

Friedensreich Hundertwasser

Friedensreich Regentag Dunkelbunt Hundertwasser, born Friedrich Stowasser was born December 15, 1928 in Vienna (Austria).

Hundertwasser's original and unruly artistic vision expressed itself in pictorial art, environmentalism, philosophy, and design of facades, postage stamps, flags, and clothing (among other areas). The common themes in his work utilised bright colours, organic forms, a reconciliation of humans with nature, and a strong individualism, rejecting straight lines. He remains sui generis, although his architectural work is comparable to Antoni Gaudí in its biomorphic forms and use of tile. He was inspired by the works of Egon Schiele from an early date, and his style was often compared to that of Gustav Klimt. He was fascinated with spirals, and called straight lines "the devil's tools". He called his theory of art "transautomatism", based on Surrealist automatism, but focusing on the experience of the viewer, rather than the artist.

His adopted surname is based on the translation of Sto (the [Slavic] word for "one hundred") into German. The name Friedensreich has a double meaning as "Peaceland" or "Peacerich" (in the sense of "peaceful"). The other names he chose for himself, Regentag and Dunkelbunt, translate to "Rainy day" and "Darkly multicoloured". His name Friedensreich Hundertwasser means, "Peace-Kingdom Hundred-Water". Although Hundertwasser first achieved notoriety for his boldly-coloured paintings, he is more widely renowned today for his revolutionary architectural designs, which incorporate natural features of the landscape, and use of irregular forms in his building design. Hundertwasserhaus, a low-income apartment block in Vienna, features undulating floors ("an uneven floor is a melody to the feet"), a roof covered with earth and grass, and large trees growing from inside the rooms, with limbs extending from windows. He took no payment for the design of Hundertwasserhaus, declaring that it was worth it, to "prevent something ugly from going up in its place".

He felt that standard architecture could not be called art, and declared that the design of any building should be influenced by the aesthetics of its eventual tenants. Hundertwasser was also known for his performance art, in which he would, for instance, appear in public in the nude promoting an ecologically friendly flush-less toilet.

On July 4, 1958 he read his celebrated and controversial Verschimmelungs-Manifest, the so-called Mould Manifesto against rationalism in architecture, in the abbey of Seckau. "A person in a rented apartment must be able to lean out of his window and scrape off the masonry within arm's reach. And he must be allowed to take a long brush and paint everything outside within arm's reach. So that it will be visible from afar to everyone in the street that someone lives there who is different from the imprisoned, enslaved, standardised man who lives next door."

In 1972 he published the manifesto Your window right your tree duty: planting trees in an urban environments was to become obligatory: "If man walks in nature's midst, then he is nature's guest and must learn to behave as a well-brought-up guest."

His work has been used for flags, stamps, coins, posters, schools, churches, a public toilet in Kawakawa in his adopted home of New Zealand, and apartment buildings. His most famous flag is the Koru Flag; he has also designed stamps for the Cape Verde islands and for the United Nations post administration in Geneva on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 1999 he started his last project named Die Grüne Zitadelle von Magdeburg. Although he never finished this work completely, the building was put up a few years later in Magdeburg, a town in central Germany, and finally opened on October 3, 2005.

An art gallery featuring his work will be established in a council building in Whangarei, New Zealand, and will bring to fruition his 1993 plans for improving the building.

Hundertwasser considered New Zealand as his official home, and no matter where he went in the world, his watch was always set to New Zealand time. That finally became the place he was buried after his death at sea on the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 on

February 19, 2000.

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