

The Hundertwasser Exhibition at KunstHausWien

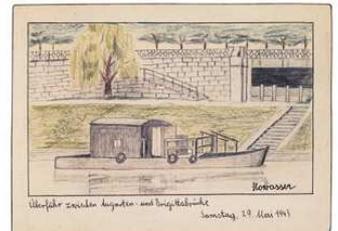
Youth work

“I was the first one at school who was able to draw perspective properly and the first one who stopped doing so because I didn't want to draw that way any longer“. Hundertwasser

“When I worked on the farm I saw how green the grass was and how brown the earth. That was when I decided to become a painter“. Hundertwasser

JW 17 THE FERRY BETWEEN AUGARTEN- AND BRIGITTA-BRIDGE

Colour pencil
Vienna, 1943



An important picture for me. My first boat. I dreamt about sailing over the seas; later, I did with the Regentag. The Danube Canal was my first sea, I crossed it by boat time and again, back and forth. (Cat. Rais.)

JW 227 / 59 COMPOSITION WITH SUN-FLOWERS

Watercolour
San Gimignano, 1949

First precursors of the spiral. I was surprised at how simple it was and wanted to persuade everybody to paint that beautifully, too. (from: Cat. Albertina, Vienna, 1974, p. 130)

It is my key, crucial picture. From then on I was a painter, from then on I was free. I had found the way back to myself. (Cat. Rais.)



Paintings

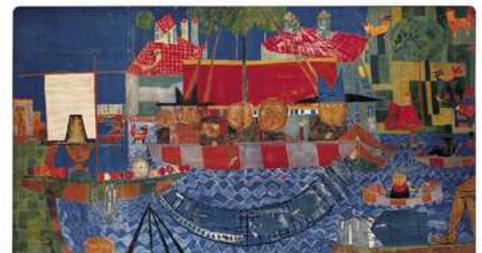
*“My paintings are the harvest of my dreams.“
Hundertwasser*

*“My painting is, I think, completely different because it is vegetative painting.“
Hundertwasser*

*“Painting is a religious activity.“
Hundertwasser*

97 THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT

In collaboration with René Brò
Mixed media
St. Mandé, 1950



In that time, I made a deal with Brô. Brô painted almond-shaped eyes high up in the face with nose, rivers and ship-mouth in circular-shaped heads. I painted soul-trees that means trees which had a halo of glory like human beings and saints. Trees where you could see through as if they were made out of spheres of glass. These trees I had seen in the drawings of Walter Kampmann. Brô gave me the right to paint his faces, and I gave Brô the right to paint my "soul-trees". (Cat. Rais.)

227 A RAINDROP WHICH FALLS INTO THE CITY

Watercolour

Paris, 1955

This watercolour is also one I folded in four parts and only painted one quarter at a time. It is like a continuation of the thought of pictures 153 and 154 Automobile with Red Raindrops, only now the raindrop is falling on a city - an appeal to a new urbanism in harmony with creation. The tachistically falling drop is meticulously depicted, or as I said later, Each raindrop is a kiss from heaven. (Cat. Rais.)



460 HOMMAGE AU TACHISME

Mixed media

La Picaudière 1961

To me the most honest form of Tachism was total self-renunciation: if a painter climbs up a ladder with a bucket of paint and shoots himself up there, letting the paint fall "automatically" onto the canvas waiting on the floor, that is the most sublime act of Tachistic self-renunciation. The canvas is like a jumping sheet, the paint sticks to it, the dead initiator falls through it. Painting blind-blindfolded - or drawing left-handed - when you're right-handed - are not so totally honest, and when you let snails, monkeys, donkey tails, elephant trunks do the painting, it is somebody else doing the work, albeit Tachistically correctly. With this picture I wanted to show very lucidly and immediately and precisely how a Tachistically fluidoid-spiraloid painting done in a state of complete awareness looks as if it were from a different viewpoint, a different time and world, when it is painted with the traditional method. I had great respect for Tachism, but as an outsider. (Cat. Rais.)



583 TWO ENVELOPES ON A LONG VOYAGE

Watercolour

Hamburg, 1964



As so many times before, for example 188 *The Parliamentary Content of an Arrow*, 180 *Steamer and Maelstrom in a Garden*, 201 *Shirt-sleeve Pattern*, 581 *The Impotent Krka Waterfalls*, the irregular form of the edges of the painted surface is very significant, as it itself becomes an essential part of the picture. Unfolded letter envelopes, tailor's patterns can be used for nothing. You don't have to do anything in addition, otherwise the ready-made form is bad and implausible, and the contrast between the painted and the external form is ruined. The margin is like the skin. When I start painting, I don't know where to begin: from the edge towards the centre or from the centre towards the edge. – Let things take their own course. (Cat. Rais.)

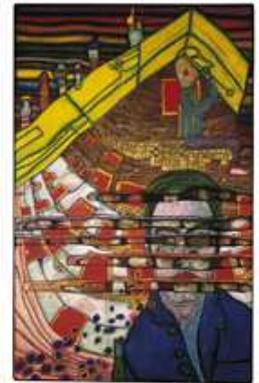
622 MOURNING SCHIELE

Mixed media
Lugano, 1965

I love Schiele, Picasso and Klee and their ilk, and Giotto, the old masters and the like. But in-between and besides them there is a yawning emptiness. The simple is still broad.

I often dream like Schiele, my father, about flowers that are red, and birds and flying fish and gardens in velvet and emerald green and human beings who walk, weeping, in red-yellow and ocean-blue.

(from: I love Schiele, 1950/1951)



839 THE THIRD SKIN

Mixed media
Porquerolles, 1982

A Hundertwasser House architecture reverie. The project was in progress. Combining architecture and painting is difficult. I am reproached in architecture circles for just painting houses: it is all a Potemkin façade, i. e., flat, with nothing behind it. And at that I build in tandem with the architect Pelikan extremely varied, complicated houses full of nooks and crannies. It is on the contrary precisely the T-square-straight, soulless architectures which are flat and easy to analyse and construct with a computer. My houses - the computer people have said - often need more data input than medieval cathedrals. (Cat. Rais.)



959 BURNING FACE

Mixed media
Vienna, 1998

The picture is important to me because it is the only one done on a white ground - on canvas - which my mother prepared herself. She wanted to paint on it, but then she died. Then the prepared canvas was kicking around my place for years. After my mother tried at all costs to talk me out of taking up painting as my profession: that was a "starveling's trade", she later, at about age seventy, took up painting herself, I think to prove to me that she could paint, too, in the naive style of Grandma Moses, who, at a very advanced age, after a full life, began to paint in her retirement and became a sensation in the art world. Grandma Moses painted until she was over a hundred years old; my mother died at 87. (Cat. Rais.)



Graphic work

"With graphic art I enter a paradise which I cannot reach with my brush."

Hundertwasser

"To make graphic art is like playing chess simultaneously with many unknown partners."

Hundertwasser

484A HOUSES IN RAIN OF BLOOD

Japanese woodcut, 1961

The first time I came in contact with Japanese woodcut-prints was in Italy when I was hitchhiking with friends and I saw rainfalls of Hiroshige as some peasants walked with umbrellas in the rain, and I saw Hokusai prints with the Fujiyama in the background and with clouds and with water and waves, and this all left such a deep impression on me that I decided later to do prints.

Immediately I did some sketches for woodcut-prints - it was all in 1950.

It took a very long time, ten years later, finally, when I was myself in Tokyo I could contact the first Japanese woodcutters and it was very difficult to convince them to work together with an European artist, because they are very jealous of their art and it is right so.

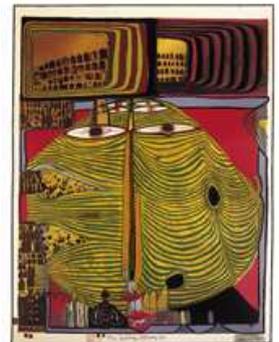
(from: Japanese woodcut-prints and I, 1977)



669 KING KONG

Silk screen, 1968

This was the beginning of a long period of working together with my friend, the "Coordinatore" Alberto Della Vecchia. Up to that time I had resisted doing graphics. What had been done in this line hitherto had come about more or less because I had no choice. Until Alberto brought me a "Hundertwasser graphic" he had done. I immediately felt ill: this was kitsch which aped my style. Nonetheless, it was the decisive impetus to do it better, to do it right. Thus "King Kong" came to be. (Cat. Rais.)



686 GOOD MORNING CITY

Silk screen, 1969/70

686 GOOD MORNING CITY - BLEEDING TOWN

Silk screen, 1970/71



This is my first large print edition, which I numbered from beginning to end; but actually it isn't one, since it consists of many variations. It is based on 151 *Bleeding Houses*. I spent months in the print shop in Campalto, while the Regentag lay in berth not far away, in a canal of the lagoon near

Ca' Noghera. It was like a simultaneous chess match with more than forty opponents. I did this even more radically later with the silkscreen print 860 *Homo Humus come va*. I don't think anyone can outdo me in this gigantic enterprise, which took up two years of my life. I used completely new techniques in print graphics: metallic-stamp printing, phosphorescent colours that glow in the dark, reflecting glass-bead appliqués, convex embossing and an incredible number of colour overprints which I painted separately on transparent foil, from where they were transferred to the screen. Then the proofs of the infinite number of colour combinations. I wanted to reduce the conveyor belt to absurdity. I got myself into a bind between the incredible demand which had materialised and my pride in creating something original, not mass-produced, and I wanted to give as much of my inner self as I could. I went to court and won because I wanted to keep the prices low (just like with the Art Club portfolio of 1951) - 100 marks per print, to make it accessible to many people. It was all for nought. I could not fix the price on the open market. It was a victory and a defeat all in one. (Cat. Rais.)

728 MEADOWMAN
Etching, 1974

My division of labour for print-graphics production was in full force: Japan for wood-block prints, Paris for lithography, Venice for silkscreen printing and Vienna for engraving and copperplate engraving. I think there is no better way of dividing up and utilising the traditional mastery in the various sectors of print graphics. (Cat. Rais.)



860 10002 NIGHTS HOMO HUMUS COME VA HOW DO YOU DO
Photolithograph / Silk screen, 1984

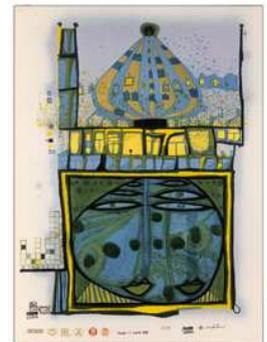
Now with my 83rd graphic work I succeeded in producing as many different specimens as their number in the edition. I succeeded not only in creating a graphic work, but a genuine original graphic work, a unique original. This actually was only a last step into the direction of a good conscience. The word **original graphic work** should mean that this graphic specimen is an original, a unique work, not a reproduction nor a duplication, i.e.,

1. it is not a reproduction after a picture,
2. it does not exist a second time.

The only difference from a hand-painted picture is that it was produced by a printing technique and not by using a paintbrush.

In the age of reproduction and duplication and mass production I am proud of having been the first to transform and vanguard the assembly line. When the machine produces originals it will lose its terror and cease to be an assembly line.

(from: On Original Graphic, 1984)



Tapestries

133 PISSING BOY WITH SKY-SCRAPER

Tapestry

Vienna, 1952

The tapestry which I did in Vienna in 1952 would not exist if it was not for a bet.

The two weavers Riedl and Schidlo insisted, a tapestry can only be woven after a cartoon the size of the tapestry itself. My opinion was that it could be done without and as I did not give in, they lent me a loom. I dragged it home myself, I believe it was on a push-cart, and the two weavers helped me to erect the loom and lent me coloured wool in many tints and then I started weaving. I was amazed to see how endless it got; it grew a few millimeters per day only. I always had to push the wool back into the warp with the comb-hammer and thus 5 cms became one or two millimeters. I slowly worked my tapestry upwards and it took me six months during which I worked from eight in the morning till eight at night with hands and feet - never in my life have I laboured so intensely and for so long a time.

I began with the toes, they became a trouserleg and to the right of it appeared a house.

As I wove I kept thinking what could fill the background and what I could conceive for higher-up. As I had started on with a trouser-leg, a body had to follow, arms, and a head; there were to be windows in the background, and if one makes windows, there must be a roof to top them off, and this is how I finished the tapestry and won my bet. (Cat. Rais.)



Stamp designs

846 WINDOW RIGHT

Watercolour
Kaurinui – Vienna, 1983

847 TREATY WITH NATURE

Watercolour
Kaurinui, 1983

848 DROIT DE CREER

Right to Create
Watercolour
Kaurinui, 1983

849 HOMO HUMUS HUMANITAS

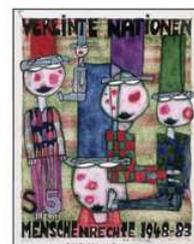
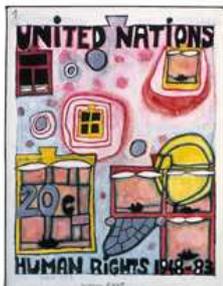
Watercolour
Kaurinui, 1983

850 THE SECOND SKIN

Watercolour
Kaurinui, 1983

851 RIGHT FOR DREAMS

Watercolour
Kaurinui, 1983



A postage stamp is an important matter.
Though it is very small and tiny in size
it bears a decisive message.
Postage stamps are the measure to the cultural
standing of a country.
The tiny square connects the hearts of
the sender and the receiver, reducing the distances.
It is a bridge between people and countries.
The postage stamp passes all frontiers.
It reaches men in prisons, asylums and hospitals.

...

(extract from: Hundertwasser on the occasion of the first day issue of his 6 postage stamps for the United Nations for the 35th anniversary of the declaration of human rights on December 9th, 1983)

Architecture

IN THE MEADOW HILLS

1989

Planning: Architect Peter Pelikan

Model executed by Alfred Schmid

"**In The Meadow Hills**" will be worldwide exemplary. Living near to nature and with human dignity is affordable and possible for everyone, and even cheaper from the point of view of national economy. Because the overall costs of buildings hostile to nature and men to the community exceeds by far the investment.

...

Living space for people is doubled by using woodlands and nature roofs. The normal sterile and dead roof is changed into a meadow to lie on, a private forest, a holiday hill, a look out, a park or a garden.

....

Everything that is horizontal and under the sky belongs to nature.

Here it becomes true.

Man must return to nature on the roofs what he took away while building the house, here it becomes true.

Man is a guest of nature and should behave. Here it becomes true.

Man must restore to nature the territories which he has taken illegally.

(from: In the Meadow Hills, 1990)



Quotations by Hundertwasser marked with (Cat. Rais.) originate from the book: Hundertwasser, 1928-2000, Catalogue Raisonné, Cologne, 2002, Vol. II