

absolutely FREE DER WOODSTOCKEFFEKT

absolutely free

An exhibition and series of events at the LM Joanneum from 1st May to 16th August 2009

2009 sees the 40th anniversary of the legendary Woodstock Festival – a musical event that has come to symbolise a whole generation that cast off social conventions and values in order to head for new horizons.

Many of the 500,000 festival-goers were aware even then that the event would make history.

This was due not just to the appearance of artists such as Country Joe McDonald, Richie Havens, Joe Cocker, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, The Who, Joan Baez, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Santana, Jefferson Airplane, Ten Years After and many others. There was also traffic chaos, poor organization, excessive drug consumption and three days of rain and mud. Conditions on the festival site were chaotic as the number of visitors far outstripped the predicted number. Entry charges were soon dropped for those who had not bought tickets in advance as setting up the ticket booths had been left to the last minute and all the fences were soon trampled underfoot.

Woodstock is still seen today as a symbol of the then fashionable international protest movement against decadent prosperity, consumerism and the Vietnam War.


The festival in 1969 was at once the peak and also nearly the end of the Flower Power movement. Woodstock represents not only the most remarkable open-air concert of all times. It was also a new three-day utopia of togetherness. Love, peace and protest were put to the test and experienced from new angles.

To the world, the message was that a different life is possible. There are unbeaten paths of self-definition, of searching for personal identity, and they involve the active, euphoric sampling of hitherto unknown and exotic states of existence.

absolutely free asks whether social and political utopias can still be afforded, and who by. It also wonders whether present-day pop culture likewise contains potentialities that are still intended to change and improve the world. And how the concept of freedom is actually used in an economically oriented world.

absolutely free starts with yesterday, but describes and stirs up today.

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absolutely ausstellung

The exhibition is dedicated to pop culture, young peoples' issues and lifestyle orientation that were the hallmark of the Woodstock Festival, with particular focus on Styria. Three different channels of information show the effects of the Woodstock phenomenon on Styria. Portraits of contemporary "eyewitnesses", artistic interventions and culture historical background information interweave and mutually complement each other, constructing in the process a multi-faceted account of the "way it (possibly) was" (seen of course through today's eyes).

Don't trust anyone over 30! The core team of the project commissioned research work and artistic statements on the subtopics of the exhibition from 60 artists and eight cultural experts under 30, so as to apply a "filter of youth" to the historical event. A total of 13 rooms are devoted to various aspects of the festival and its myth:

**WOODSTOCK | OPEN AIR | PEACE | FREE LOVE | FREEDOM | ON THE ROAD | DRUGS |
RGTI-SOCIETY | DARK ROOM | COMMUNES | REVOLUTION | F.U.C.K. | UTOPIA**

Every room opens up a new world. A new atmosphere of colour, light and sound awaits the visitor with every subject. It is an exhibition that evokes feelings and turns the subject into an experience.

absolutely music

The music programme of *absolutely free* recaptures the Woodstock tradition by locking into the Woodstock Festival's potential for musical innovation. However, it is not a regional Woodstock Revival, i.e. a nostalgically transfigured revival of the spirit of 1969. This is no revivalist rehashing. It's about recognizing the magic and vitality of the historic moment and augmenting, enhancing and developing them in the context of the structural conditions of here and now. The aim is to home in on the (pop) mythological aspects of Woodstock where frontiers were blurred, broken and redefined, where unorthodox practices in performance and the interaction between artistes and public heralded new ways that showed up in the mainstream years later in toned-down form or were in their turn radically rejected and marginalised. *absolutely free* offers a platform for a wide range of bands, solo acts and performance collectives over and beyond strict genre boundaries, clear style definitions and the current median aesthetic.

The music programme is being drafted and carried out in co-operation with various local organizers, who in turn represent a heterogeneous spectrum of variants of contemporary pop culture.

absolutely performance

absolutely free is conceived as an interface between the 1960s and present practice. That means the *absolutely free* series of events is chiefly about formations whose productions are the result of anti-hierarchical working methods and open space-concepts that move away from the "frontal" and "from the stage down" approach in favour of a new organization of hearing and seeing. The aim is to make *absolutely free* a place of production and genesis. There are events and concerts everywhere. In *absolutely free*, it is not just a question of coming on as a performer but of sharpening the senses for what or who is already performing. Where is the city already pop?

A presence in public space is implemented in the form of guided tours, headphone disco and suchlike that offers participants in the programme new takes on (and new insights into) the city as a performative reality.

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