



White Trash, 2008 © Köbberling & Kaltwasser

Folke Köbberling
Maaaaash!, 2026

An off-road vehicle stands on a piece of meadow right next to a busy traffic artery – muddy brown, as if it were completely covered in mud. It is an irritating yet familiar object in an urban space dominated by traffic.

Maaaaash! is a 1:1 replica of a luxury off-road SUV, which Folke Köbberling modelled directly from the original vehicle. The title of the work – *Maaaaash!* (to trample, crush, mix) – refers to the production of the material, a bio-based composite developed by the artist herself. Exposed to the elements, the sculpture slowly begins to rot and, unlike the original vehicle, provides space and nutrients for plants and microorganisms.

Folke Köbberling's artistically formulated social criticism is directed against the waste of resources, soil sealing and neoliberal profit-seeking. *Maaaaash!* is a scathing commentary, a poetic act of protest against the dominance of the automobile and the land consumption of status symbols.

Maaaaash! is a contribution by KÖR Wien (Public Art Vienna) to the 2026 Klima Biennale Wien and part of the exhibition "(No) Funny Games".

Duration: 10.4.–31.7.2027

Location: Kunstplatz Karlsplatz, Rosa-Mayreder-Park, 1040 Wien

Curator: Olga Wukounig

Opening and Talk

as part of the 2026 Klima Biennale Wien

10.4.2026

18:30 Meet and welcome at the artwork

19:00 Talk at Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

„Kill your car before it kills you“

Spatial resources, living spaces and the mobility transition

Cars are becoming increasingly heavier, longer and wider, even though in a climate-neutral future, less would be more. Where the car's promise of freedom, comfort and status is concerned, ecological awareness often falls by the wayside. For many, the car remains an indispensable means of transport: how do art and science respond to the contradiction between knowledge and action?

A KÖR Wien talk to mark the opening of *Maaaaash!* as part of the 2026 Klima Biennale Wien with Veronica Kaup-Hasler (City Councillor for Culture and Science, Vienna), Folke Köbberling (artist) and Andrea Stickler (urban planner and sociologist, Vienna University of Technology) – Moderator: Cornelia Offergeld (Artistic Director, KÖR Wien)

Biography

Folke Köbberling (born in 1969 in Kassel, lives in Berlin) works within and with the urban environment, focusing on its social and material processes. The artist examines – from 2001 to 2015 in collaboration with Martin Kaltwasser – urban structures of living, working and mobility, and uses sculptural and interventionist models to question capitalist conditions and the waste of resources. Against the backdrop of the climate crisis, her interest in material cycles and organic materials such as raw wool has taken on new urgency.

Köbberling studied art in Kassel and Vancouver, as well as architecture in Berlin. Teaching posts have taken her to Berlin, London, Vienna, Pasadena and Vancouver, among other places. Since 2016, she has been teaching as a professor of architecture-related art at the Technical University of Braunschweig.

Group exhibitions (selection): Karachi Biennale (2019), Ruhrtriennale (2012), Lentos Museum (2012), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2011), ZKM Karlsruhe (2011), Martin Gropius Bau/Berlin (2005). Solo exhibitions (selection): Kunstverein Wolfsburg (2021), Museo El Eco / Mexico City (2017), Kunstverein Kassel (2014), Schaustelle at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich (2013), Jack Hanley Gallery, NYC (2011), Bergamot Station Art Center Los Angeles (2010), Chinati Foundation, Marfa (2010), Shedhalle, Zurich (2007).

Text by the curator

A mud-covered Mercedes-Benz G-Class—a vehicle originally developed for military purposes whose various offroad capabilities are emphasized in the marketing campaign—sits in a meadow as though it had veered off the road. It is a 1:1 replica that Folke Köbberling has made directly from the real-world “luxury off-roader” out of a specially developed bio-based composite material. The sculpture is called *Maaaaash!*, and the English verb (meaning to crush, pulp, mix) may be a clue as to how the material was produced. Köbberling has already used it to mold three such compostable SUVs, then observed their slow decay over the course of a year (Mash & Heal, 2024). But the title may also be understood as calling on the sculpture itself to mingle with the soil on which it rests during the decomposition process: under the open sky, the composite slowly starts to rot. Elements inside the car are made of other natural materials such as jute, raw wool, cellulose, clay, wheat, earth, and wood, which can serve as shelter for animals and a breeding ground for plants. The chassis and tires are wooden.

Folke Köbberling’s creative practice protests the waste of resources, soil sealing, and the neoliberal pursuit of profits as well as the dominance of the automobile in society, in the urban fabric, and in people’s minds. She has taken cars apart and converted them into bicycles, dismantled cars and shipped them by train, made replicas of cars and crashed them into each other. In collaboration with Martin Kaltwasser, she built a copy of an Audi Q7 SUV, enlarged by 20 percent, out of scrap wood, painted it white, and moored it on the median of Berlin-Neukölln’s Karl-Marx-Straße; for four weeks, it occupied three regular parking spaces, waiting to be destroyed by the weather or by aggrieved locals. But the big white wooden car suffered no damage; people in the neighborhood unexpectedly took a shine to it (White Trash, 2008).

Just after the end of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Köbberling and Kaltwasser erected a larger-than-life bulldozer made of recycled wheatboards on one of the few remaining vacant lots in the vicinity of the Olympic Village. These construction panels had been used to protect surfaces in the apartments from wear and tear by the athletes in order to ensure that the properties remained in pristine condition for the subsequent sale. Exposed to the elements, the panels made of highly compressed wheat straw slowly disintegrated; together with the humus the artists had presciently placed inside the bulldozer, they yielded soil ready for animal and plant colonization and hobby gardeners (The Games Are Open, 2010).

In *Maaaaash!* on Vienna’s Karlsplatz, too, disintegration marks the beginning of an open-ended sculptural process. Stranded at the tip of the small park between multi-lane roads and clearly visible to drivers passing by, Folke Köbberling’s sculpture will fall apart in a compelling illustration of how absurd the appropriation and privatization of public space by cars is.. (Olga Wukounig)

About KÖR Wien (Public Art Vienna)

KÖR Wien (Public Art Vienna) brings contemporary art in all its facets into the city's public spaces, making it accessible for broad audiences. Its remit encompasses temporary individual projects as well as permanent art-in-architecture projects for residential buildings, subway stations, and train stations, city squares, and projects in the field of public commemoration.

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