

SYLVIA KOVACEK  
FINE ART  
VIENNA  
DOUG ARGUE EXHIBITION  
APRIL 14 – MAY 9, 2026

Step into a world where language becomes image, and color and text collide in mesmerizing new works by New York City artist Doug Argue, viewed by critic Donald Kuspit as a “visionary,” who is “able to make unconscious feeling conscious.”

The Sylvia Kovacek Gallery in Vienna is delighted to present Argue in Europe for the second time. From April 14 to May 9, 2026, the gallery at Spiegelgasse 12, 1010, will be showing a selection of new and key works by the painter, sending a clear signal for internationally relevant contemporary art in Vienna.

Argue understands painting as a complex pictorial space animated by dynamism, depth, and intense use of colour. His works move between abstraction and illusion, between precisely placed structure and free gesture. Large and medium-scale works convey a sense of continuing beyond their own edges; smaller formats focus the viewer's gaze on details and condensations.

At the center of his oeuvre is an exploration of language and literature. Inspired by classics such as *Moby-Dick* and the sonnets of Petrarch, Argue removes text from its original context and uses it as visual material. Words are fragmented in a masterful choreography. Letters stretch, arc, torque and overlap, meaning is translated into structure and rhythm. *In Praise of Language* (2019) uses language itself as its subject: Stenciled letters crisscross the canvas — a dense network. *Timeline* (2019) takes up the theme of time, combining text fragments into an open, multi-layered composition. *Babel* (2026) evokes the famous *The Tower of Babel* painting by Pieter Bruegel in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, interweaving architectural form, symbolic imagery, and vibrant colour contrasts. The monumental tower appears both constructed and dissolving, suggesting the fragility of knowledge and communication.

Across different periods, Argue continuously expands this approach. Works such as the *Fish on books-series* (2023) and *Aquarium* (2023) further

develop this dialogue between image, text, and layered perception. While *Fish on books-series* combines organic motifs with stacked book spines and directly references the relationship between image and knowledge, *Aquarium* weaves painting and digital printing to create a clearly structured yet multi-layered image surface. Argue uses text not for reading, but as a formal element. Letters become building blocks of the composition, creating depth, movement, and rhythm. His painting deliberately moves between control and openness — revealing how language, history, and the present are intertwined.

With this solo exhibition, the Sylvia Kovacek Gallery once again underscores its commitment to internationally significant artistic positions. Doug Argue's works show how contemporary painting can convincingly combine literary tradition, visual structure, and current issues.