

Exhibition: **Erwin Wurm**

Duration: **30 January – 13 April 2003**

Place of Exhibition: **ZKM | Media Museum, Project Room**

Opening: **29 January 2003, 7:00 pm**

Press Conference: **29 January 2003, 11:00 am**

“The lines of the development of the avantgarde all run together in Erwin Wurm’s work. He makes explicit reference to the most important stations of the expansion of the concept of sculpture in the 20th century.”

Peter Weibel

Duration congeals into enduring fleetingness. Drawings become directions for how to do things, photos become sculptures of spontaneity. The haptic becomes visual, mass becomes invisible, and rationality becomes belief. Erwin Wurm, who was born in Bruck/Mur in 1954, seems to have fun changing the coordinates. Although in his heart he has remained true to traditional sculpture—something ascertained by critics worldwide—he has managed to fit the prerequisite for sculpture and plastic formation into paradigms of our time. The artist, who lives in Vienna, has been pursuing a straight line of thought in his work for the past 20 years. Departing from wood and metal sculptures in the 1980’s, Wurm later completely dispensed with solid materiality. His ephemeral sculptures, which are born before the eyes of the spectator, touch upon Walter Benjamin’s dictum of “what is reproducible”. The artist himself compares their character with music, the score: “When everything else has been lost, records or tapes, there will still be these directions for the performance. Anyway I would prefer it if the idea of a sculpture would constantly undergo formal ‘renovation’ as the years pass.” It is not the object per se or its individual form of appearance, which is of interest, but rather the processes which happen between the things and the people. Thus, simple pieces of clothing become objects of artistic action. For example, Wurm places three model overcoats in the exhibition room.

Drawings next to them show how one could handle them and the process takes its course. The visitor reproduces the processes and the short moment in which the extremely fragile gestures assume form is the moment of the completion of the “One Minute Sculptures.” Photos document the event, placing it into a cycle of seemingly same but different moments.

To some of the viewers, these staged scenes seem scurrilous, witty, or funny and others, on the other hand, interpret them as alienating, scary or repulsive. “In most of my works I am dealing with a field of situations in which our most varying fears, imaginings, conditionings, and neuroses which accompany us can be applied. Apparently it arouses the need to laugh in some of the people,” the artist states.

The exhibition shows a cross-section of the work of Erwin Wurm. In addition to the hands-on-environments, there are also the earlier objects with pieces of clothing, the series with the pullovers, excerpts from the “Fat”-Series, videos and also new works on exhibit.

For the exhibition there is a catalog in English, edited by Peter Weibel and published by Hatje-Cantz Publishers (EUR 29,80). ISBN 3-7757-1181-3

Homepage of the exhibition: <http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/erwinwurm/>

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