

johann hauser: i'm the artist!
Curated by Johann Feilacher

10 Years of museum gugging – 90 Years of Johann Hauser – 200 Masterpieces

Art party and exhibition opening

johann hauser.! i'm the artist

duration: June 6, 2016 – January 8, 2016

PRESS BREAKFAST: June 2, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

OPENING: June 5, 2016, 11:00 a.m.

with the Governor of Lower Austria Erwin Pröll

A sensation at the museum gugging: The museum will mark its 10th anniversary on June 5. It will be celebrating with a large art party and the opening of the exhibition of the exceptional artist Johann Hauser.

Hauser had already become a star among the Gugging artists very early on. With its pithy line, Hauser's work was valued highly by other artists such as Jean Dubuffet or Arnulf Rainer. His images of beautiful and ugly women, rockets, tanks, snakes, and palaces are intense, powerful, and moving. Hardly any artist could be better suited to celebrate ten years of museum gugging in a worthy manner.

With over 200 works, the show "johann hauser: i'm the artist!" provides a representative overview of this extraordinary artist's lifework.

Hauser, the creator of Gugging's "Blue Star," made hundreds of magnificently colorful images that are represented in public and private collections around the world and form an essential part of the international Art Brut scene. Hauser's images of women are full of an insistent eroticism and achieve their striking impact through their powerful use of line. The artist exhibits his playful side in his depictions of other subjects: airplanes, warships, helicopters, palaces, or green snakes. They mesmerize viewers through their chromatic and emotional intensity.

Biography and Artistic Development

Born in Bratislava in 1926, Johann Hauser had to move to a resettlement camp in Lower Austria as a young adolescent. He was committed to the state neurological clinic at Maria Gugging in 1943, at the age of 17; he moved to the House of the Artists in Gugging in 1986. The psychiatrist and head of the department for men, Leo Navratil, discovered his talent and began to support his development. In this way, Hauser first began to draw only at the age of 32. Hauser advanced to become an "artist-patient" and his work was published for the first time in 1965. Other artists, primarily those of Vienna's avant-garde, were fascinated by his work. The painter Peter Pongratz referred to him as the teacher who showed him what art is, and the "overpainter" Arnulf Rainer even asserted that Hauser outclassed 99% of professional painters.

His first exhibitions in the 1970s brought early successes and the first publications. Under Navratil's successor, Johann Feilacher, the "Center for Art and Psychotherapy" was converted into the "House of the Artists" and separated from the clinic, and Hauser's work was shown throughout Europe, in the US, and in Japan. Hauser was invited to exhibition openings in cities including Helsinki, Cologne, Philadelphia, and New York and enjoyed his fame and the travel it involved. In only a few years, he advanced to become a classic figure of Art Brut.

Together with his fellow Gugging artists, Hauser received the 1990 Oskar Kokoschka Prize for outstanding achievements in the field of visual art. Hauser died in 1996, at the age of 69.

The show's curator is the artistic director of the museum gugging, Johann Feilacher, who personally accompanied Hauser over a period of 13 years.

Publication

The 500-page, large-format catalogue presents Hauser's works in around 500 reproductions. Along with the comprehensive presentation of Johann Hauser's lifework, he is also portrayed as an individual. The book makes it clear how mood swings heightened the artist's sense of self-esteem and drove him to attain an exceptional productivity, but also how he created an impressive body of late work in the balanced years toward the end of his life.

Edited by Johann Feilacher; with texts by Johann Feilacher (Artistic Director of the *museum gugging*), Sarah Lombardi (Director of the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne), Roger Cardinal (creator of the concept of "Outsider Art"), Maria Parucki (art education department at the *museum gugging*), and Michaela Strebl-Pühringer (Dorotheum, Vienna).

500 pages, hardcover, ca. 500 ill., Residenz Verlag, 2016.

Special edition with slipcase and gold edging, numbered and signed, Residenz Verlag, 2016.