

ERWIN WURM

GRAMMAIRE WITTGENSTEINIENNE DE LA CULTURE PHYSIQUE

03 MARS 2013 - 27 AVR. 2013

**Opening on Sunday 3 March from 1pm to 5pm
Performance at 2pm**

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac in Pantin is pleased to present a new body of work by Austrian artist Erwin Wurm in its performance space. The central part of the exhibition will be a physical performance on and around new clay models of an architectural complex taking place on Sunday, March 3rd relating to the title of the exhibition, *Wittgensteinian Grammar of Physical Education*. A number of cast house sculptures will be on display as well as videos showing how they were made.

Modelled on existing buildings of European and American architecture the artist punched or kicked the houses, hit them with his elbows or crushed them with his own body weight by lying or sitting on them. The marks of destruction are preserved through being cast in bronze, acrylic or even polyester, and refined by silver- or gold-plating.

Some of the buildings chosen by the artist are well known, others anonymous and some selected for personal reasons. The maltreated models include prisons, warehouses, a psychiatric clinic, bunkers, as well as the house belonging to his ex-wife. The Narrenturm [madhouse tower] in Vienna bears footprints, San Quentin State Prison has been slashed open, and Alcatraz has a hole, dug out by hand, which might just as well have been made by a violent explosion.

The house, a symbol of withdrawal, but also of sociability and living together, is here defined purely from the exterior, an object. This purely formal conception is in turn counteracted by the sensual components of the production and immediate destruction. There is something playful yet controlled in this process of creation and destruction and the preservation of ruined forms.

The deformation gives the works the amorphous character that has made Wurm's style iconic and the often-alluring gold or silver or gloss-varnished surfaces trivialise and conceal the course of the purposeful attacks, and glorify the joyful destruction.

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac has published a book, *Erwin Wurm, Samurai & Zorro*, with a text by Abraham Orden in 2012 on this series of works.

Erwin Wurm was born in Bruck an der Mur, Austria, in 1954; he lives and works in Vienna and Limberg. He became known in the early 1990s for his *One-Minute-Sculptures*, for which his models posed in relation to everyday objects, holding their position for a minute and thus becoming, however briefly, sculptures.

Recent institutional solo exhibitions of Wurm's work include the Dallas Contemporary in Texas, as well as the CAC Málaga, Spain, the Vitra Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany and the Albertina Museum in Vienna.

He will have a solo exhibition at the MOCaK in Krakau, Poland, opening in October 2013. In 2014, solo exhibitions at the ZKM Karlsruhe and the Städelmuseum in Frankfurt am Main, Germany are scheduled.