

***I Love My Time, I Don't Like My Time:
Recent Work by Erwin Wurm***

November 18th 2006 – January 28th 2007

A Self-Guided Tour for Students

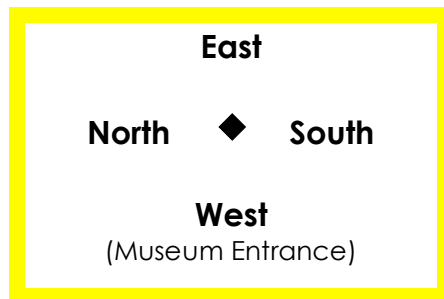
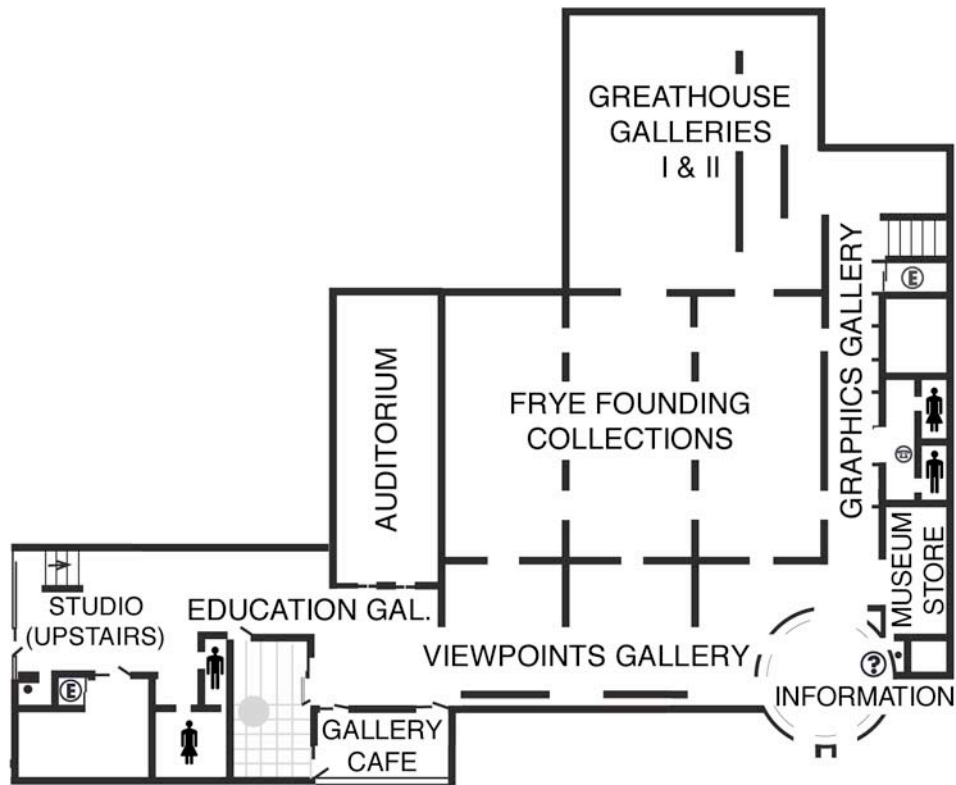


FRYE
ART MUSEUM

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Getting Started

Welcome to the Frye Art Museum! The map below will help you find the works of art featured in this self-guided tour. This exhibition provides a number of opportunities for you to be creative by participating in works of art. You will explore work created by the artist Erwin Wurm and follow some of his instructions to create your own art. We hope you enjoy exploring the exhibition and discovering the art of Erwin Wurm!



Is there a specific point where action becomes sculpture?

Erwin Wurm

Born in Bruck, Austria in 1954, the artist Erwin Wurm has gained an international reputation for challenging traditional concepts of sculpture and for blurring the lines between sculpture, photography, performance art, and video. Wurm's work contains a humorous interactive quality as well as a serious investigation of traditional sculptural values and techniques – especially how it pertains to time and mass.

The exhibition *I Love My Time, I Don't Like My Time* highlights ten years of Wurm's work and includes a range of explorations into the ways sculpture can be made, understood, and communicated through performance, photography, installation, drawing, video, and text.

About the Artist

- **Humor is an important aspect of Wurm's work. He uses humor to examine serious topics, and allows us to playfully address these issues.**
- **Wurm challenges our assumptions of art viewing and art making. He stresses that the process of making art and viewing art can be more important than the final product.**
- **Wurm's work encourages the do-it-yourself mentality in making art.**
- **Wurm questions authorship. He suggests that any of us can make and become a sculpture – the exhibition includes instructions on how we can do this in one minute!**
- **We might think of sculpture as a mass of stone that is carved, or clay that is shaped into art. Wurm, however, challenges the notion that sculpture must be static, lifeless, and everlasting. He asks us: Is a sculpture still a sculpture if it only exists for one minute? Is a piece still a sculpture if we are only seeing it as a photograph?**

Something to Think About & Do



Is there a specific point at which action becomes sculpture? The Frye invites you to contemplate that question while exploring and participating in the work of Erwin Wurm.

Stop #1

- Step outside the front doors of the rotunda and watch the video in the foyer.

FOYER

Can't Stop by the Red Hot Chili Peppers
Digital video, 4 minutes, 35 seconds, looped



They used the sculptures like a kid's game. They made it more childish – it's great.

Erwin Wurm discussing the Red Hot Chili Peppers' video *Can't Stop*

The notion of sculpture as action is brought to life with music in the Red Hot Chili Peppers' video, *Can't Stop*. Singer Anthony Kiedis, bassist Flea, and drummer Chad Smith perform and interact with everyday objects and, in doing so, give these items new meaning. Ordinary objects like buckets, empty water bottles, garbage cans, and florescent lights are taken out of context and become a bridge between entertainment and art. As Mark Romanek, director of the music video says, "Wurm's sculptures just have a way of finding the spiritual in the mundane."

One of Wurm's goals is to remind us that art is for everyone, that it is open and accessible to the public and the art world alike. The Red Hot Chili Peppers embrace this accessibility by uniting Wurm's ideas with music. The band acknowledges the artist at the end of the video with a reader board sign that proclaims "Inspired by the 'One Minute Sculptures' of Erwin Wurm."

As you will discover, Erwin Wurm makes art with little more than a museum visitor, a coat hanger, or a sweater.

Something to Think About & Do



Back at school or at home do some research on two important artists and movements of the 20th century: the artist Joseph Beuys (social sculpture) and artists of the Fluxus movement. What ideas did they explore in their art? How do these connect to the ideas Wurm explores in his work?



Before going to the next stop, think about and write down your definition of sculpture.

Stop #2

- Return to the rotunda and watch the video *59 Positions*. You are going to be making a sculpture with your own body after viewing the video.

ROTUNDA

59 Positions, 1992

Digital video, 20 minutes, looped

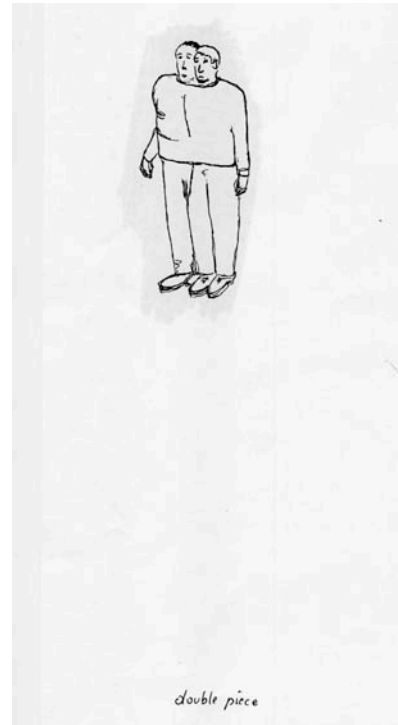
Untitled, 2004

Series: *One Minute Sculptures*

Pedestal, clothing, drawings

I am interested in the object, in liberating it from its field, giving it a new validity and meaning. I do not want to go so far as to say that the object is no longer recognized. Rather I want to have the appeal of the recognition effect on the one hand and that of alienation on the other, which the object emanates.

Erwin Wurm



Putting on or taking off a sweater is an act that we rarely notice consciously. When a sweater is stretched in such a way that our body becomes enveloped in it and creates new shapes, a sculptural process takes place. Our body becomes the sculpture.

On the pedestal at the center of the rotunda is an assortment of sweaters and pictorial instructions that Wurm made to incorporate the viewer into his sculptural projects. Please take off your shoes, step up onto the platform, and follow his instructions. It is important to make a pose for one minute. By combining your body with these sweaters, you will become a temporary sculpture. You may also have the gallery attendant at the front desk take a Polaroid photograph of your sculpture to take home with you.

Something to Think About



Think about what it felt like to become a sculpture in a museum.



Is a sculpture still a sculpture if it only exists momentarily? Why or why not?

Stop #3

- Go to the Graphics Gallery – this is the long hallway to the right of the yellow wall. Find the work of art *Curator Imperator, Robin Held, 2006*.

GRAPHICS GALLERY

Curator Imperator, Robin Held, 2006

Digital photograph on vinyl

The works of art in this section explore the concept of mass. Mass is the solid, material, space-occupying bulk that is contained within a sculpture's surfaces. Wurm investigates the fundamental question of what minimum characteristics an object must have for it to be considered a sculpture.

Wurm regularly updates the *Curator Imperator* series by posing curators as if they have gained an unnatural amount of mass. In this piece, the Frye's own Chief Curator Robin Held takes on a weighty appearance alongside her fellow colleague. By virtue of gaining additional artificial mass, the curators become sculptures and their large size makes them seem more important and more powerful than they are in reality.



The big curator is a pun on art-making as well as a sly comment on the people who work in museums. Wurm pokes fun at the elitism associated with the art world and reminds us once again that art is for everyone.

Vocabulary: imperator - a commander in chief or emperor of the ancient Romans.
curator - the person who is in charge of creating museum exhibitions.

Something to Think About & Do



Have you ever heard of the term *fat cat*? *Fat cat* is slang term used to describe a rich, prosperous person. Think about and write down additional phrases, situations, or stories in which mass lends importance to an object or person. For example:

- The immense mass of the pyramids and the Great Sphinx contribute to our overall impression of ancient Egyptian importance and power.



These two curators allowed themselves to be shaped into massive forms, photographed, and displayed in this exhibition. Reflect on the role of the curators' participation in this work of art. How does their participation relate to Wurm's interest in challenging the hierarchies that exist in the art world?

Stop #4

- Continue in the long hallway until you find the video, *Shopping*, on your left.

GRAPHICS GALLERY

Shopping, 1995/1996

Digital video

26 minutes 12 seconds, looped

It's about self-consciousness. We all want to be slim and active and this is a part of the society's game...

Erwin Wurm

In the video *Shopping*, Wurm captures performances of people dressing in layers and layers of clothing until they can barely move. This piece offers a sharp criticism of our current value system, one in which the advertising world demands us to stay thin while pressuring us to consume more and more.

Wurm's work explores using additive sculptural techniques like building in clay rather than subtractive methods. In this case he uses bodies and clothing as the material to construct his sculpture.



Something to Think About & Do



Think of similar ways to transform yourself into piece of art by adding mass. Back at home or in your classroom, make a sculpture and photograph your results.

Stop #5

- Go to the end of the hallway until you reach the alcove.

ALCOVE

I Love My Time, I Don't Like My Time, 2003

Digital video, 8 minutes, 25 seconds, looped

Fat Car, 2000

Mixed media

The video, *I Love My Time, I Don't Like My Time*, features a digitally animated monologue referencing the anger, fear and confusion of the post-9/11 world. In it, a fat car conducts a dark monologue composed from phrases referring to gun and drug culture.

Look at the sculpture *Fat Car*. Wurm made his first *Fat Car* by plumping up an existing car with Styrofoam and fiberglass; this process resulted in a bulbous, marshmallowy version of the original sports car. *Fat Car*, a testament to the need to live large in today's society, addresses the issues of power and wealth.



Something to Think About & Do



Do you think that *Fat Car* is a metaphor for anything else? If so, what?



What other items of mass consumption would be interesting to make into a fat sculpture? Back at school or at home, try to make a fat object of your own. For example, a cell phone, an iPod, or an Xbox.

Stop #6

- Make your way into the next gallery.

SMALL GREATHOUSE GALLERY

Inspection, 2002

Series: *Instructions on How to be Politically Incorrect*

Cibachrome print

One of the most political questions is to be critical about the things which are accepted.

Erwin Wurm

In the series, *Instructions on How to Be Politically Incorrect*, Wurm tackles our heightened fearfulness following the events of 9/11. Threats on national and international security have made us more sensitive to our personal space and freedoms. An invasion of personal and private space is documented in this work. In the photograph, *Inspection*, a poker-faced woman unflinchingly continues her lunch date while a man searches inside her sweater for a bomb. Wurm seems to be making fun of how much we have accepted intrusion into our private lives. Despite the lightheartedness of this series, these works of art have a serious intent and are a social and political critique of our changing world.



Something to Think About & Do



What is your reaction to this piece? Find another photograph in this series and spend a few minutes looking at it. What did you discover? What else do you think Wurm is commenting about in the series *Instructions on How to Be Politically Incorrect*?



Have your ideas of social/personal space changed over the last few years? How have the Internet and Websites like MySpace changed your opinion of personal space?

Stop #7

- Enter the next Gallery. Turn immediately to your left until you see the series of eighteen photographs hung in two rows.

LARGE GREATHOUSE GALLERY

Untitled, 1997–present

from *One Minute Sculptures* series

Cibachrome print

The word “sculpture” usually refers to static material that is crafted or built. In these sculptures, Wurm introduces elements of time and action as key characteristics. By posing with the props according to the artist’s instructions, the visitor becomes a sculpture. Asked to hold the position for one minute, these participants become aware of the element of time as it relates to making a sculpture. Funny and intentionally awkward, Wurm challenges the notion that sculpture must be static, lifeless, and everlasting.

Vocabulary: conceptual art - an international art movement in which the idea behind the art matters more than the physical result. In conceptual art, the artist’s intent is to convey a concept rather than to create an art object.



Something to Think About & Do



Is a sculpture still a sculpture if it only exists for one minute? Is it still a sculpture if we are only seeing it as a photograph?

Stop #8

- Go to the wall directly across the room from the last piece that you explored.

LARGE GREATHOUSE GALLERY

50 drawings from *Thinking About Philosophy* series, 2003
Graphite on paper

Instructional Drawing [Hold Your Breath and Think about Spinoza], 2003

**When is Wurm's Spinoza more similar to Rodin's *The Thinker*:
(a) when the performer takes the same self-concentrated
position as *The Thinker*? Or (b) when the performer thinks?**

Paulo Herkenhoff, Director, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Brazil



In this series, Wurm presents delicate line drawings of fifty individuals, each presumably pondering a different philosopher. Drawn on a white background, each figure seems to float in space with a blank, hard-to-read expression. The only difference between the figures is a hand-written note indicating which philosopher they are contemplating, for example, "Thinking about Karl Marx." Although expressionless and anonymous, each individual takes on a persona based on the content of each philosopher's teachings.

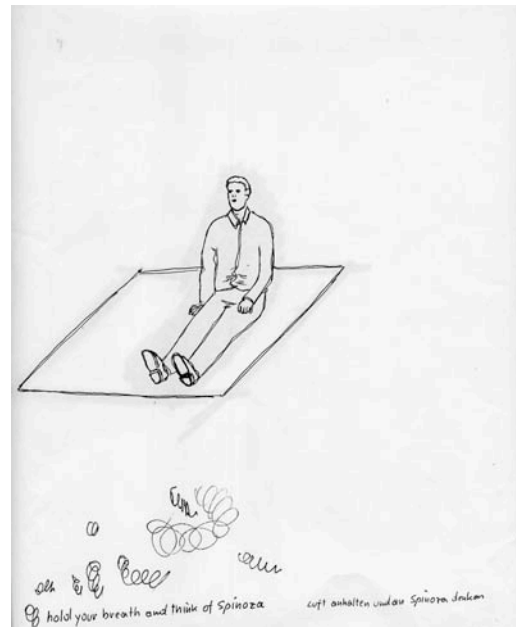
Something to Think About & Do



Directly across from the *Philosophy* photographs is another platform with instructional drawings. Here, Wurm invites you to take part in the creation of another temporary sculpture – simply "Hold Your Breath and Think about Spinoza." According to the artist, "Its name is connected with the person [Baruch Spinoza] who said that free will does not exist." Test your own free will by stepping onto the platform, taking off your shoes, and transforming yourself into a piece of art.



In some of his work, Wurm writes instructions for viewers so that they can position themselves into his sculptural inventions. Back at school, or at home, write a list of instructions using everyday objects and a description of how your friends and family members can turn themselves into sculptural forms.



Stop #9

- Once you have explored the exhibition, return to the rotunda, and make your way north to the Education Wing Gallery (Opens December 8th).

EDUCATION WING GALLERY

Youth Art Exhibition

Pieces of Clothing

Baby Fat Landscape

Please take a moment to read the introduction panel to this exhibition, then watch the animation *Baby Fat Landscape*. This animation depicts comfortable baby clothing coming to life by exploring space, growing in mass, and interacting with others like it. Notice how individual articles of baby clothing take on distinct personalities as they begin to interact with one another. The pieces of clothing move around, on top of, and away from each other until they eventually form a landscape. Accompanying the animation is a sculpture of the stuffed baby clothes that the students used to create the video. This sculpture illustrates how the final frame of the animation was captured.

Something to Think About & Do



Spend some time watching the students' video and contemplating the work they created. What aspects of Erwin Wurm's art and ideas do you think influenced them? How did they interpret Wurm's art to make it relevant to their lives?



Has Wurm's work challenged you to look at sculpture differently? Revisit your definition of sculpture on page three. Has it changed after exploring the exhibition?

For Further Exploration

<http://www.erwinwurm.net/>

The official Website of Erwin Wurm.

http://www.e-flux.com/projects/do_it/notes/essay/e001_text.html

An interesting interview between Erwin Wurm and Paulo Herkenhoff, former curator at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<http://www.fryeart.org/pages/school.htm>

Please visit our Teacher Programs and Classroom Resources link for an online version of this Self-Guide.

Erwin Wurm, Erwin Wurm: I Love My Time, I Don't Like My Time. Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2004. A comprehensive survey highlighting more than ten years of Wurm's artistic production.

Image Credits:

Frontispiece: Erwin Wurm, *Untitled* from *One Minute Sculpture* series, 1997–present, cibachrome print, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 3: Red Hot Chili Peppers, *Can't Stop*, 2001, digital video still, 4 minutes, 35 seconds, looped, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 4: Erwin Wurm, *Double Piece* from *One Minute Sculpture* series, 2004, instructional drawing, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 5: *Curator Imperator, Robin Held*, 2006, digital photograph on vinyl, photograph by David Andersen, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 6: Erwin Wurm, *Shopping*, 1995-96, digital video, 26 minutes 12 seconds, looped, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 7: Erwin Wurm, *Fat Car*, 2000, mixed media, edition 3/8, collection of Charles Betlach II, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 8: Erwin Wurm, *Inspection*, from *Instructions on How to be Politically Incorrect* series, 2002, cibachrome print, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 9: Erwin Wurm, *Untitled* from *One Minute Sculptures* series, 1997–present, cibachrome print, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery

Page 10: Erwin Wurm, *Instructional Drawing*, from *Thinking About Philosophy* series, 2003, graphite on paper, courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery



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I Love My Time, I Don't Like My Time: Recent Work by Erwin Wurm was organized by the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. The exhibition was coordinated for the Frye by Chief Curator Robin Held. This self-guide was created by Education Consultant Janelle Graves and Deborah Sepulveda, Manager of Student and Teacher Programs at the Frye Art Museum.