

# Friedensreich Hundertwasser

The work of the Austrian painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser, one of the world's most challenging and colourful figures in the field of ecology and 'alternative' architecture, is on display for the first time in the United Kingdom at the Barbican Art Gallery from 26 April to 19 June; York City Art Gallery, York, 2 July to 7 August; and the City Arts Centre, Edinburgh, 20 August to 17 September.

'Hundertwasser', the second international touring exhibition of his work, has been seen in nearly forty major centres in Europe, North and South America, and the Middle and Far East since it was launched at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris in 1975.

This inspiring exhibition covers the whole range of Hundertwasser's work from his early paintings and sketches, through graphics, postage stamps and tapestry, to architecture.

His painting style is characterised by bright colours, spirals (which have for him a symbolic importance), Klimt-like droplets (water is a great source of inspiration), and irregularly drawn geometric shapes.

His art, though fascinating in itself for its rich colour and variety, is also an expression

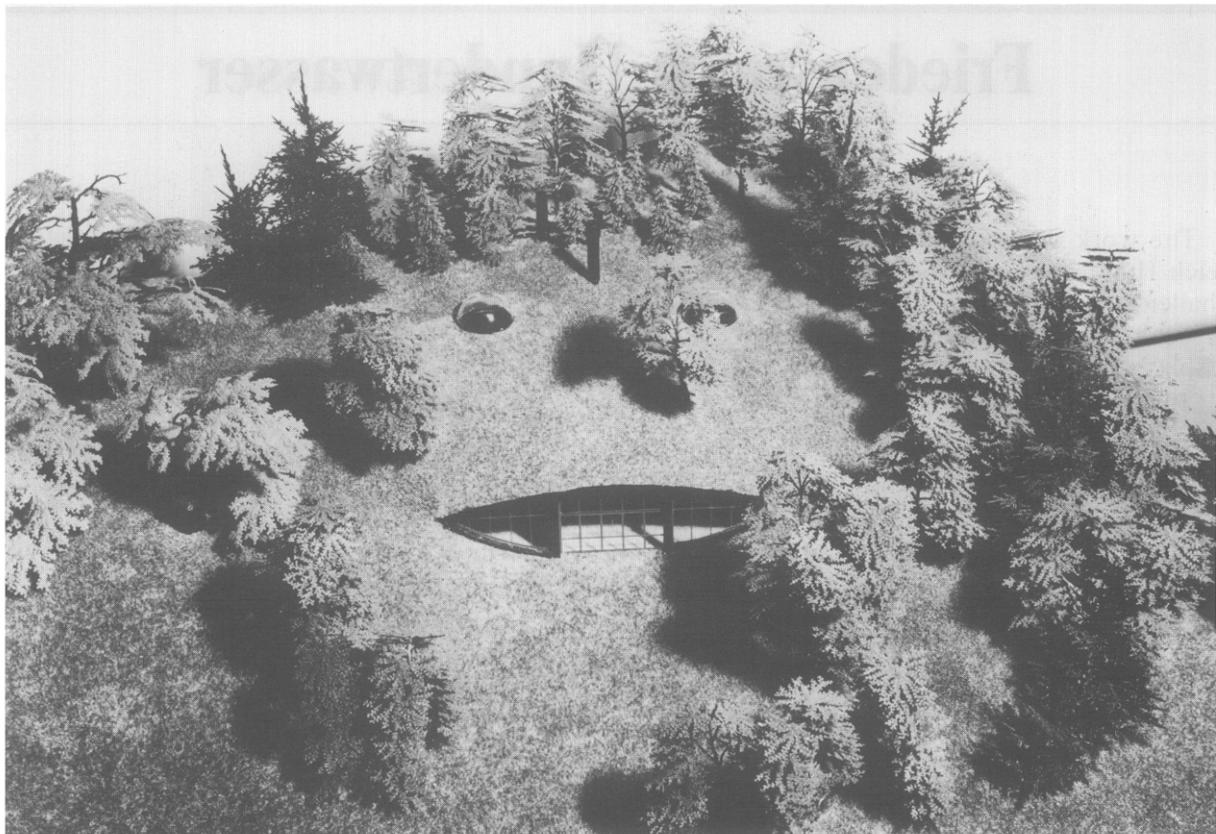


Hundertwasser: "Blood Red Fever House".

of deeply held views about ecology, modern art and especially modern architecture. These ideas have been expounded over many years in a series of manifestos, essays, statements, worldwide lecture tours, and by headline-grabbing demonstrations (such as the nude demonstrations in Vienna and Munich in 1964 against anti-human environments and sterile architecture).

His preoccupations are revealed in works such as "The Mouldiness Manifesto: Against Rationalism in Architecture" (1958), "Your Rights to Windows—Your Duties to Trees" (1972), "The Advantages of a Grass Roof", and "The Toilet Manifesto" advocating a humus lavatory to recycle waste (1975).

The relationship between art and ecology is clearly revealed in the Tree Manifesto (1976): "*Since I am myself I always confronted society with art and art with ecological terms. This is part of myself as artist, citizen of the world and human being. Therefore it is impossible to separate Hundertwasser the ecologist from Hundertwasser the painter.*"



Hundertwasser: Architectural Model.





Hundertwasser: Architectural Model.

At the age of eight a Viennese teacher noted "an unusual sense of colour and form", but his work was ignored by dealers and critics for many years. To meet a huge demand in recent times, however, he has turned to silk screen printing techniques, creating 10 000 copies of "Good Morning City—Bleeding Town" for instance. His poster for the Munich Olympics, commissioned by the West German Government, originally sold for £10; its current value is £490.

Recent activity has included an anti-nuclear energy poster for Ralph Nader's Critical Mass Energy Project (1980); the design of a public housing project for Vienna, the building of which was begun last Autumn;

the conversion of a coal washing plant in West Germany for the 1984 National Garden Show, and the rebuilding of a silo in Austria and a factory in Germany to blend with nature and human needs.

Hundertwasser has just completed a lecture tour of Manila and Seattle University. Recently in San Francisco the Mayor declared a Hundertwasser Week when Hundertwasser donated posters for Greenpeace and the Jacques Cousteau Society. In Washington he was the guest of Walter Mondale and the Centre for Environmental Education.

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