

When *Erwin Wurm. Fichte* opens in the great hall of the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg on March 22, 2015, a specially created sculpture at the entrance will provide a hint of the spectacular show awaiting visitors.

The Austrian sculptor (b. 1954), internationally known for his *One Minute Sculptures*, as well as his “fat” and deformed objects, will present a Volkswagen van in the guise of what he calls a “fat hot dog stand“ here in Wolfsburg: the city of motorcars. During lunchtimes throughout the run of the show, *Curry Bus* will sell original VW curry sausages. With his bizarrely shaped cars, houses, and figures, the sculptor conveys his own humorous view of everyday objects and life itself – a view that can be as disturbing as it is philosophical.

Wurm will turn the great exhibition hall into a German forest. The forest is a symbolic piece of nature. Since the Romantic era its untamed, unspoiled state has represented an alternative to human civilization. It is a nearby place where people from the city can go to rest and relax, or - as in fairy tales - it is a place where the hero is put to the test. Anyone who hears the title *Fichte* and is reminded of the German idealist philosopher of the same name would not be too far off the mark, as far as Wurm is concerned. Johann Gottlieb Fichte was one of the most important, inspirational figures of Romanticism: a defender of self-confident individualism, and the author of the controversial “Addresses to the German Nation.” Within this heterogeneous frame of reference, the use of more than fifty gigantic, real firs presents a considerable sculptural challenge due to the fact that the trees must be placed in a specific relationship to the exhibition space. At the same time they provide a dialogue and a means of contrasting with more than forty other (mainly new) works of art, sixteen of which have been created especially for the show.

In the past 20 years, Wurm has created a consistent oeuvre that adds interactive and social aspects to the concept of sculpture. In a pointed, laconic way, his performative or plastic deformations are not only about formal considerations, but also about the futility of human effort and the fine line between high and low, norm and deviation. Conceptually speaking, the title, *Fichte*, links both the ordinary fir tree and a complex philosophy, and thus refers to a kind of dramatic fall that Wurm strives to convey in his artistic transmissions. In the contrast between nature and civilization, interior and exterior, the monumental and the ephemeral, the entire installation examines the theme of the relationship of the self to the world. Here, the artist addresses issues that have been valid ever since the Romantic era: knowledge, self-assertion, conformity, and resistance.

With the exhibition *Erwin Wurm. Fichte* the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg is continuing its series of

great artistic projects, including *Douglas Gordon. Between Darkness and Light* (2007), *James Turrell. The Wolfsburg Project* (2009), and most recently, *Christian Boltanski. Bewegt* (2013).

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