights of heaven, the expanses of desert and onto the peaks of mountains. Pictures by Ernst Haeckel, Wenzel Hablik, Bruno Taut, Heinz Mack and Olafur Eliasson compose a complimentary natural history to the facts and figures of quantitative natural science.

Historical imagination takes shape in both permanent installations, the “Prometheus Dome” and the “Amber Room”, both modern realisations of myth-focused art rooms and central elements of the display. Ingeborg Lüscher’s “Amber Room” is a replica of the legendary Baroque artwork made out of the profane material sole soap; Peter Bissegger’s “Prometheus Dome” emanates from the vision of the Russian composer Alexander Skrjabin. Together with the **crystalweb**^o and “boundless knowledge” they form a complete work of art made up of music, texts, pictures, aromas and contacts: a long temporary enchantment.

Through “Temporary Enchantment” in the Crystal Showcase of the Swarovski Crystal Worlds, the Swiss curator Harald Szeemann, who died in February 2005, realised one of his last, big exhibition projects – a playground of imagination, characterised by visionary ideas and an art perceptible with all the senses. The theme, “boundless knowledge” takes the place of “KRIST-ALL-TAG” or “Crystal in Everyday Life” (February 2005 until February 2006),

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where Una Szeemann looked at the concept of crystal from various different perspectives and applied free associations to crystal in everyday life. In “Escape Points“, the main theme in the first year of “Temporary Enchantment” (March 2004 until February 2005), she unearthed crystals in architecture and film, in expressionism and science fiction.

Harald Szeemann

Harald Szeemann studied art history, archaeology and journalism in Paris and put on his first exhibition in 1957 in St. Gallen. In 1961 he became director of the Kunsthalle in Bern and consequently made a name for himself organising various highly acclaimed exhibitions.

From 1969 he worked as a freelance exhibition manager with his “Agency of Spiritual Guest Work” and as an independent curator for the Kunsthaus in Zürich from 1981. In 1972 Szeemann organised the legendary “documenta 5” and he was given the responsibility for the Swiss pavilion at the Universal Exposition in Seville in 1992. In 1997 Szeemann took over as curator of the “Biennale” in Lyon, and the “Biennale” in Venice in 1999 and 2001.

He died on 18th February 2005 in Zürich.

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