

Press Release

ERWIN WURM: *Dissolution*

Opening	Saturday, 8 May 2021, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß, Pötzleinsdorfer Straße 102, 1180 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	8 May – 5 December 2021 (Opening of the Geymüllerschloß season)
Opening Hours	8 May – 5 December 2021 Saturday & Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

With Erwin Wurm (b. 1954), the MAK is inviting one of the internationally most significant artists of the present age into the MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß. Under the title *Dissolution*, Wurm is for the first time presenting in a dramaturgical arrangement sculptures from his series of the same name (2018–2020) in a museum context. Wurm has formed plastic masses of clay into gesturing hands, mouths, ears, or other fragments of body parts associated with the senses of touch, hearing, smell, and taste.

The word “dissolution” has connotations of disintegration, decay, decomposition, and vanishing boundaries. With his series of the same name, Erwin Wurm opens up a dialogue between a fragile, sociopolitically connotated material; contemporary sculptural language; and a reinterpretation of the painterly through oscillating ceramic glazes. The sculptures—with their protruding fingers, hands, lips, mouths, breasts, bellies, navels, noses, and ears—force their way out of a clayey mass. These surreal experimental structures composed of isolated body parts and sense organs take on a life of their own; their bulkiness generates an expressive presence.

The ceramic sculptures affirm the inherently plastic nature of the material clay. They recall the potency of *bozzetti*, in which artists since the Renaissance have been able give direct expression to their innermost creative ideas. *Bozzetti* were preliminary sketches, the draft models of works to be executed in more challenging materials. Painters use *bozzetti*, three-dimensional models in clay or plaster, to study the incidence of light and shadow in their paintings, placing them on miniature stages. Sculptors themselves drafted their stone and ceramics works in the form of clay *bozzetti*. *Bozzetti* reveal the artist’s conception of the work—the “idea” behind it—and represent the autonomization of the artist’s creativity.

Erwin Wurm’s sculptural body segments invade the individual rooms and salons of the Geymüllerschloß—the entrance hall, the library, the music room, the cupola room, the bedroom, the oriental room—creating tableaux vivants. The works, reminiscent of abstract characters, mirror deconstructions, deformations, distortions, contortions, dissolution and decay. In his sculptural forms the artist combines realism with abstraction. The multifaceted gestures of an imaginary role play await the visitor, in which these abstract, sculptural forms assume figurative, human traits.

In his oeuvre Erwin Wurm brings together disparate genres, surprising us by intermeshing painterly gesture, sculpture, concept art, performance, and narrative. At the same time, he exaggerates the functionality and symbolism of objects, testing the conceptual boundaries of sculptural form and its materials. Dust, used by Wurm as raw material, alludes to the momentariness of time. Clothes, a second skin or casing, he declares to be sculptural bodies whose proportions he extends or distorts. Wurm redefines the function of furniture, forming the stage props of our surreal world's consumer culture—cars, houses, samples of Austrian culinary culture—into sculptures.

In the garden of the Schlössel, Erwin Wurm's massive sculptures of Carrara marble, resembling divans, virtually invite the visitor to take a seat. The staved in and squashed sculptures *Sitting on Freud's House* (2020) and *Sitting on Friedrich Nietzsche* (2020) in the villa garden represent the broad spectrum of the artist's role in critically illuminating and distorting our world.

The exhibition *ERWIN WURM: Dissolution* also marks the start of the Geymüllerschloßel season, that runs from 8 May to 5 December 2021.

Photo material on the exhibition is ready for download at [MAK.at/presse](https://www.mak.at/presse).

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Curators	Bärbel Vischer, Curator, MAK Contemporary Art Collection, and Rainald Franz, Curator, MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection
Publication	The exhibition is accompanied by the catalog <i>ERWIN WURM: Dissolution</i> , published by Christoph Thun- Hohenstein, Rainald Franz, and Bärbel Vischer, with contributions by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Rainald Franz, and Bärbel Vischer. German/English, 64 pages with numerous color illustrations. MAK, Vienna/ arnoldsche Art Publishers, Stuttgart 2021. Available at the MAK Design Shop and at MAKdesignshop.at for € 29.
Admission	€ 6 Free admission for children and teens under 19 Free admission with MAK annual ticket Free admission to the park and to James Turrell's Skyspace For entry to the MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß, inde- pendent of whether visitors wish to see only the Erwin Wurm exhibition or the Schloß, a time-slot must be booked online in order to ensure as safe a visit as possi- ble for all. This policy is communicated via our MAK channels.



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