

PRESS INFORMATION

Museum Hundertwasser – the largest Hundertwasser collection permanently displayed at Kunst Haus Wien

With its innovative and artistic design KUNST HAUS WIEN catches the eye from afar. In Vienna it is the only building designed by Friedensreich Hundertwasser that is open 365 days a year. The museum and exhibition venue, founded by Hundertwasser and named KUNST HAUS WIEN, is one of the most important sights of the city. With its top international exhibitions of contemporary art with a focus on photography it has become an integral part of the Viennese culture scene.

Museum Hundertwasser, located in KUNST HAUS WIEN and frequented by visitors from all over the world, houses the most comprehensive permanent exhibition of works by the Austrian artist and visionary. It presents a unique cross-section of Hundertwasser's oeuvre and offers an unforgettable experience – not only appreciated by younger audiences – often rounded off with a visit to the garden. By presenting artists who take up Hundertwasser's ideas on ecology and sustainability and who reflect upon these from today's perspective, KUNST HAUS WIEN as the first "ecological museum" is a platform for globally discussed and most topical issues.



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The Museum Hundertwasser unites the most important aspects of his oeuvre and exhibits the largest collection in the world of his paintings, printed graphics, tapestries and architectural designs.

Paintings by Friedensreich Hundertwasser

"A major part of the effect of Hundertwasser's painting is colour. Hundertwasser uses colours instinctively, without associating them with a definite symbolism of even his own invention. He prefers intensive, radiant colours and loves to place complementary colours next to one another to emphasize the double movement of the spiral, for instance. He also likes to use gold and silver, which he pastes onto the picture in a thin foil.

Two large groups of motifs determine the content of Hundertwasser's painting: one comprises a world of forms representing analogies to vegetative growth and an animistic nature; the other is the repetitive use of architectural code symbols: houses, windows, gables, fences, gates. It is one of the idiosyncrasies of Hundertwasser's art that both motif groups are inextricably linked: vegetative forms seem static, to solidify to architecture in order to last, whereas everything constructed seems to have grown organically, to have been produced by nature herself.

His painting technique is also his very personal affair. Hundertwasser likes best to use paints he has pulverised or prepared himself, which he applies without mixing. Similarly, he prepares the priming ground himself; for prime coating, paint mixture and varnish he has developed various recipes of his own, all of which are designed to guarantee a long life for his pictures. In many of his pictures he uses oil, tempera and watercolour techniques in one picture to achieve a contrasting effect between the matte and radiant parts of the picture."

(Wieland Schmied, in: Hundertwasser – KunstHausWien, Cologne: Taschen Verlag, 1999)

"Hundertwasser's colour! There is no limit to its sensuality; it grows richer and richer, in a triumphant, exuberant

warmth; greens, blues, and luminous violets exalting the shrill carmines, vermilions, and yellows; and still more sumptuous when the vividness is heightened by applying genuine gold and silver foils. Before such a feast for the

eyes one forgets that up until 1957 he had been living on the edge of survival, virtually deprived of everything, for all his meagre requirements and legendary sobriety. One forgets, too, that he had unfolded treasures of ingenuity in the recovery of scraps and trash-can rakings and by painting on anything, with anything, provided it would last – which indeed it has done, as well as if not better than the newest and most costly materials."

(Pierre Restany, "Happy Hundertwasser", 1976. In: Hundertwasser, New York: Parkstone Press, 2008)

Hundertwasser's Graphic work

Hundertwasser mastered and innovated many graphic techniques, among them lithograph, silk screen, etching, colour woodcut and many others. He was one of the first to demand and practice complete transparency in terms of technique, dates of creation and editions for each sheet. Hundertwasser never really created large editions of one and the same graphic work.

His graphic editions comprise several colour versions and variants, which are not numbered separately, but instead numbered throughout the entire edition. It was his aim to make many different unique pieces within the art of the graphic, thereby going beyond machine production. Hundertwasser always took great care to provide exact information about the work on each graphic sheet, in order to arrive at as complete a disclosure of a work's techniques and creation dates as possible.

Tapestry created by Hundertwasser

Hundertwasser's first tapestry "133 Pissing Boy with Sky-Scraper" was created in 1952 as a result of a bet. Hundertwasser had asserted that it was possible to weave a tapestry without a template, i. e. a cardboard model of the image in the size of the planned tapestry. All Hundertwasser tapestries that have been executed afterwards by weavers of Hundertwasser's choice have been created without cardboard templates.

When transforming his works into a tapestry, Hundertwasser's main concern was to have this done freehand – a transmission of one of his works into a different medium and the quality of the artistic interpretation by the weaver without pattern or cardboard template. In Hundertwasser's opinion, only this procedure, without a cardboard template, could breathe life into the work, thus an authentic work of art could evolve and not just a soulless copy of the model. This is the reason why all Hundertwasser's tapestries are unique works.

Architecture – A prominent landmark in Vienna

As early as 1958, Hundertwasser formulated in his "Mouldiness Manifesto Against Rationalism in Architecture" his denouncement of rationalism, the straight line and functional architecture.

In 1968 Hundertwasser presented his manifesto "Los von Loos (Loose from Loos) – A Law Permitting Individual Building Alterations or Architecture-Boycott Manifesto". For Hundertwasser the tradition of rational, sterile architecture with its deadly monotony begun by the Austrian architect Adolf Loos was responsible for people's misery. He called for a boycott of this architecture and promoted creative freedom to build and the right to individualise buildings.

In his architectural models from the 1970s he demonstrated the afforestation of roofs, the "tree tenant" and the "window right" and created new architectonic forms such as the "spiral house", the "eye-slit house", the "pit-house" or the "terrace house".

As an "architectural doctor" he took on the responsibility of transforming ugly, monotonous and sterile buildings. In numerous exemplary architectural projects that Hundertwasser was able to realise from the 1980s onwards, he drove a path out of the cul-de-sac of modern architecture. His buildings are witness to his

encouragement of diversity over monotony, for romanticism, for the organic and for unregimented irregularity, for spontaneous vegetation and for a life in harmony with nature.

Ecology

"Ecology is the touchstone of Hundertwasser's sensitivity, the sensitive cytoplasm of his fifth skin. Hundertwasser is naturally 'green', just as he is naturally a painter, Austrian, cosmopolitan or pacifist. Since his earliest childhood he had displayed a hypersensitivity to his surroundings.

Nature is the supreme reality, the source of universal harmony; his immense respect for nature very soon aroused in him the desire to protect it against the attacks made on it by man and industry."

(Pierre Restany: The Power of Art, Hundertwasser, The Painter-King with the Five Skins, Cologne, 1998)

The history of KUNST HAUS WIEN

On 9 April 1991, after two years of reconstruction, KUNST HAUS WIEN was opened in the buildings erected for the brothers Thonet in 1892.

KUNST HAUS WIEN houses the only permanent presentation of Friedensreich Hundertwasser's work worldwide – his philosophy, his contribution to painting, graphic arts, ecology and architecture; also his early work and tapestry as well as various models of completed and anticipated projects.

"KUNST HAUS WIEN is a house of beauty barriers, where beauty holds the most efficient function, a place of not regulated irregularities, of uneven floors, of tree tenants and dancing windows. It is a house in which you have a good conscience towards nature. It is a house that does not follow the usual standards, an adventure of modern times, a journey into a country of creative architecture."

Hundertwasser, 1991

KUNST HAUS WIEN secured its firm position among the established museums in Vienna within a very short time. The visitors from Austria as well as from abroad have expressed a very positive opinion on their experience at KUNST HAUS WIEN. The local and international press have certainly contributed to the great success of KUNST HAUS WIEN.

On 1 October 2007 Wien Holding took over KUNST HAUS WIEN. Wien Holding manages KUNST HAUS WIEN as successfully as the company's whole cultural group, currently consisting of Vereinigte Bühnen Wien with the venues Theater an der Wien, Raimund Theater and Ronacher, Wiener Stadthalle, Mozarthaus Vienna, Haus der Musik and the Jewish Museum Vienna. Wien-Ticket, one of Austria's biggest ticketing companies, is also part of the Wien Holding enterprise.

KUNST HAUS WIEN Exhibition programme

In addition to the permanent exhibition of Hundertwasser's works, KUNST HAUS WIEN has so far shown more than 70 international exhibitions of contemporary art since 1991, focussing increasingly on photography in recent years. In this field KUNST HAUS WIEN continues to show comprehensive exhibitions on renowned artists who have occupied an important place in the history of photography as well as topical international works, thus offering Austria's photography scene a central platform for dealing with this medium.

Starting 2015 KUNST HAUS WIEN presents a new line of programmes: Based on Hundertwasser's forward-looking ideas regarding ecology and society KUNST HAUS WIEN provides a new space for artists and creative minds who deal with topics such as sustainability, climate change, recycling, urbanistics, or cross-generational responsibility in a critical and visionary way from a contemporary point of view.

FACTS

Venue KUNST HAUS WIEN
Untere Weißgerberstraße 13, 1030 Vienna

Opening times Daily 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Admission Museum Hundertwasser € 11
Photography exhibition € 9
Combined ticket € 12
Annual Pass € 22; Annual Family Ticket € 39
Children up to 10 years free, 11 to 18 years € 5
Student ticket € 5 (with student ID)
Free admission to Garage

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