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21er Haus
Museum of Contemporary
Art

Quartier Belvedere
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Erwin Wurm's 'Fat House' at the Upper Belvedere

There is no avoiding Erwin Wurm in 2017. Internationally represented in several major exhibitions, his works are most notably shown alongside Brigitte Kowanz at the Austrian Pavilion of this year's Art Biennial in Venice. The Belvedere documented the renowned artist's work in preparation for the Biennale and, from June to September 2017, the 21er Haus showed his statues and performative sculptures. In this context, visitors are greeted by Wurm's 'Fat House' on the Upper Belvedere.

Erwin Wurm has been exploring the expressive possibilities of sculpture for over 35 years. As profound as it is ironic, his multifaceted body of work encompasses nearly all genres and extends the concept of sculpture via its interactive, social and temporal aspects. With his 'Fat Sculptures' – 'fatty' middle-class status symbols like cars or single-family homes – the sculptor delivers snappy and striking commentary on today's consumer society.

Starting in May 2017, the southern end of the Upper Belvedere hosts one of Erwin Wurm's famous fat houses (*Fat House*, 2003), which was acquired for the Belvedere collection in 2016. The obese house contains a video projection in which the very same swollen building argues with itself and poses existential questions to the incoming visitor, such as: 'When does a house become art and who determines that?' The sculpture, accessible at no charge in the Belvedere's garden, presents a taste of Wurm's contribution to the Venice Biennale 2017 as well as of the exhibition 'Erwin Wurm – Performative Sculptures' which was on display in the nearby 21er Haus from 2 June to 10 September 2017.

The solo exhibition at the 21er Haus comprised upwards of 40 performative sculptures and statues, including a series of new works that Wurm developed especially for the show. In his most recent work, he examines extraordinary examples of architecture and objects of daily use. The starting point is represented by models and blocks of clay, which are usually processed by Wurm himself or other people whom he instructs. Tension arises in the dialogue between the original

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form of objects and the traces left by the performative interventions, turning the body into the material and the medium of action. In the exhibition, the works of clay were juxtaposed with castings made of bronze, aluminium, iron or polyester resin. The exhibition was curated by Severin Dünser and Alfred Weidinger.

Belvedere's curator Alfred Weidinger followed Erwin Wurm and Brigitte Kowanz with his camera during their preparations for the Venice Biennale – from the initial ideas to the project's implementation. The resulting documentary film and artist portraits were shown for the first time at the Biennale in May 2017, and could also be seen during the Erwin Wurm exhibition at the 21er Haus. These open new ways for the audience to approach the works of these two representatives of contemporary Austrian art.

Erwin Wurm's walk-in sculpture is accessible at no charge from 6 May 2017 through spring 2018, daily between the hours of 10 am and 6 pm.