
ERWIN WURM

HOME SWEET HOME

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

05 Oct 2019 - 18 Jan 2020



The exhibition is extended until 18 January 2020.

In the end, art deals with the difficulty in coping with life – be it by means of a philosophy or a nutritional diet. Erwin Wurm

Erwin Wurm's exhibition HOME SWEET HOME presents his new group of works, *Heads*, alongside the latest works from his ongoing series. The recently created *Heads* comprise amorphous bronze formations, which the artist combines with various found objects from everyday life, such as rubber bands, tennis balls or a bottle.

Erwin Wurm succeeds in exploring mundane, everyday decisions as well as existential questions in his works. He often focuses on the objects that help us to cope with daily life, and through which we ultimately define ourselves. These include the material coverings with which we surround ourselves – the clothes we wear, the cars we drive and, as the title reveals, the 'home sweet home' we live in.

Permeating Wurm's three-dimensional work is always the question of the definition of sculpture and the expansion of this art historical concept, radically altered in the 20th century through ready-mades and participative or conceptual ideas. With his *One-Minute Sculptures* – in which, using simple props, the viewer becomes the artwork for a limited time – the artist erases the boundary between sculpture and viewer. The static presence of the sculpture is completely reversed, becoming an ephemeral process that blurs the line between human body and sculpture.

Wurm achieves a transformation in the opposite direction when objects or forms in his work assume distinctly human features through attributes or body parts. In his *Stone Sculptures*, he endows massive, moss-covered chunks of stone with human legs, thus transforming them into anthropomorphic figures. The limbs, variously clad and shod, exhibit diverse postures, suggesting – in combination with the stone – individual personalities. In his *Tall Bags*, too, Wurm calls in question traditional sculptural representations of the body. A wide variety of bags which, besides their practical function, demonstrate the status of the person carrying them, are perched instead upon surreally elongated legs.

In the works *Long Leg Suit* and *Wooden Leg Coat*, the original support of the sculpture – the pedestal – becomes the artwork, transformed by clothing into a replica of a human being, thus evoking diverse associations. Clothes, our second skin, the covering in which we appear in public, forms our physical but also psychological image in our own eyes and in those of the world around us.

Misshapen and distorted sculptures are a recurrent motif in Erwin Wurm's work. The usually inherent properties of an object have dissipated or mutated, as in *Fat Mini* from his *Fat Car* series, shown for the first time in Austria. The Mini Cooper's iconic shape is concealed by a swollen mass. As an artwork, immobile and distended, this vehicle – a prestige object – forfeits not only all functionality but also its original status.

When I was younger, we used to call these cars that the rich and powerful would drive 'fat cars', referring to the status of their drivers. But then, people say that over time a master becomes more and more like his dog. That's what I was thinking with the fat cars. When we own a car, perhaps it's the same: the car starts to resemble us, and reflect our society. - Erwin Wurm

In his recent group of works, *Heads*, Wurm adds various attributes to white painted forms, transforming them into portrait heads. The size and the material is reminiscent of traditional bronze busts, while the attributes resemble the props used in the *One-Minute Sculptures*. The *Heads*, shaped in

clay then cast in bronze, can be seen as a further development of Wurm's *Dissolutions*, a series of ceramics created in 2018. Whereas in the latter group individual body parts such as ears, noses or nipples were still recognisable, the new sculptures support an anthropomorphic interpretation through their attributes, articles of daily use. The ambiguity of these works, with their vague or surreal elements, allows for an open, pluralistic interpretation of their meaning.

Erwin Wurm (b. 1954) lives and works in Vienna and Limberg, Lower Austria. In 2019, solo exhibitions were dedicated to Wurm at the Jorn Museum in Silkeborg and the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Musée Cantini and Centre de la Vieille Charité in Marseilles. The exhibition *Offsite: Erwin Wurm's* currently on view at the Vancouver Art Gallery until 23 February 2020.

Erwin Wurm, Untitled (Berge), 2017/2019 Bronze, paint, wires, 21 x 24 x 25 cm (8.27 x 9.45 x 9.84 in)

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