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Media information, June 2024

## The Last Days of Democracy

An exhibition featuring works by Deborah Sengl and texts by Lydia Haider

Location	Jewish Museum Vienna Dorotheergasse 11, 1010 Vienna
Dates	June 19 to September 29, 2024
Opening	June 18, 2024, 6:30 p.m.
Hours	Sunday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Press images	<a href="https://www.jmw.at/en/press">https://www.jmw.at/en/press</a>

### The Last Days of Democracy

A war broke out in 1914 that was to become a world war. Karl Kraus described this inhuman time in a play consisting of 220 scenes, which he called *The Last Days of Mankind*. Ten years ago, on the 100th anniversary of World War I, the artist Deborah Sengl took forty scenes from the play and depicted them with taxidermied rats. The artistic transposition of the war drama into the world of rats establishes a distance but also makes the work timeless, in this way doing what Kraus had wanted: to create not only an uncompromising historical document but also a universal warning to mankind.

The year 2024 is an election year. Throughout Europe, parties dreaming of "illiberal democracies" are gaining strength and attempting to persuade us that the term is not a contradiction. Society is polarized, with the social media echo chambers serving their own clientele and stirring up animosity to others. Pandemic and war have polarized public opinion even further, and the gap between rich and poor grows daily. Antisemitism and

racism are omnipresent. Many people see this as a premonition of the last days of democracy, and Kraus, who celebrates his 150th anniversary this year, is more relevant than ever. That's why the rats are back. Sixteen scenes have been chosen from Deborah Sengl's installation and updated with texts by the Austrian writer Lydia Haider.

<b>Artist</b>	Deborah Sengl
<b>Texts</b>	Lydia Haider
<b>Curators</b>	Barbara Staudinger, Hannes Sulzenbacher, Tom Juncker
<b>Exhibition design</b>	solo ohne — Studio für Gestaltung
<b>Admission</b>	€ 15,- / reduced € 13,- Students younger than 27, Präsenz- und Zivildienstler € 11,- Free admission for under 19 years olds
<b>Visitor service</b>	+43 1 535 04 31 <a href="mailto:info@jmw.at">info@jmw.at</a> , <a href="http://www.jmw.at">www.jmw.at</a>

Accompanying the exhibition, a publication will be available for € 5.

#### Queries

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