

**Erwin Wurm**

***Ethics demonstrated in geometrical order***

**March 30—May 27, 2017**

**536 West 22nd Street, New York**

#erwinwurm | #oneminutesculptures | @lehmannmaupin

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, March 30, 6-8 PM



*Deep Snow, One Minute Sculpture*, 2016, instruction drawing, Baker Copenhagen bench, and realized by public, 18 x 49 x 18.75 inches (sculpture), 45.7 x 124.5 x 47.6 cm, Courtesy the Artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.

Participants will navigate these iconic 20th-century furnishing designs, often to unusual effect. By asking for the audience's participation in a way that could make them feel uncomfortable, *One Minute Sculptures* offer a moment of visceral introspection as a means of provoking an examination of one's own insecurities, thus turning them into subversive "thinking sculptures." Much of Wurm's work, though disturbing, offers an underlying social critique of contemporary culture, particularly in response to the capitalist influences and resulting societal pressures that the artist sees as contrary to our internal ideals.

New York, February 23, 2017—**Lehmann Maupin** is pleased to announce ***Ethics demonstrated in geometrical order***, an exhibition of new *One Minute Sculptures* by **Erwin Wurm**. This year marks the 20th anniversary of these audience-activated sculptures, which will also be the focus of Wurm's installation for the Austrian pavilion in the 57th Venice Biennial. Wurm's *One Minute Sculptures* have influenced a generation of artists by redefining what a sculpture is and how the public engages with the medium. **There will be a reception for the artist on Thursday, March 30 at 536 West 22nd Street from 6-8 PM.**

The basic premise of a *One Minute Sculpture* remains uniform. For each work, using a drawing or specific text, Wurm directs participants to pose with an object, which have ranged from cleaning products and sneakers to furniture and fruit. The viewer enacts the proposed sculpture on a low plinth, manipulating their body and the predetermined prop in a pose held for a short time. Wurm reiterates that the success of these ephemeral pieces is determined by the exactness with which the directions are executed, stating, "The *One Minute Sculptures* only come into existence if the public follows precisely the instructions of the artist and free will has a low priority."

For the *One Minute Sculptures* featured in this exhibition, Wurm employs mid-century modern furniture as props.

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The necessity for explicit mimicry of Wurm's directives is reflected in the artist's title choice, *Ethics demonstrated in geometrical order*, evoking the 17th-century Dutch philosopher Baruch de Spinoza. Considered a pioneer of the Enlightenment era, Spinoza's magnum opus, *Ethics* (1677), premised the uncertainty of free will. Wurm suggests contemporary scientific manifestations of Spinoza's thoughts could be applied to the common theory among neuroscientists that our thoughts, judgments, and subsequent actions are strongly influenced by predeterminations and conditioning.

Throughout the Renaissance, an ongoing debate about the specific virtues of sculpture, painting, and poetry aligned sculpture with the physical entity it summons into being, a perception that dates back to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 AD). *One Minute Sculptures* reconsider this early interpretation of sculpture as a stand-in for the human form by using an actual human body as a replacement for its representation in durable form. By reducing the duration of the piece to a single minute, Wurm questions the timelessness often attributed to sculpture. The resulting works thus collapse the distinction between sculpture and other art mediums, such as painting and poetry, into a complete corporal, temporal, and narrative form.

In addition to the *One Minute Sculptures*, Wurm will present five new sculptural works in cast bronze and mixed media, including *Equitable* (2016) and *Flat Iron* (2016), recreations of two iconic New York buildings that appear to be melting, and *Bad Thoughts* (2016), created by casting deformed bags of clay. These works are reminiscent of his *Fat House* (2003) and *Fat Car* (2001-present) series, where he gave swollen anatomical form to these structures. Together with *One Minute Sculptures*, this latest body of work reasserts Wurm's continued engagement with everyday objects and familiar forms as a catalyst for challenging and confounding perceptions of space, volume, form, and materiality.

### **About the artist**

Erwin Wurm (b. 1954 Bruck an der Mur/Styria, Austria; lives and works in Vienna) graduated from University Graz, Austria in 1977, and Gestaltungslehre University of Applied Art and Academy of Fine Art, Vienna in 1982. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil (2017, forthcoming); Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg, Germany (2017, forthcoming); Leopold Museum, Vienna, Austria (2017, forthcoming); Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2016); Schindler House, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, West Hollywood, CA (2016); Bangkok Art and Culture Center, Thailand (2016); Indianapolis Museum of Art, IL (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art in Kraków, Poland (2013); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (2012); Dallas Contemporary, TX (2012); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2011); Middelheimmuseum, Antwerpen, Belgium (2011); Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2010); and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2010). Select group exhibitions of his work include *Performing for the Camera*, Tate Modern, London (2016); *Precarious Balance*, Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch, New Zealand (2016); *Desire for Freedom*, Museum of Contemporary Art in Kraków, Poland (2013); *Heimsuchung: Uncanny Spaces in Contemporary Art*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2013); *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today*, Kunsthhaus Zürich, Switzerland, traveled to The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2011); and *Temporary Structures: Performing Architecture in Contemporary Art*, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA (2011). Wurm's work is in numerous international public and private collections, including Albertina, Vienna; Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain; Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Kunsthhaus Zürich, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany;

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Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Italy; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN.

### **About Lehmann Maupin**

Founded in 1996 by partners Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin, Lehmann Maupin has fostered the careers of a diverse group of internationally renowned artists, both emerging and established, working in multiple disciplines and across varied media. With three locations—two in New York and one in Hong Kong—the gallery represents artists from the United States, Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East. Known for championing artists who create groundbreaking and challenging forms of visual expression, Lehmann Maupin presents work highlighting personal investigations and individual narratives through conceptual approaches that often address such issues as gender, class, religion, history, politics, and globalism.

### **Current & Upcoming Exhibitions**

Kader Attia, *Reason's Oxymorons*, through March 4, 2017, Chrystie Street, New York

Liza Lou, *inxgube*, through March 11, Pedder Building, Hong Kong

Kim Guiline, February 16—March 25, 2017, West 22nd Street, New York

Teresita Fernández, *Fire (America)*, March 17—May 20, 2017, Chrystie Street, New York

Do Ho Suh, *Passage/s*, March 20—May 13, 2017, Pedder Building, Hong Kong

For more information on Erwin Wurm or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Marta de Movellan or Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923, or visit [lehmannmaupin.com](http://lehmannmaupin.com).

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