

Press Release

Artists in Focus #10 **Erwin Wurm. Schöner Wohnen**

Press Breakfast	Tuesday, 22 March 2011, 10:30 a.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Permanent Collection Contemporary Art MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	22 March – 4 September 2011
Opening Hours	Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed

Erwin Wurm, one of the world's most successful contemporary artists, is developing the project "Schöner Wohnen" [Better Living] as an intervention in the Contemporary Art section of the MAK Permanent Collection which will open on Tuesday, 22 March 2011. In focus will be objects with utilitarian value conceived specifically for the MAK. Furniture as instruments of the collective are objects in which attitudes towards life manifest themselves in an exemplary fashion. The artist comments on these via subtle instructions, interventions and shifts.

This exhibition continues the Artists in Focus series, which introduces important artistic stances from the MAK Collection that lie at the interface between applied art, fine art and architecture. The series is meant as an appeal to the public as part of the museum's programmatic strategy to position the MAK Permanent Collection of Contemporary Art. Once central aspect of this is the attraction of support from sponsors and patrons in order to be able to make essential purchases for the MAK Collection.

Starting from "found objects," Wurm will be turning pieces of furniture into works of applied sculpture, thereby turning the "world of things" on its head. In doing so, the artist aims to accomplish a paradigm shift between art and design, something which can be seen throughout cultural history and which is immanently present in the MAK Collection. While Donald Judd propagated drawing a clear distinction, Franz West's furniture pieces display visual codes of the sculptural; Heimo Zobernig, on the other hand, indifferently declares mass-produced objects to be themselves works of art.

In this MAK exhibition, Wurm sketches out a distorted picture of an interior, exaggerating the functionality and symbolism of the individual objects. His mode of handling space can be seen in loose groupings of transformed furniture sculptures against the backdrop of an oversized, psychedelic-seeming wall design. In doing so, the artist establishes several potential routes of contemplation which one might follow. Autobiographical references, the history of art and design, museum and collecting-related discourses and the conditions of artistic production all coalesce here.

In his artistic practice, Wurm alternates between the poles of sculpture (static objects) and performance (portrayal through motion), scenic image and action, concept and punch line. In doing so, the artist provides instructions for how his works are to be added to and used, as well as for how objects can be made into sculptures as part of performative sequences. He creates scenarios of the everyday as both a producer and a protagonist. His popular-aesthetic works distort social utopias as reflected in social criticism. The MAK Collection contains works by Wurm from several of his creative periods, including the dust object "Untitled" (1990), the video installation "Gesicht (1000 Portraits)" (1992) and the mobile sculptures "Fat Car" (2000/01) and "Geste Mobil" (2010).

Erwin Wurm, who was born in Bruck an der Mur in 1954, lives and works in Vienna. His works are present in numerous exhibitions, museums and galleries both in Austria and abroad. Solo exhibitions (selected): "Narrow Mist," Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Peking (2010), "Liquid Reality," Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn (2010), "Selbstportrait als Essiggurkerl," Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Salzburg (2010), "Erwin Wurm," Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich (2009) and "Keep a Cool Head," Central House of Artists, Moscow. Group exhibitions (selected): "The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today," MoMA, Museum of Modern Art, New York, (2010), 3rd Moscow Biennial, Moscow (2009) and "Art of Participation: 1950 to Now," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, (2008).

While Wurm involves himself mainly with the sculptural genre, his overall body of works encompasses objects, installations, drawings, videos and photographs. He is a former professor at the Institute of Fine and Media Arts at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Instabilities and frailties in apparently secure everyday processes are the themes which have interested him ever since the 1990s, and which he articulates within his expanded definition of sculpture.

Since 2007, the exhibition series "Artists in Focus" has succeeded in its objective of integrating important objects and groups of works into the MAK Collection of Contemporary Art. Having already presented "Rainer, sonst keiner! Overwritings," "Alfons Schilling. Sehmaschinen 007," "Padhi Frieberger. No Art without Artists!," "FRANZ WEST. Sit on My Chair, Lay on My Bed." "Applied Art, Heimo Zobernig. Total Design," "Franz Graf. Final Song First," "Liam Gillick. Executive Two Litre GXL," "Hans Weigand. Vortex," and "Plamen Dejanoff. Heads & Tails," and following the current exhibition "Erwin Wurm. Schöner Wohnen," the series will continue with "Walter Pichler. Sculptures Drawings" (27 September 2011 – 26 February 2012).

All press material on the exhibition is available for download at www.MAK.at/press



MAK

Applied Arts | Contemporary Art

Press Data Sheet

Artists in Focus #10

Erwin Wurm. Schöner Wohnen

Press Breakfast	Tuesday, 22 March 2011, 10:30 a.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Permanent Collection Contemporary Art MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	22 March – 4 September 2011
Exhibition	Erwin Wurm, Peter Noever
Curator	Bärbel Vischer
Opening Hours	Tue MAK NITE® 10 a.m.–12 midnight Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed
MAK expert-guided tour	31 March 2011, 5:00 p.m., with Bärbel Vischer, MAK Curator
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50 Free admission on Saturday®s
MAK Press Office	Monika Meryn (head of press office) Olivia Harrer Christiane Vogl Tel. (+43-1) 711 36-229 Fax (+43-1) 711 36-227 presse@MAK.at www.MAK.at

Vienna, 1 March 2011