

Erich Sokol Prize for Digital Caricature, Critical Drawing, and Satire



Erich Sokol, Fotograf unbekannt

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Between 1 June and 31 December 2026, artists from all over the world are invited to submit their portfolios with caricatures and satirical graphics for the SOKOL Prize for Digital Caricature, Critical Drawing and Satire.

The SOKOL Prize, established in 2018, is dedicated to making contemporary positions visible at the intersection of drawing, satire and critical social reflection. At intervals of 4–5 years, the prize will be awarded again in 2027, taking up and continuing the current discourse on critical drawing and digital image practices.

The award-winning works will be presented at the Karikaturmuseum Krems from July 2027 to July 2028. The exhibition is conceived as a survey of contemporary caricature strategies in the field of tension between digitalization, the public sphere and satire.

SOKOL Honorary Award for Outstanding Achievements or Lifetime Achievement

The Erich Sokol Prize honors, in its main category, lifetime achievement or outstanding accomplishments in the field of caricature. The focus lies above all on the quality of draftsmanship, but also on the satirical substance and the political statements of the artist's overall body of work. The prize particularly considers traditionally produced works – for example executed in pencil, ink or acrylic. It honors artists with a clear stance whose work is uncomfortable, creates social friction and is driven by powerful satirical ideas.

SOKOL Main Prize for Digital Caricature

Around the world, more and more artists are working with digital techniques. In caricature, too, the computer is increasingly used alongside traditional methods such as pencil, ink or acrylic. Artists draw and color digitally, and in some cases also publish digitally.

Above all, the internet and social media channels are used to disseminate caricatural statements, enabling them to reach a significantly larger audience than through print media alone.

The use of artificial intelligence presents new challenges and opportunities for caricaturists worldwide. In particular, a critical approach to AI, as well as the engagement with and reflection on processes involving artificial intelligence, is to be highlighted.

SOKOL Advancement Award

The working conditions for young caricaturists are becoming increasingly difficult. On the one hand, many of them are confronted with political repression; on the other hand, AI-generated images are increasingly displacing the work of drawing artists. At the same time, the market for drawn works has become massively tougher in the context of the internet and a “for-free culture”. Caricaturists and satirical initiatives therefore require targeted support as well as formats that enable them to continue their work independently, without interference and over the long term. Caricature has never been as widespread as it is today, yet its artistic freedom has never been so strongly under threat.

2 x AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Lower Austria Scholarships in Krems

The AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Lower Austria program in Krems promotes international cultural exchange. It offers caricaturists, illustrators and comic artists the opportunity to live and work temporarily in Lower Austria and to get to know the regional cultural landscape first-hand. Over the years, the program has given rise to numerous long-term exchange relationships and friendships. AIR sees itself as an international network that connects people and makes exciting artistic processes possible.

The Erich Sokol Prize as an international network

The Province of Lower Austria and the Karikaturmuseum Krems, under the patronage of Annemarie Sokol, widow and executor of Erich Sokol’s estate, are setting an internationally relevant signal for contemporary drawing and satire with

the Erich Sokol Prize. The prize honors outstanding artistic achievements in both traditional and digital drawing.

Beyond the award itself, the Erich Sokol Prize sees itself as part of an international network that creates human connections and makes art tangible as a lived practice with real impact on society. It promotes exchange, dialogue and sustainable relationships between artists and institutions across national borders.

Erich Sokol



Erich Sokol © Annemarie Sokol

Erich Sokol, the prize's namesake, is regarded in the field of caricature and political satire as a pioneer of a new Austrian school. His works were published in renowned magazines worldwide. Sokol was internationally influenced from a young age and as an emerging artist. As part of a scholarship, he completed a course of study at the Institute of Design in Chicago, where he was introduced early on to new media, photography and experimental applications.

In Austria, Erich Sokol worked not only in a groundbreaking way as a political caricaturist, but also cross-media and across genres with the then young medium of television. As early as the 1970s, he was responsible for drawing the corporate identity of the ORF, long before the term was widely known here.

After his success as a political caricaturist for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and in parallel with his legendary cover illustrations for the *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, Erich Sokol created numerous covers for the magazine *Bühne* from the early 1980s onwards. The theatre-loving artist designed subtle depictions of actors, directors, authors and artistic directors of renowned Austrian venues. With his meticulously crafted portraits, he incisively brought roles, productions and personalities from cultural life into view.

The SOKOL Prize for Digital Caricature, Critical Drawing and Satire reflects the outstanding achievements of this artist and highlights his modern, cross-media working methods. In addition, it makes the concept of caricature visibly and tangibly broader for everyone.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Erich Sokol Prize will be announced internationally in June 2026 and awarded in 2027. It is aimed at artists from all over the world who wish to present their digital and/or traditionally drawn caricatures in a museological and scholarly context.

Artists, students and graduates of an artistic or graphic education, as well as individuals engaged in artistic practice in Austria or abroad, who are at least 18 years old, are eligible to participate. The choice of theme is left to the artists.

SUBMISSION PERIOD

1 June 2026 to 31 December 2026 (CET)

The works of the future award winners will be presented at the Karikaturmuseum Krems from July 2027 to July 2028.

PRIZES

Prizes with a total value of over € 30,000 will be awarded to national and/or international winners. They are divided as follows:

SOKOL Honorary Award for outstanding achievements or lifetime achievement – € 11,000

SOKOL Main Prize for Digital Caricature – € 11,000

SOKOL Advancement Award – € 4,000

2 x AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Lower Austria scholarships

Two scholarships by AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Lower Austria in the amount of each € 1.950 will be awarded to international participants. These include free accommodation in a studio apartment in Krems for five weeks each and personal support on site. Austrian artists are excluded from the allocation of these scholarships.

PROCEDURE

1. The application documents (portfolio, short biography) must be uploaded by the participants in digital form (PDF format, max. file size 9 MB each) via the

form provided on the website of the Karikaturmuseum Krems by 31/12/2026, 8:00 p.m. (CET) at the latest.

2. The portfolio must contain at least four and no more than ten works and should, if possible, consist of pieces from the last two years. Please do not send any originals, as they will not be returned. No liability is accepted for submitted originals. The application documents should also include a short biography covering key artistic milestones, such as education. Submissions are possible both by invitation and on the participants' own initiative.
3. Submissions that do not comply with the requirements of this call for entries will not be considered further. No separate notification will be sent regarding non-consideration.
4. After the submission deadline, all entries will be reviewed by an independent expert jury. The expert jury is entitled to nominate artists for the competition on its own initiative. All submissions will be assessed by the individual jury members, who evaluate independently of one another and online. The artists' portfolios are the primary basis of evaluation. In addition to the fulfilment of the competition's objectives and the creative idea, the main criteria are a particular degree of originality, quality of draftsmanship, strength of content, innovative spirit and an interesting use of media. The jury's deliberations are not public, its decision is final and not subject to legal appeal. With regard to the submitted proposals, the jury members are obliged to maintain confidentiality until the announcement of the award winners by the jury.
5. The winners will be notified by e-mail shortly after the selection has been made. Other competition participants apart from the nominees will not be personally informed.
6. The prizes will be awarded in a formal ceremony in July 2027 as part of the opening of the exhibition at the Karikaturmuseum Krems dedicated to the 2027/2028 award winners.
7. The Karikaturmuseum Krems addresses a heterogeneous and wide-ranging group of visitors, including children, and is entitled to exclude submissions with inhuman or discriminatory content from participation in the competition. The organizer is under no obligation to disclose the reasons for an exclusion. Participants who attempt to disrupt or manipulate the competition process, or who violate applicable law or the rights of third parties, will also be excluded from participation.

JURY

Under the patronage of Annemarie Sokol, an international expert jury decides on the awarding of the prizes. The jury consists of artists, experts from the fields of caricature, media and online publishing, as well as representatives of the Department of Arts and Culture of the Province of Lower Austria and of the Karikaturmuseum Krems.

The Karikaturmuseum Krems, with Gottfried Gusenbauer responsible for the administration of the submissions and the selection process, reserves the right to determine the number of jury members and to change the composition of the jury.

CONTACT

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LEGAL INFORMATION

Participants in the competition must be the creators of the submitted works and thus authors within the meaning of § 10 (1) of the Copyright Act, Federal Law Gazette No. 111/1936, as amended. By submitting a portfolio to the specified e-mail address, the artists grant the Karikaturmuseum Krems the right to forward the works to the jury members.

Furthermore, the participants agree that, in the event of a nomination for the SOKOL Prize for Digital Caricature, Critical Drawing and Satire, they grant the Karikaturmuseum Krems the right, free of charge, to present the nominated work(s) in the exhibition and to exploit them in connection with the exhibition and the award ceremony. This includes the publication and use of the works in the context of reporting, documentation, publications and promotional purposes.

The temporally and materially unrestricted, free right of reproduction for the catalogue, public relations and marketing (including the internet, all social media channels, non-commercial apps), educational programs related to the exhibition and for documentation purposes after the end of the exhibition is likewise deemed granted upon submission, unless the participant explicitly decides otherwise in

writing. The use of the works must in each case be accompanied by the participant's name as the creator.

For the purpose of contract processing and publication in the event of a nomination, the personal data provided by the potential award winner will be processed (electronically) in accordance with the GDPR.

The organizer reserves the right to exclude participants from the competition who violate the terms and conditions of participation.

The granting of rights is settled with the prize money. Any further reimbursement of costs or payment of fees is excluded. Non-winning participants will not receive any compensation for expenses.

WINNERS 2018

SOKOL Honorary Award for Lifetime Achievement
Sebastian Krüger (Germany)

SOKOL Main Prize for Digital Caricature
Thomas Fluharty (USA)

SOKOL Advancement Award
Nadia Khiari (Tunisia)

2 x AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Lower Austria scholarships
Ramize Erer (Turkey)
Frank Hoppmann (Germany)

WINNERS 2023

SOKOL Honorary Award for Lifetime Achievement
Gerald Scarfe (United Kingdom)

SOKOL Main Prize for Digital Caricature
Florian Satzinger (Austria)

SOKOL Advancement Award
Liz Montague (USA)

2 x AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Lower Austria scholarships
EtchingRoom1 | Kristina Yarosh and Anna Khodkova (Ukraine)
Ghita Ait Bensalah (Morocco)

BIOGRAPHY ERICH SOKOL

1933

Born on 31 March in Vienna.

1939–1952

Attended elementary school and the Goethe-Gymnasium in Vienna's XIV district. While still in high school, he took continuing education classes at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. In 1952, he sold his first drawing to the socialist newspaper *Kleine Blatt* for fifteen schillings. Graduated from high school.

1952–1957

Studied at the business college Hochschule für Welthandel. At the same time, he produced large-scale drawings and had further sales successes with illustrated jokes and political caricatures for *Neuer Kurier*, *Die Presse*, *Der Stern*, *Wiener Bilderwoche*, *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung*, *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, *Weltpresse*, *Die Münchner Illustrierte*, and for the British weekly *Punch*, among others.

1957–1959

Time spent in America. As part of the Moholy-Nagy fellowship, he studied for two semesters at the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago (courses in visual design, photography, and typography). He earned his living primarily as an illustrator for the men's magazine *Playboy* and *The Lion Magazine*. He was awarded the Artist's Guild of Chicago prize for editorial art. He worked on a collection of satirical drawings depicting American characters. He returned to Vienna in November 1959.

1960–1967

His illustrated collection *American Natives* was published by Harper & Brothers in New York, and in 1961 by Hamish Hamilton in London. He joined the editorial staff of the social democratic *Wiener Arbeiter-Zeitung* as a political cartoonist. In 1965, he started freelancing for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. In 1967, he resigned from the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*.

1967–1992

Chief graphic designer at ORF. In 1971, he was awarded the Golden Camera for *Hör zu*. In 1972, he was awarded the State Prize for Advertising by the Federal Ministry of Trade, Commerce, and Industry for his Austrian Airlines campaign. In 1973, he debuted as a director of a television program. In 1975, Sokol's first cover image for the *Neue Kronen Zeitung* was published. At the same time, he stopped working for *Playboy*, where he had been a contributor for eighteen years. He was awarded the

City of Vienna Prize for Applied Arts in 1977, the Golden Medal of Honor of the City of Vienna in 1982, and the Johann Nestroy Ring in 1986. In 1987, he became art director of ORF overseeing all design areas (graphic design, set design, wardrobe). In 1992, as part of the ORF relaunch, he retired early as art director.

1992-2003

1997 Decoration of the City of Mödling for services to art and culture. From 1999 cover illustrations for *Die Presse*. At the end of the 1990s, together with his partner Annemarie Höld-Praschl, founding of the Erich Sokol Private Foundation in Mödling. 2001 award of the Olaf Gulbransson Prize and wedding with Annemarie Höld-Praschl. 2002 announcement of the title Professor (conferred posthumously on his 70th birthday). Erich Sokol dies in the night to Thursday, 20 February 2003, in his house in Mödling.

Publications in newspapers and magazines (selection):

Aktuelt – Copenhagen, *Dagens Nyheter* – Stockholm, *Family Weekly* – Chicago, *Harper's Magazine* – New York, *Der Spiegel* – Hamburg, *The Observer* – London, *The New York Times* – New York, *Sun* – Tokyo, *Krokodil* – Moskau, *Rudé právo* – Prague.