

## INTERVIEW WITH AUSTRIAN ARTIST ERWIN WURM

BY OLGA TRÖSCHER



Erwin Wurm @ Inge Prader

Erwin Wurm is one of the most famous contemporary Austrian artists, who represented Austria at Venice Biennale in 2017. His art works are in the best museum collections such as the Centre Pompidou, France; Guggenheim Museum, NY; Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag; Kunsthau, Zurich; National Museum of Art, Osaka; Tate Modern, London; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Städel Museum, Frankfurt; Len-

bachhaus, Munich; Middelheimmuseum, Antwerp; Albertina and Belvedere, Vienna.

This autumn his exhibition "Peace & Plenty" organized in cooperation with the Kunstmuseum in Luzern will be shown in Albertina Museum.

**Olga Tröscher:** Erwin, in November you will have a new exhibition "Peace & Plenty" in Albertina Museum for which you created around 600 drawings. What is the concept behind this exhibition and can it be called a diary of your everyday life?

**Erwin Wurm:** The last two years I made drawings which are related to my thinking, to my colleague writers, artists, philosophers, musicians, actors, etc., to the things I like, so it's a great variety of topics reflecting me and my world.

**O.T.** How did you get the idea to create this exhibition?

**E.W.** I was invited to make a show with this body of works. Of course, I had this kind of drawings before but having got this invitation, I began to work more intensively because this was the target, to show these pieces. It really took me a lot of time to make these drawings as I had to concentrate and to work hard. I wanted to have a great amount of drawings to be able to select the best for the exhibition, to fulfill my wish.

**O.T.** How many hours do you usually work per day? Do you work every day?

**E.W.** First I need to be very concentrated and when everything is clear with the concept, I can work from the morning to the evening, sometimes for 12 hours. With drawings, I can make only around 10 drawings per day because I have to think a lot. Because the more I concentrate, the more I am in and then the better the drawings are. But sometimes I am not in and I still can make interesting works. There is no rule or recipe in general. I work when I want to. When I have an exhibition, I push myself because I love to work.

**O.T.** You have exhibitions all over the world and to manage everything is not an easy task. Do you have a big team of people who work with you?

**E.W.** I have an office and a team of people who work with me and also my gallerists, they support me too.

**O.T.** You created many famous series of projects: One Minute Sculptures, Fat Car, Fat House, Narrow House, the Truck and many others. What is your favourite one that you consider the most important?

**E.W.** My most favourite project is One Minute Sculptures because it's such an ephemeral body of work. It only exists for a very short period of time, nothing stays there and then it's gone again. It's very much about the brain, the imagination or whatever. I would say this is the kind of work I like most. I have been doing it since a long time and I still love it.

**O.T.** Do you have a favourite material to work with as a sculptor?

**E.W.** I can't say so. But recently I made a new series of works with clay ceramics. What I like there in particular is that I do everything myself. Because normally with big projects like Fat Car or Narrow House I am not able to do it all by myself, I need people to assist me and therefore I am just a part of a group. But with ceramics I do everything myself and this is great. I will introduce some of these pieces in the Thaddaeus Ropac gallery in London in January 2019.

**O.T.** You represented Austria at Venice Biennale in 2017. What interesting projects did you have after that and what exhibitions you are planning to have the next year?



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**E.W.** I had several museum shows this year: Storage Hyundai Card in Seoul in collaboration with the Tate Modern where 50 pieces of mine were shown. They also wanted to show the piece from the Biennale; Hot Dog Bus, organized by Public Art Fund New York, which was a big success, they handed over 50.000 hot dogs to the visitors for free at Brooklyn Bridge Park and we already sold the Bus to a Chinese collector, and it will be shown in China as well; then



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I had Solo Exhibitions in Kunstmuseum Luzern and Ludwig Museum Budapest; a One Minute Sculptures show in a museum in the Philippines and in Switzerland in a Le Corbusier house which he built for his parents called Villa Le Lac. I went there with a very big Polaroid Camera and we took photos. Narrow House was exhibited there because of a special connection (Le Corbusier built a house for his parents there and Narrow house was the house of my parents). Next year I will have some museum shows in Marseille as well as in König Gallery in Berlin, in Hong Kong, in a Danish Museum as well as in Leipzig.

**O.T.** Erwin, you are a very famous and successful artist. What advice would you give to young artists who are at the beginning of their careers?

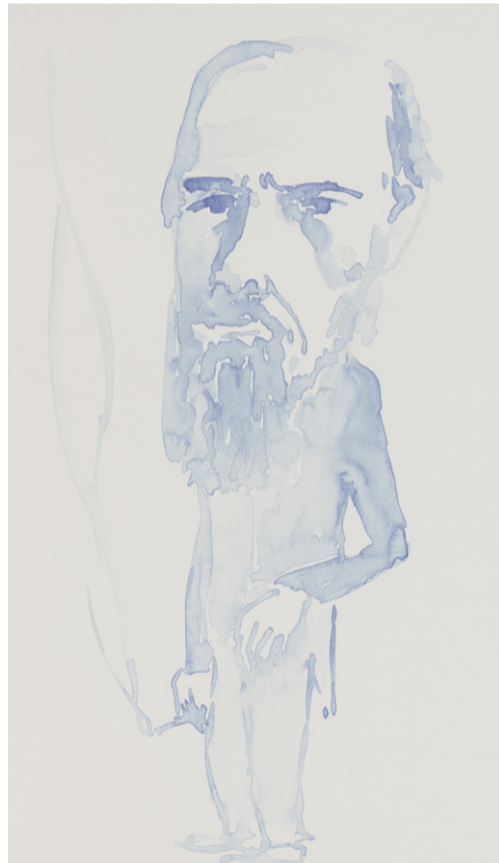
**E.W.** They have to fight, they have to be constant, they have to have a strong will. Of course, it's important to have a talent, but they also have to be strong not to give up if somebody didn't accept their work. At the beginning I wasn't very sure about myself. It was not so easy as I didn't know how my work would develop, but you have to go on, you have to learn from criticism and use it in a positive way. But actually I am still fighting. I believe that the work has to develop and for that reason I try to open new ways and bring new ideas forward. Some artists make copies of their work. This was never a solution for me.



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**O.T.** What is the role of an Artist in the society?

**E.W.** You know, I am very much interested in questions related to existing problems with our society, my work is about consumption, consumer society and capitalism, different philosophical questions. Sometimes I am tired and want to be in my ivory tower to work only for myself. I like literature, classical music, philosophy. My drawings for the "Peace & Plenty" exhibition for example are not related to any social issues, it's just my world.



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