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**PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**13.04.2016, 11 am**

Dr. Thomas Köhler  
Director of Berlinische Galerie, curator of the exhibition *Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti*

Dr. Annelie Lütgens  
Head of Department Prints and Drawings, curator of the exhibition *Modern Visionaries*

The press conference takes place in the presence of Erwin Wurm.

Followed by a tour through the exhibitions.

**OPENING**  
**14.04.2016, 7 pm**

Dr. Thomas Köhler  
Director of Berlinische Galerie, curator of the exhibition *Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti*

Dr. Annelie Lütgens  
Head of Department Prints and Drawings, curator of the exhibition *Modern Visionaries*

The opening takes place in the presence of Erwin Wurm.

Followed by music

**The press conference and the opening will be held in German.**



BERLINISCHE GALERIE

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KUNST, FOTOGRAFIE UND ARCHITEKTUR  
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Berlin, 13 April 2016

### Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti 15.04.–22.08.2016



Erwin Wurm: The Idiot III (One Minute Sculpture), 2010,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016,  
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Paris  
Photo: Studio Erwin Wurm

**The Austrian Erwin Wurm (\*1954) visited Berlin in 1987 as a DAAD artist-in-residence. During this formative period, his artistic technique underwent a radical change: he began probing the boundaries between sculpture, object and performance. Erwin Wurm is now to have his first monographic exhibition at a Berlin museum.**

The show at the Berlinische Galerie presents key aspects of his output, some of it only recent. Centre stage are the human body with its sculptural potential and Wurm's participatory approach to letting the viewer become part of his artwork.

The title of the exhibition (at face value, "bei Mutti" means "at Mum's") is a nod to the *Narrow House*, a replica of Wurm's childhood home in Bruck an der Mur but shrunk to a depth of 1.10 metres. In 2011 this surreal abode was displayed at the Venice Biennale.

The artist has turned this typical detached family house with its pitched roof into a walk-in sculpture. Here visitors can physically experience the middle-class domestic culture of the post-war years, but also – quite literally – the cramped narrowness of provincial life. Faithfully furnished, even down to the reproductions of family photos, a visit to this house taps without judgmentalism into the collective memory of several post-war generations.

In his *One Minute Sculptures*, which he has been making since 1997, Wurm radically challenges the very concept of sculpture. These sculptural interventions often resemble little stage plays: they are short performances in which people struggle with a task or an object given to them by the artist with the aid of an instruction sheet – entangling themselves in the sleeves of a woolly jumper, wedging themselves between chair legs, attempting to lie on top of tennis balls or to sit grotesquely astride a sofa, even to weld with it. The *One Minute Sculptures* illustrate Wurm's deep interest in philosophy and demonstrate the performative side to his art. Critical explorations of art history alternate with sarcastic commentaries on Catholicism or the



contemporary cult of the body. A dozen of these mostly tongue-in-cheek, witty playlets can be enjoyed in the hall around the Berlinische Galerie's distinctive stairway. Erwin Wurm's theatrico-sculptural mises-en-scène are humorous, surprising, off-the-wall. Funny, sensual works that are incomplete without the visitor's participation.

The exhibition also scores a first with its detailed presentation of Erwin Wurm's drawings. There are about 80 of these on show, most of which accompany and complement the *One Minute Sculptures*. The compact little book *From Men's Size 38 to Size 48 in eight days* is about a process of transformation. With snappy instructions, diet plans and recipes, it invites us to increase our body mass substantially over the course of a week. Thus, carrying the technique used for the *One Minute Sculptures* to extremes, our own body provides the material to make this sculpture. The work is a provocative riposte to all those self-help books about achieving healthy bodies and slender, idealised figures. At the Berlinische Galerie, the pages are individually displayed in a showcase.

The third section of the exhibition is devoted to sculptural works produced in recent months. There are dented refrigerators alongside huge deformed telephones and collapsing sideboards. These pieces investigate the sculptural qualities of furniture and other everyday utensils. Wurm reproduces familiar objects from a variety of materials, alienating them by distorting dimensions, warping shapes and adding marks of destruction. Cast in bronze or polyester, the original function and significance of these objects has been altered. At the same time, the colour reflects the content of the quoted object: the creamy white, for example, of *Body*, a bottle of body lotion, or the yellow of *Butter*, the reconstructed fridge. This playful treatment of inside and outside is typical of Erwin Wurm's work. What we are seeing is a "de-form-ation", a tension between the depiction of everyday objects, their materiality and the traces left by bodily actions and prints.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue from Prestel Verlag with approximately 100 illustrations primarily devoted to the drawings, hitherto only been published as excerpts. (ISBN museum edition: 978-3-940208-43-9, ISBN book trade edition: 978-3-7913-5545-0, price museum edition: € 24,80)

The exhibition and the catalogue were funded by the Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Capital Culture Fund) and the Förderverein Berlinische Galerie e.V.

Cooperation and Media Partners:

Wall AG, Deutsche Bahn, tip berlin, rbb radioeins, Spike Art Quarterly, me.Urban



#ErwinWurmBG, #berlinischegalerie



**Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti**  
**15.04.–22.08.2016**

**BIOGRAPHY**  
**ERWIN WURM**

lives and works in Vienna and Limberg, Austria

Biography

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 27.7.1954 | Born in Bruck / Mur  |
| 1973      | Finished school in Graz  |
| 1974 - 77 | Studied art history and German, University of Graz   |
| 1977 - 79 | Studied arts and crafts education (sculpture) at the College of Performing Arts, Salzburg                              |
| 1979 - 82 | Studied design theory (sculpture) at the College of Applied Arts, Vienna (with Prof. Bazon Brock)                      |
| 1979 - 82 | studied design theory at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna  |
| 1983      | Master's degree (Magister atrium)  |
| 1983      | Assistant lecturer at the Technical University of Vienna, Department of Sculpture                                      |
| 1995      | Guest lecturer at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris (Sculpture)  |
| 1996/97   | Guest lecturer at the University of Industrial and Artistic Design (Sculpture Class), Linz                             |
| 2002 - 06 | Professorship at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna / Department of Art and Cultural Studies – Art Education       |
| 2007 - 10 | Professorship at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna / Department of Fine and Media Arts – Sculpture and Multimedia |

Periods working abroad

- |      |                         |
|------|-------------------------|
| 1992 | 3 months in Los Angeles |
| 1994 | 7 months in New York    |
| 1995 | 6 months in Paris       |

Awards

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1984 | Otto Mauer-Prize  |
| 1991 | Wiener Allianz Art Prize  |
| 1993 | Fine Art Prize of the City of Vienna  |
| 2004 | Art Prize of the City of Graz   |
| 2007 | "Artist of the Year 2007" (chosen by the periodical KUNSTJAHR 2007 – Die Zeitschrift die Bilanz zieht. No. 7, Lindinger + Schmid, Regensburg) |
| 2013 | Honorary member of ADC (Art Directors Club)   |
| 2013 | Grand Austrian State Prize  |
| 2015 | Silver Cross of Honour for Services to the State of Lower Austria   |
| 2015 | State of Styria Award in Honour of the Fine Arts  |



## Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti

15.04.–22.08.2016

### EXHIBITION TEXTS

The work of Erwin Wurm (\*1954 in Bruck an der Mur/Austria) is unique in contemporary art. It is easily accessible and yet it poses existential questions. Wurm has been exploring the boundaries between sculpture, object and performance since the late 1980s. He can turn an action into a sculpture, just as he can a thought or a feeling. In many cases, the visitor is an integral part of the art.

The exhibition presents major works ranging from the early 1990s to the latest sculptures. The tongue-in-cheek title "Bei Mutti" alludes to the recurrent theme of domestic settings, but also to the figure of the caring, nurturing mother.

The human body is a pivotal point of reference in these works. Wurm uses it as artistic material and investigates the body's relationship with its space, with other objects and with social rules. Clothing and the domestic environment become an extension of the body. This reveals a paralysing dependence on the social and physical conditions in which a person operates.

Loss of familiar form is a common thread that pervades all Erwin Wurm's work. Items that have been inflated or compressed, distortions, and fusions of human and object reflect a self uncertain of its physical and personal boundaries. Humans cut an immature and grotesque figure. Wurm mounts them on a merciless platter, but with a light, humorous touch and great empathy.

#### Narrow House

Erwin Wurm created the *Narrow House* by replicating his parents' home in Oberschöckl near Graz in Styria. It is a conventional detached family house with a pitched roof and boxes of flowers. The fixtures, from the curtains to the wallpaper, are faithful in every detail, except that the artist has compressed the house to a depth of 1.10 metres. Visitors can walk inside the sculpture and physically experience not only the middle-class domestic culture of the 1970s, but also the confines and narrow-mindedness of provincial life. Walking around this house, visitors are immersed in the collective memory of several post-war generations.

There is a striking correlation here between individuals and habitat. As in many other works by Erwin Wurm, everyday utensils and living quarters betray a close affinity with the people who use them. The rooms and fittings in the *Narrow House* seem to embody the identity of their absent occupants. The characters themselves no longer play a role, having found a material substitute in the décor and furniture.

#### One Minute Sculptures

The *One Minute Sculptures* made by Erwin Wurm since 1995 invite the visitor to join in. The exercise consists in taking everyday objects like tennis balls, chairs or disinfectant bottles and adopting a specific pose with them. By following the artist's instructions to the letter, the visitor becomes a living sculpture for just one minute.

In these works, Erwin Wurm explores the boundaries between object, performance and sculpture. Instead of an art object designed to last, we briefly witness the embodiment of an artistic idea, and part of the performative work actually remains invisible, as it is inside the head of the visitor performing the task.

According to the classical rules of sculpture, a statue must capture a moment of perfectly balanced posture. The objects that are added, known as attributes, identify the figure and symbolise certain aspects of the content. Erwin Wurm builds on this vocabulary only to



demolish it. In his *One Minute Sculptures*, bodies and objects grotesquely fuse. Completing the task is often difficult, entailing a constant risk that the endeavour will be thwarted.

### **Instruction drawings**

Drawings serve Erwin Wurm as a starting-point for his *One Minute Sculptures*. In the style of instruction leaflets for consumers, they illustrate body positions or demonstrate what to do with the objects provided. The serious tenor of the instructions contrasts with the downright silliness of the actions they describe. Most of the drawings are accompanied by a simple sentence or a catch phrase. These verbal elements vary in form from headline to imperative.

The rules formulated by Erwin Wurm must even be applied to the visitor's mental and emotional processes. To become a living sculpture, he or she must follow these absurd and authoritarian instructions to the letter. The resulting blueprint for human existence negotiates between freedom and self-determination on the one hand and a range of social, psychological and physical constraints on the other. In his *One Minute Sculptures*, Wurm pursues this contradiction to extremes in a diversity of ways, depicting people as tragicomic characters. "Whether we seek to master life with the help of a specific diet or a certain philosophical attitude, we all fail in the end!" (Erwin Wurm)

### **From Men's Size 38 to Size 48**

This work, originally published as a book, is about a metamorphosis. Visitors are given brief instructions and a diet schedule, all in the style of a self-help book on how to improve your health, and told to increase their body mass by two garment sizes within the next eight days. The classical approach to sculpture understands the production process as labour involving mass, volume and shape. By analogy, Erwin Wurm interprets weight gain as a sculptural process. The idea sown in the *One Minute Sculptures* – using the body as artistic material – is cultivated to extremes here. At the same time, this work is a sardonic comment on a contemporary lifestyle trapped between ideals of a slender figure and an optimised body on the one hand and the rise of obesity on the other.

Shapes that become excessively fat or thin are a recurrent theme in Wurm's sculptures. The cover picture for the book depicts the target state for this exercise as a puffed up, spherical object. It looks more like a balloon than a human body and expresses a contradiction between the ample body size and inner emptiness of the anxious modern-day individual.

### **Recent works**

As his point of departure for these latest sculptures Erwin Wurm draws on objects that accompany people from day to day, often structuring or dominating their lives. Some of these everyday utensils have been magnified to monstrous dimensions. For others, the artist reproduces and distorts vintage furniture with identifiable historical or social origins. They allude to a current craze for retro styling, where people construct an image for themselves against a backdrop of bygone artefacts.

A tension unfolds in these sculptures between apparently familiar forms and their alienation. Apart from shifts in dimension and shape, there are apparent traces of misuse. Severe deformations suggest an intensive physical and emotional encounter between person and object.

At the same time, these works address a sculptural issue about manifestations of materiality. In itself, the play between inside and out – the contour and content of a form – is a recurrent stylistic device in Wurm's oeuvre. One of the sculptures, for example, takes the form of a fridge, but the colour, surface consistency and warping evoke the slab of butter we would normally expect to find inside the fridge.



**Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti**  
**15.04.–22.08.2016**

**PRESS IMAGES**



Erwin Wurm,  
Narrow House, Pilane 2015,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016,  
Photo: Studio Wurm



Erwin Wurm,  
Narrow House, Pilane, Innenansicht, 2015,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016,  
Photo: Studio Wurm



Erwin Wurm, 2014, © Inge Prader



Erwin Wurm,  
Leopoldstadt, 2004,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016 ,  
courtesy: Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Paris,  
Photo: Studio Erwin Wurm



Erwin Wurm,  
One Minute Sculpture, 1997,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016 ,  
courtesy: Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Paris,  
Photo: Studio Erwin Wurm



Erwin Wurm,  
The Idiot III (One Minute Sculpture), 2010,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016 ,  
courtesy: Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Paris,  
Photo: Studio Erwin Wurm





Erwin Wurm,  
Open your trousers, put flowers in it and don't think ...  
(One Minute Sculpture), 2002,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD KUNST, Bonn 2016,  
courtesy Studio Erwin Wurm



Erwin Wurm,  
Daniel, 2015,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD KUNST, Bonn 2016,  
courtesy Studio Erwin Wurm



Erwin Wurm,  
Phone, 2015,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD KUNST, Bonn 2016,  
courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, Salzburg,  
Photo: Eva Würdinger

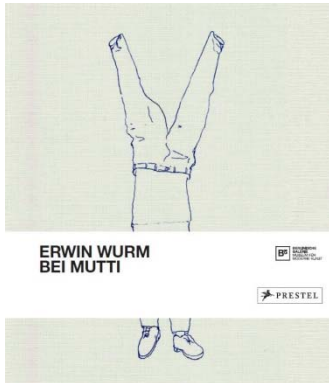


Erwin Wurm,  
Triple Seat, 2015,  
© Erwin Wurm, VG BILD KUNST, Bonn 2016,  
courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, Salzburg,  
Photo: Eva Würdinger



**Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti**  
**15.04.–22.08.2016**

**CATALOGUE**



To accompany the exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie (15.04.–22.08.2016), an exhibition catalogue entitled "Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti" will be published by Prestel.

Erwin Wurm's oeuvre enjoys a unique place in contemporary art. Since the late 1980s, he has been probing the boundaries between sculpture, objects and performance. His works possess tremendous visual power, are easily accessible, and yet raise existential questions. The *One Minute Sculptures*, begun in 1995, invite the visitor to join in and adopt unusual, bizarre poses with the aid of everyday items like tennis balls, chairs or disinfectant bottles. By following the artist's brief to the letter, the visitor becomes a living sculpture for the space of a minute. These artistic instructions are gentle, humorous drawings, published for the first time in such quantity in this catalogue. Reproductions of Wurm's latest sculptures furthermore cast light on a recent development in his creative output. Some 100 large-format illustrations are complemented by three essays addressing major issues in the art of Erwin Wurm.

Editor: Berlinische Galerie, Museum of Modern Art, Photography and Architecture

Publisher: Prestel

ISBN: Museum edition: ISBN 978-3-940208-43-9  
Book trade edition: ISBN 978-3-7913-5545-0

Authors: Anne Bitterwolf, Dr. Thomas Köhler, Dr. Ursula Ströbele

Format: 23 x 27 cm

Pages: 128

Illustrations: approx. 100 colour pictures

Languages: German/English

Price: Book trade edition: € 39.95  
Museum edition: € 24,80



## Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti

15.04.–22.08.2016

### EDUCATION PROGRAMME

With Erwin Wurm's *One Minute Sculptures* visitors can spend a minute being a work of art; his *Narrow House* is an invitation to a whole-body experience. Guided tours and workshops for school parties or families are part of a wide-ranging education programme around the exhibition "Erwin Wurm. Bei Mutti" catering for all age groups. Interactive tours appealing to multiple senses offer visitors with little or no sight a very special experience of Wurm's art.

#### PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS IN ENGLISH

Monday, 02.05., 04.07. 3 pm

Tour is included in Happy-Monday-admission

#### GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS

Guided tours for groups of up to 22 people in English, French or Italian:

70 € for a tour of 60 minutes, 90 € for 90 minutes, plus a reduced entrance fee

Booking and further details: MuseumsInformation at Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH,

+49 (0)30-247 49-888, museumsinformation@kulturprojekte-berlin.de

#### FOR SCHOOLS

##### General tour

Sek. I (ISCED Level 2), Sek. II (ISCED Level 3). Duration: 60 minutes, free of charge (limited quota, early booking recommended; otherwise 60 minutes € 55 / 90 minutes € 75 per class)

Bookings: MuseumsInformation at Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH, +49 (0)30-247 49 888,

museumsinformation@kulturprojekte-berlin.de

#### FOR VISITORS OF LITTLE OR NO SIGHT

##### Tactile tour

The tour offers an opportunity for dialogue and for experiencing Erwin Wurm's art through touch, hearing and movement. Visitors with little or no sight can explore the *Narrow House* and Erwin Wurm's sculptures via multiple senses. The *One Minute Sculptures* enable visitors to become an art work for the space of a minute – by following the artist's instructions carefully. This makes a visit to this exhibition an unusual participatory experience.

The tours are primarily intended for blind visitors so as to ensure dialogue in small groups. On selected dates, blind and sighted visitors are invited to discover the exhibition together and share the variety of sensual perceptions.

In partnership with Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH (Museumsdienst)

##### Dates

Sun 24.04. 11 am–1 pm

Sun 08.05. 11 am–1 pm

Fri 10.06. 3–5 pm (for blind and sighted visitors)

Fri 15.07. 3–5 pm (for blind and sighted visitors))

Sat 13.08. 4–6 pm

The tour lasts 120 minutes and is included in the price of admission. Please book in advance (at least 4 days before the chosen date): phone +49 (0)30-247 49 888, museumsinformation@kulturprojekte-berlin.de)

Tours are conducted in German. If the need arises, the guide will answer individually in English.



Tactile tours can also be booked by groups of adults or school students.

**Handouts and information**

Individual visitors can pick up handouts in large type and Braille (in German) at the ticket desk. Visitors wishing to prepare for or review their trip to the exhibition can download material free from 15 April onwards by going to the museum website: [www.berlinischegalerie.de](http://www.berlinischegalerie.de)

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BERLINISCHE GALERIE

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Berlin, 13. April 2016

### Modern Visionaries

**Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch**

**15.04.–31.10.2016**



Paul Goesch, Kopf mit Farbteilung,  
ca. 1920, Berlinische Galerie

“That is ultimately what we want: Utopia!” (Walter Gropius 1919)

“Modern Visionaries” is devoted to the brief but dramatic period between 1918 and 1923 – the end of World War I, the November Revolution and the formative years of the Weimar Republic. Architectural visions and drawings by three visionaries of the early twentieth century are being presented together for the first time at the Berlinische Galerie. Around 1914 the writer, poet and inventor Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915) inspired the young architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938) to take up his ideas about building with colored glass. The building material glass was thought capable of helping to bring a harmonious society into existence – a utopia as clear as glass that extended out past the planets into outer space: “Light seeks to penetrate the whole cosmos and is alive in crystal,” wrote Scheerbart for Taut’s famous Glass Pavilion built in 1914 for the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne.

The exhibition focuses on the visionary art of Paul Goesch (1885-1940). Even while still studying architecture in Berlin before the outbreak of World War I, the young artist turned to painting. He was one of the participants of that important forum for utopian architecture, the “Crystal Chain” correspondence initiated by Taut in 1919. Goesch’s fragile mental state required numerous hospitalizations in psychiatric clinics and he was permanently institutionalized after 1921. In 1940 he fell victim to the so-called T4 Action, the Nazi program of forced euthanasia. The exhibition unites around eighty of his colored gouaches from between 1919 and 1923 with selected drawings and texts by Paul Scheerbart, whose double talent as a writer and draftsman is likewise prominently represented by important examples in the collection of the Berlinische Galerie. For Bruno Taut – the third member of this visionary



triumvirate and a crucial figure for both Scheerbart and Goesch – we were able to draw on the collegial support of the Baukunstarchiv at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin to integrate loans of works by Bruno Taut and other members of the Crystal Chain such as Hermann Finsterlin, Wenzel Hablik and Hans Scharoun. In addition, never before exhibited architectural visions by Paul Goesch were selected from the holdings of the Baukunstarchiv to supplement the motifs inspired by Christianity or Buddhism from the collection of the Berlinische Galerie. Paul Goesch can be seen in these works as a visionary Expressionist without any salvational emotionalism whose ornamental structures and colorful, exotic pictorial worlds are marked by humor and an affirmation of life, despite the dangers they visualize.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME**

### **Guided tour and lecture on International Museum Day (in German)**

May 22, from 11 am, museum admission, registration not required

11 am guided tour with Dr. Annelie Lütgens, head of the collection of prints and drawings, exhibition curator, 12 noon lecture "Paul Goesch im Kontext der Sammlung Prinzhorn" by PD Dr. Thomas Röske, head of the Prinzhorn Collection, University Clinic, Heidelberg

A number of drawings and a sketchbook by Paul Goesch already entered the collection of the Psychiatric University Clinic Heidelberg at the time of Hans Prinzhorn between 1919 and 1921. However, the art historian and physician did not take them under consideration in his survey textbook "Bildnerei der Geisteskranken" (1922). The lecture positions Goesch's work in Heidelberg then and now.

### **Curator's tours (in German)**

Monday, 30.05., 13.06., 04.07., 01.08., 29.08., 2 pm  
Museum admission, registration not required

### **Public Guided Tour in English**

Monday, 03.10. 3 pm  
Tour is included in Happy-Monday-admission



## Modern Visionaries

Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch

15.04.–31.10.2016

## EXHIBITION TEXTS

### Modern Visionaries. Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch

Times of crises and upheavals are also the times of the visionary. Our exhibition is devoted to the brief but dramatic period between 1918 and 1923 – the end of World War I, the November Revolution and the formative years of the Weimar Republic. Diverse societal forces, including artists, were setting out to improve the world, which they wanted to turn into a place of peace, of prosperity and of beauty, and where all the arts would unite in architecture. Visionary ideas and buildings for a new society – that was the plan.

Paul Scheerbart (1863–1915), Bruno Taut (1880–1938) and Paul Goesch (1885–1940) participated in this new beginning in different ways. The exhibition focuses on Scheerbart as a visionary poet and draftsman, on Taut as a visionary architectural theorist and on Goesch as an architectural painter-poet and outsider artist. Bruno Taut assumes the role of inspirer and intermediary within this triumvirate. He disseminated Paul Scheerbart's utopias and created a forum for Paul Goesch's texts and drawings.

The exhibition unites drawings, photographs and models by Bruno Taut, Hans Scharoun, Hermann Finsterlin, Wenzel Hablik, Hans and Wassili Luckhardt from the collection of the Baukunst-Archiv at the Akademie der Künste with drawings by Paul Scheerbart and Paul Goesch from the holdings of the Berlinische Galerie.

### Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915)

Paul Scheerbart's fantastic future visions influenced artists, architects and theorists. He already began propagating life in glass buildings in his novels from the late nineteenth century. In 1913/14 the author inspired the architect Bruno Taut to take up his ideas about building with colored glass. Scheerbart dedicated his 1914 theoretical treatise *Glass Architecture* to Taut, who in turn erected his Glass Pavilion that same year in the poet's sense at the Cologne Werkbund Exhibition.

Alongside his bizarre, humorous novels and caricature-like drawings, Scheerbart's vision of a "glass culture" make up the foundation of fantastic architecture and the emergent Expressionism. The building material glass was thought capable of helping to bring a harmonious society into existence—a utopia that extended far into outer space: "Light seeks to penetrate the whole cosmos and is alive in crystal," wrote Scheerbart in 1914 for Taut's Glass Pavilion. There was a dominating preference for crystalline construction elements that veered between art form and natural object.

### Bruno Taut (1880-1938)

More than any other architect of his generation, Taut was someone who influenced and practiced the two decisive stylistic art movements of the nineteen tens and twenties: Expressionism and New Objectivity. In the economically difficult post-war years Taut published his visionary ideas in texts, colored drawings and architectural designs. He had already realized his preference for colored building prior to World War I at the Gartenstadt Falkenberg near Berlin and in 1925 at the Hufeisensiedlung (Horseshoe Estate) in Berlin-Britz. Taut became the spokesman of the Workers Council for Art upon its foundation in 1918 in conjunction with the German November Revolution. After founding of the *Crystal Chain* correspondence in 1919 he edited the magazine *Frühlicht* from 1920 to 1922, turning it into a forum for visionary architecture. At the same time Taut also designed stage sets and costumes for the Deutsches



Theater and stood as a universal artist and pioneer of modernism at the focal point of a cultural network in the early twentieth century.

### **The Crystal Chain**

"We are not an artist group. 'Building' takes precedence over all artistry. Only the great mirth will become victorious. Dancing and building!"

In a letter from November 1919, Bruno Taut employed these words to invite colleagues to an exchange of ideas by mail. The result was the famous *Crystal Chain* correspondence that until late 1920 would evolve into a kind of visionary think tank. The motivation behind it stems from the November Revolution of 1918. Artists and architects also founded the Workers Council for Art that same year and Bruno Taut became its spokesman. Organized by the Arbeitsrat, the *Exhibition for Unknown Architects* went on show in April 1919 with the objective of lending architecture new expression and social significance. Several of its participants would also take part in the *Crystal Chain*. At Taut's suggestion, all of the participants employed pen-names. Hermann Finsterlin thus went by the name *Prometh*; Paul Goesch *Tancred*; Wenzel Hablik *W.H.*; Hans Luckhardt *Angkor*; Wassili Luckhardt *Zacken*; Hans Scharoun *Hannes* and Bruno Taut *Glas*.

Between 1920 and 1922 Bruno Taut published the contributions to the *Crystal Chain* in the journal *Frühlicht*.

### **Paul Goesch (1885-1940)**

The architect Paul Goesch belongs to a generation of artists who rejected the Wilhelmine regime in Germany and set off for new horizons: life reform and psychoanalysis, Expressionism and mystic Catholicism were areas he occupied himself with or which directly affected him. Goesch supported the objectives of the Workers Council for Art as well as of the November Group that was founded in 1919 and participated in their exhibitions. His fragile mental state required numerous hospitalizations in psychiatric institutions. Five of his paintings that had been acquired by the Kunsthalle Mannheim were confiscated in 1937/38 in conjunction with the National Socialist "cleansing action." Goesch's works were presented at the infamous "Degenerate Art" exhibition as those of a professional modern artist on the one hand as well as those of a "lunatic" on the other. The artist was murdered in August 1940 in Brandenburg, falling victim to the so-called T4 Action, the Nazi program of forced euthanasia. His drawings and ornamental architectural designs in a fantastic visionary Expressionist style still remain to be rediscovered.





## Modern Visionaries

Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch

15.04.–31.10.2016

### PRESS IMAGES



Paul Goesch,  
Kopf mit Farbteilung, ca. 1920,  
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Goesch,  
Selbstportrait, undated,  
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Goesch,  
Festsaal, 1921,  
Berlinische Galerie, Schenkung der Erbgemeinschaft  
aus dem Nachlass des Künstlers, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Scheerbart,  
Ein Zukunftschild, um 1912,  
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Goesch,  
Ohne Titel (Bajadere mit rosa Rock), ca. 1920,  
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Paul Scheerbart,  
Jenseitsgalerie, 1907, sheet 3 of 10,  
Berlinische Galerie, Repro: Kai-Annett Becker



Bruno Taut,  
Glashaus auf der Werkbundausststellung auf Köln 1914,  
Ansicht von außen, Akademie der Künste, Berlin,  
Bruno-Taut-Sammlung, photographer unknown



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## CATALOGUE



On the occasion of the exhibition in the Berlinische Galerie (15.04.–31.10.2016) Scheidegger & Spiess will publish the exhibition catalogue „Modern Visionaries. Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Paul Goesch“.

Architectural utopias, drawings, and texts by three visionaries of the early twentieth century are united here for the first time. The novelist, poet and inventor Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915) inspired the young architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938) with his ideas on building with colored glass. Paul Goesch (1885-1940), a trained architect, produced hundreds of fantastic visionary drawings. He was one of the correspondents who contributed to the “Crystal Chain”, the famous forum on utopian building initiated by Taut in 1919.

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