

KÖNIG GALERIE

ERWIN WURM
SUBJECT

25 FEBRUARY – 17 APRIL 2022
KÖNIG GALERIE IM KHK

KÖNIG GALERIE is proud to present SUBJECT, the first solo show by Erwin Wurm in the Vienna gallery. The centre-piece of the show is the ICONS series.

Shaped like sausages, bread rolls and pretzel sticks, Wurm's oversized marble sculptures dominate the space. They are a continuation of his signature works and remain true to his subject matter and language of forms, despite being made of stone. Wurm gives them a polished finish, playing impressively with his chosen material. He uses various colours of stone, including white Carrara and Paonazzo, grey Marquina and pink Breccia marble, whose often diverse veined patterns break with the "beautiful" aesthetic of the surfaces, the artist explains.

The irony of replicating the humble fare of a traditional Austrian sausage stand in polished marble creates an epicurean symbol that skilfully entices the observer to look behind the scenes of our society. "A sausage with a bread roll is the simplest meal you can get. It was my go-to food when I was a kid – but also later, as a student. To me, it's a symbol of our social environment and attitudes," says Erwin Wurm. "But it also stands for a certain type of white male, the kind who discuss their worldviews over a sausage at the stand, usually narrow-minded worldviews that are rife with prejudice and intolerance, not to mention anti-feminist attitudes."

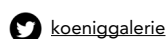
The sculptures evoke a range of associations, from the unwavering adherence to traditional values to eco-criticism, and cheap meat to factory farming. The title of the series – ICONS – shows clearly what this is about: idolising the wrong things and seeking a (false) sense of social and physical security by indulging in them for a little 'extra padding', says Wurm. As with his "Fat Sculptures", the artist explores the extent to which the Western world uses excessive consumption – whether of food or goods – to compensate for existential insecurity. Wurm's ICONS and their cultural significance become a metaphor for inner and social conflicts.

A further twist is added by the titles – DIGNITY, or HONOR – which further underpin the special contiguity of the ICONS series by combining form, material and language. Material precision and the reduction and clarity of forms in these works make the idea behind them almost palpable and amplify their message.

These sculptures create a clear-cut succinct, ironic montage. "Humour is a weapon," says Wurm – although he sees himself not as a humourist but more as someone who uses their wit to offer an alternative perspective on everyday life. In a way, his works reveal to us the insignificance of our existence: "No matter how you approach it, through philosophy or diet, in the end you can never win," says Wurm.

For all his contextualisation of content, Erwin Wurm also proves to be a stringent sculptor throughout. He understands not only how to exploit the medium of sculpture to express his message but also how to sound out the possibilities of his material: standing erect on their plinths, with just a small footprint, the heavy, stone sausages and baked goods meaningfully maintain a solid balance.

Text: Silvie Aigner



EXHIBITIONS

STEPHAN BALKENHOL
ST. AGNES I NAVE
04.03. – 17.04.2022

KRIS MARTIN
Fairy Tales
ST. AGNES I CHAPEL
25.02. – 20.03.2022

ROBERT JANITZ
Eleven Studies of Everything
KÖNIG SEOUL
25.02. – 31.03.2022

FABIAN WARNISNG
KÖNIG LONDON
18.03. – 16.04.2022

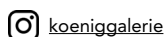
KÖNIG GALERIE IM KHK
Friedrichstraße 7
1010 Vienna

vienna@koeniggalerie.com
koeniggalerie.com

Opening Hours
Wed – Sun 11 AM – 6 PM

KÖNIG GALERIE

Erwin Wurm (b. 1954) lives and works in Vienna and Limberg, Austria. His works include material sculptures, action art, videos, photos, drawings and books. Among his most influential groups of works are his ONE MINUTE SCULPTURES. This year the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, Serbia, and the Museum Jan Cunen in Oss, the Netherlands, will present some of his works in solo shows. Other solo shows to date have been held in international galleries and institutions as well as public spaces, such as the Via Veneto Contemporanea. Erwin Wurm, Rome (2021); MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst, Geymüllerschloß, Vienna, Austria (2021); Lauba, Zagreb, Croatia (2021); Tianjin K11, Shenyang K11, China, (2021); Roca Umbert, Granollers, Spain (2021); The Pavilion, Cantieri Culturali alla Zina, Palermo, Italy (2021); MEP - Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France (2020); Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei City, Taiwan (2020); Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn, Austria (2020); Lars Eiding and Erwin Wurm, KÖNIG GALERIE x Ruttkowski 68, Cologne, Germany, (2020); Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland (2018); Albertina, Vienna (2018); Ayala Museum, Makati City, Philippines (2018); Ludwig Museum, Budapest, Hungary (2018); Kunsthaus Graz, Graz, Austria (2017); Austrian Pavilion, 57th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, with Brigitte Kowanz (2017); 21er Haus, Vienna, Austria (2017); Lehbruck Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2017); MKM Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg, Germany (2017); Leopold Museum, Vienna, Austria (2017), and more.



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