

Press Release: 12 June 2014

FRANZ WEST: WHERE IS MY EIGHT?



THIS SUMMER THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD PRESENTS ITS LARGEST EXHIBITION
A MAJOR UK SURVEY EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY FRANZ WEST,
INITIATED AND CO-DEVELOPED WITH THE ARTIST BEFORE HIS DEATH

13 JUNE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2014

Free Admission

Press Preview: Thursday 12 June, 11am – 3pm
Evening Preview: Thursday 12 June, 6.30 – 8.30pm
Opens to the public: Friday 13 June, 10am – 5pm

- This summer The Hepworth Wakefield will present its largest exhibition to date, a major UK survey exhibition of the multi-layered work of Franz West
- *Where is my Eight?* was initiated and co-developed with mumok (Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna) and Franz West with great enthusiasm before his death in July 2012
- The exhibition provides a survey of West's artistic output with a focus on his combination pieces, in which the artist combined and re-combined various individual works in different configurations
- Visitors can interact with and use several of the works on display, following West's conviction that his art should be experienced on a physical as well as an intellectual level
- Parallels between the work of Barbara Hepworth and Franz West will be revealed in a unique intervention in the Hepworth Family Gift gallery
- Viennese-born Franz West was Austria's most successful contemporary artist and received the 'Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement' at the Venice Biennale in 2011
- West collaborated with many contemporary artists, among them YBA artist Sarah Lucas, Turner Prize winner Douglas Gordon and Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig

From 13 June until 14 September 2014, The Hepworth Wakefield opens the highly anticipated first UK presentation of the major survey exhibition, *Franz West: Where is my Eight?*

This will be The Hepworth Wakefield's largest exhibition since the gallery opened three years ago, with seven out of the ten David Chipperfield-designed gallery spaces showing West's work.

Where is my Eight? will present a loosely chronological survey of Franz West's artistic output, focusing on his combination pieces, which the artist worked on throughout his prolific career. These combine and re-combine individual works into a multitude of different configurations. The combi-pieces offer a direct insight into West's complex and multi-layered output, including his 'Adaptives', furniture, sculpture, videos and works on paper.

Visitors can experience the works on a number of levels, from a psychological and intellectual exchange to a physical interaction. This will include an opportunity to use his signature 'Adaptives' (Passestücke) works. Intended by West to "adapt" to the body, they offer ever-changing results that depend on the visitor or wearer, time and context.

In the true spirit of Franz West, arguably one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th century, the exhibition *Where is my Eight?* has itself been adapted for its summer presentation at The Hepworth Wakefield. A unique intervention of West's work will take place in the Hepworth Family Gift, our centrepiece collection display that features many of Hepworth's plaster prototypes, as well as the six-metre high model for Hepworth's John Lewis commission, *Winged Figure*, 1961 - 63.

This addition to the exhibition investigates the connections between the work of Franz West and Wakefield-born Hepworth. It places their work in parallel to explore the use of plaster as a creative material; the significance of the studio environment; the repeated return to reconfiguring and adapting previous works, including the combination of several pieces, and the intended physical experience of the works of art.

Simon Wallis, Director of The Hepworth Wakefield said: "We're delighted to exhibit this major survey by such a significant and influential artist in Yorkshire this summer. The show will have some fascinating resonances with our sculpture collection."

Where is my Eight? was initiated and co-developed with mumok (Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna) and with Franz West with great enthusiasm before his death in July 2012. The exhibition title and design for the exhibition poster were developed by the artist, a further example of his practice of combination and recombination. Inspired by his gouache of 2004, depicting a woman putting on a pair of trousers which, following a successful diet, were now too big for her, Franz omits the 'W' to transform the title *Lost Weight* into *Lost Eight*, before finally arriving at *Where is my Eight?* By leaving the question unanswered, West invites the viewer to develop their own associations.

Eva Badura-Triska, Curator at mumok and Head of the Archiv Franz West, knew the artist from the early 1980s and collaborated with him on various occasions, organising West's first retrospective in 1996 at the museum in Vienna. She also developed this exhibition with West before he died and said: "I'm so pleased we're able to realise this highly anticipated major UK showing of West's varied, influential and prolific practice with The Hepworth Wakefield. It's a timely celebration and appraisal of his very unique approach to art, with works that invite using the gallery spaces not only for experience, association, consideration and reflection, but also for a participatory conversation and social interaction."

Visitors can enjoy free admission to *Franz West: Where is my Eight?* There will be a number of events and talks relating to the exhibition. For further details about these, as well as the gallery's summer public programme and free, family-friendly activities visit www.hepworthwakefield.org or telephone 01924 247360.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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IMAGE REQUESTS:

High resolution images are available from the Media Centre: www.hepworthwakefield.org/press

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

FRANZ WEST: WHERE IS MY EIGHT?

This exhibition is supported by The Henry Moore Foundation, Crown Fine Art and the Austrian Cultural Forum.

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

The gallery is at the heart of Wakefield's regeneration. Designed by the internationally acclaimed practice, David Chipperfield Architects, it is funded by Wakefield Council and Arts Council England with additional funding from a number of charitable trusts and private individuals. The gallery opened on 21 May 2011 and welcomed its millionth visitor on 5 December 2013.

The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, West Yorkshire, WF1 5AW

Free admission

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm and 10am – 9pm on the Third Thursday of every month

Closed Mondays (except for Bank Holidays and school holidays) www.hepworthwakefield.org
01924 247360

The gallery should be cited in full, as *The Hepworth Wakefield* and not Hepworth Wakefield, Hepworth Gallery or any other configuration.

FRANZ WEST

Franz West was born in 1947 in Vienna, where he also died in 2012. With no formal training he began to make art at the age of twenty-three. Between 1977 and 1982, as a student of Bruno Gironcoli, West was at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Though his work was only known to his circle of friends during the first ten years, the 1980s saw the beginning of his international career. He was represented at Documenta twice (in 1992 and 1997) and in 1990 provided the Austrian contribution to the Venice Biennial. In 2011 he was awarded a Golden Lion there for his life's work, the highest award for a living artist.

Despite his international career, Vienna remained the centre point of his life as a city for which he a particular affinity.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A catalogue is being published for the exhibition with a wealth of illustrations and a foreword by Karola Kraus, Eva Badura-Triska and Susanne Gaensheimer. It contains an article by Eva Badura-Triska on Kombi und Re-Kombi als Form des Sprachspiels bei Franz West, [Combi and Re-combi as a form of Word Game in the Work of Franz West], an essay by Klaus Goerner (curator MMK Frankfurt am Main) entitled Produktion und Teilhabe [Production and Participation], the most comprehensive account to date of West's relationship to Wittgenstein, written by philosopher Peter Keicher, and a contribution by psychoanalyst Georg Groeller. In his contribution artist Andreas Reiter Raabe, who became close friends with West in the 1990s, melds his own thoughts and quotations by, and about, the artist into a fundamental reflection on West's person and oeuvre.

For the exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield, an additional introduction will be available, discussing the parallels between the work of Barbara Hepworth and Franz West.

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