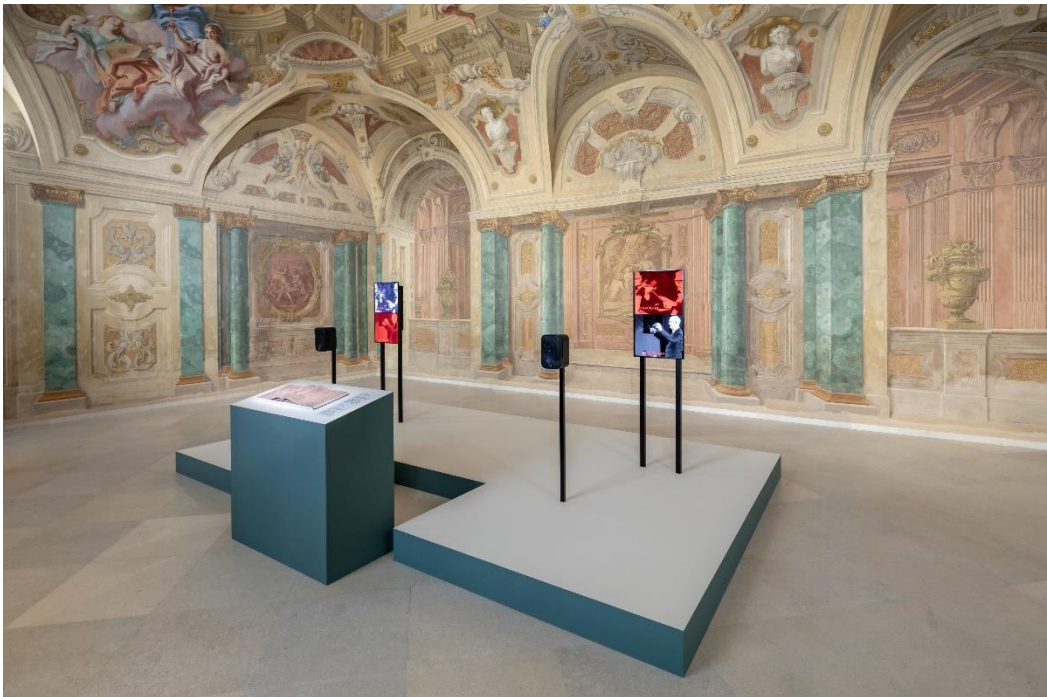


CARLONE CONTEMPORARY
DARA BIRNBAUM
Bruckner: Symphonie Nr. 5 B-Dur

Upper Belvedere
25 April to 29 September 2024



Exhibition view CARLONE CONTEMPORARY: Dara Birnbaum. Bruckner: Symphonie Nr. 5 B-Dur
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The CARLONE CONTEMPORARY series features American artist Dara Birnbaum's (b. 1946) installation *Bruckner: Symphonie Nr. 5 B-Dur*. Birnbaum originally created the work in 1995 for her retrospective in Vienna. The Austrian Ludwig Foundation acquired the work for the Belvedere in 2024. The presentation is a tribute to Anton Bruckner (1824-96) on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of his birth.

In an audio collage, she brings together interpretations of Anton Bruckner's (1824–96) eponymous composition by the conductors Wilhelm Furtwängler and Otto Klemperer. Through this juxtaposition, Birnbaum thematizes political servitude and propagandistic instrumentalization during the time of National Socialism – after all, the work was considered Adolf Hitler's favorite symphony. Using key passages from the score, Birnbaum has arranged an acoustic juxtaposition of the two interpretations and supplemented it with historical film footage of Klemperer and Furtwängler.

General Director Stella Rollig: Dara Birnbaum's installation as part of the CARLONE CONTEMPORARY series at the Belvedere gains historical and political depth from the fact that Anton Bruckner spent the last year of his life in the Custodian's Wing of the Upper Belvedere. His music belongs to the classical canon and is therefore subject to an ambiguous reception history, which the artist addresses.

The Fifth Symphony is characterized by significant revisions by Bruckner himself, as well as by its first interpreter, Franz Schalk, who conducted the premiere in the composer's absence. This context has raised questions about its authenticity and originality, interpretation, and reception. Against this background, Dara Birnbaum was particularly interested in the political exploitation of Bruckner's work during the National Socialism, as it was considered Adolf Hitler's favorite symphony. Hitler's admiration for the composer and the subsequent National Socialist canonization of his oeuvre was exemplified, above all, by the deliberate disregard for the spiritual meaning Bruckner had intended for his pieces and their instrumentalization for propaganda purposes.

Chief curator Luisa Ziaja: *Through Anton Bruckner's Fifth Symphony, from which the installation takes its name, Dara Birnbaum explores the political dimensions of Austrian musical history. She addresses issues of appropriation, falsification, and instrumentalization, as well as ambivalence and contradiction.*

The biographies of the two interpreters encapsulate the relationship between music and the politics of history in all its complexity and contradiction: the conductor Otto Klemperer was persecuted for being Jewish and banned from performing in 1933. He fled to the United States, where, unlike many other refugees, he was able to continue his successful career. Wilhelm Furtwängler, on the other hand, was involved in the National Socialist system in various ways, both as a conductor and by holding several official positions. In 1944, he was included in the "divinely gifted" list of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda. However, he frequently came into conflict with the authorities and was cleared of any collaboration by the Allied courts in 1947.

Artist Dara Birnbaum: *My paternal grandparents were born in Vienna, and they emigrated around 1900 to New York City. I believe my artistic talent comes from the centuries of European descent. So, in a way by having this privilege to exhibit at the Belvedere, in Vienna, I am home. When I witnessed Leon Botstein, then the conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, on January 13, 1995 break the chain of censorship regarding Anton Bruckner's Symphonie Nr. 5 B-Dur I was deeply moved. That symphony, as Hitler's favorite was banned from being played in the U.S. after WWII. In researching, I found that different conductors interpreted this symphony in different ways. Thus, perhaps it is best - given these chaotic times - to reach for the Artist's authentic intention, in their creative work, and realize that all - even art - is open to interpretation. Perhaps subtle, but perhaps also exceptionally important.*

Dara Birnbaum was born in 1946 in New York, USA, where she continues to live and work. A pioneer in media art, she has been critically examining mass media imagery since the 1970s. Her work has received numerous accolades and has been exhibited widely, most recently at Tai Kwun, Hong Kong (2023); Fondazione Prada Osservatorio, Milan (2023); Prada Tokyo Aoyama (2023); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2023, also 2008); MoMA PS1, New York (2019); National Portrait Gallery, London (2018); Cleveland Museum of Art (2018). Major retrospectives have been shown at the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson (2022); the Miller Institute for Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh (2022); the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto (2010); and the S.M.A.K. Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent (2009). Birnbaum also took part in documenta 7, 8, and 9. In 1987, she was the first woman in video to receive the

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prestigious Maya Deren Award from the American Film Institute. In recognition of her achievements, the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University established the Birnbaum Award in 2017.

The *CARLONE CONTEMPORARY* series presents contemporary works in the Carlone Hall of the Upper Belvedere. With their perspectives on the Baroque pictorial program of the frescoes, artists build a bridge from the ancient world of Apollo and Diana to the present day.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition	CARLONE CONTEMPORARY. Dara Birnbaum Bruckner: Symphonie Nr. 5 B-Dur
Curators	Luisa Ziaja, Theresa Dann-Freyenschlag (assistant curator)
Duration	25 April to 29 September 2024
Location	Upper Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna
Opening Hours	Monday to Sunday, 9 am to 6 pm
Media Contact	Press Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-177 M press@belvedere.at

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For more information on the exhibition and high-resolution press photos please visit www.belvedere.at/en/press