

Erwin Wurm: Human Form

April 12–November 16, 2025



Austrian Sculptor Erwin Wurm's First Solo Museum Exhibition in Japan at the Towada Art Center

The Towada Art Center will present Erwin Wurm's first solo museum exhibition at a museum in Japan from Saturday, April 12, 2025, to Sunday, November 16, 2025. The Towada Art Center is the only institution in Japan with a permanent display of Wurm's works, which include *Fat Car* and *Fat House*.

Recognized as one of Austria's most significant contemporary artists, Erwin Wurm redefines and expands the boundaries of sculpture, employing a wide range of media—from traditional materials like plaster and metal to photography, clothing, and paint.

In this exhibition, Wurm will explore the human body, one of the most fundamental sculptural motifs, through themes of time, volume and surface, figuration, and representation. The human form—shaped by external influences such as clothing, furniture, language, and social ideologies—is depicted as fragile, mutable, and filled with boundless possibilities. Often absurd and paradoxical, Wurm's works expose the structures underlying social norms, institutions, and power.

The exhibition will feature the Japan premiere of Wurm's latest large-scale installation, *School* (2024), along with recent key works from his *Skins* and *Flat Sculptures* series.

Contact

Towada Art Center Communications: Otani Sae
Tel: +81(0)176-20-1127 Fax: +81(0)176-20-1138
media@towadaartcenter.com www.towadaartcenter.com

Exhibition Highlights

Japan Premiere of Large-Scale Installation *School*

Originally unveiled in Austria in 2024, *School* has been newly created for this exhibition. Inside a distorted school classroom, visitors will encounter textbooks from the Meiji era and printed materials that children of the time would have seen. The work suggests that the institution of school—and society in general—inherently imposes pressures and that the concept of "correctness" and social norms are fluid, shifting ambiguously over time.



School, 2024, on view at the Albertina ModernSchool
Photo: Rainer Iglar / Salzburg – Vienna
Courtesy: Albertina Modern, Vienna
Reference image

A Multi-Medium Exhibition: Photography, Clothing, and Painting

The exhibition will showcase Wurm's diverse artistic expressions across multiple mediums, including *Brothers and Sisters*, a photographic series featuring clergy in absurdly exaggerated poses; *Hanging Pullovers*, a sculpture that incorporates clothing as humanity's second skin; *Standing Floral II* from the *Skins* series, exploring the dynamic interplay between surface and volume in sculpture; and works from Wurm's *Flat Sculptures* series, a radical exploration of pictorial flatness in painting.



Works from the *Skins* series and *Flat Sculptures* series in the artist's studio
Erwin Wurm, Bildrecht Wien, 2025
photo: Ulrich Ghezzi
Reference image

Public Installations of One Minute Sculptures in Towada

Wurm's iconic *One Minute Sculptures* will be exhibited throughout central Towada, including inside local shops and public facilities. These participatory works invite viewers to follow specific instructions and hold a pose for one minute, momentarily transforming their bodies—traditionally private and personal—into sculptures independent of their own will.

Artist Statement

For my first solo museum exhibition in Japan, *Human Form* explores the ever-shifting boundaries between body, form, and space. Across sculptures, photography, paintings, and textile-based works, I investigate the relationship between mass and surface, the physical and the absurd.

From the *School* - a narrow version of reality - to *knitted walls* and sculptural *pullovers*, my work questions how bodies and objects adapt, stretch, and conform to external pressures. The *Flat Sculptures* challenge depth and volume, while *Skins* and knitted pieces reimagine the body as a mutable surface, where structure dissolves into materiality.

Contradictions are central to my practice. By playing with scale, distortion, and familiar objects, I invite viewers to reconsider the limits of physicality and identity. In *Human Form*, the body is not just a subject but a site of transformation - compressed, extended, redefined.

This exhibition marks an important moment in my engagement with Japanese audiences. I hope it provokes both curiosity and reflection on the ways we shape, and are shaped by, the world around us.

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Erwin Wurm



photo: Markus Gradwohl
©Erwin Wurm, Bildrecht Wien, 2024

Born 1954 in Bruck an der Mur, lives and works in Vienna and Limberg, Austria. Studied at the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Over the course of his career, Erwin Wurm has radically expanded conceptions of sculpture, questioning its notions of time, mass and surface, abstraction and representation. Solo exhibitions include *Deep*, Museo Correr and Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Italy, 2024) *Trap of the Truth*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (UK, 2023-2024) *Erwin Wurm Photographs*, Maison Européenne de la Photographie (France, 2020). His works showed at the Austrian Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2017).



Fat House, Fat Car, 2010
photo: Oyamada Kuniya

Public Programs

Gallery Talk by Erwin Wurm (with consecutive interpretation from English to Japanese)

Date & Time: Saturday, April 12, 2025, 14:00–14:40

Location: Towada Art Center Exhibition Space / Admission: Free with exhibition ticket

About the Exhibition

Title	<i>Erwin Wurm: Human Form</i>
Dates	April 12–November 16, 2025
Hours	9:00–17:00 (last admission 16:30)
Closed	Mondays (except for holidays, in which case closed the following day) *Open April 28, May 6, August 4, and August 12, 2025
Admission	1,800 yen 200 yen discount for groups of 20 or more Under 18: free
Location	Towada Art Center
Organized by	Towada Art Center
Endorsed by	Austrian Cultural Forum Tokyo, Asahi Broadcasting Aomori Co., Ltd., Aomori Broadcasting Corporation, Aomori Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Aomori Fm Broadcasting, The Daily-Tohoku Shimbun Inc., The To-o Nippo Press, and Towada City Board of Education
Curator	Nakagawa Chieko

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Towada Art Center

The Towada Art Center opened in 2008 as the first contemporary art center in Japan's Tohoku region. Its permanent exhibition comprises thirty-eight works by world-class artists, including Kusama Yayoi, Nara Yoshitomo, Shiota Chiharu, and Ron Mueck. The collection expands beyond the art center to the Art Square, a park-like area where children and adults alike can stroll, relax, and interact with the outdoor artworks.

10-9 Nishi-Nibancho, Towada, Aomori 034-0082

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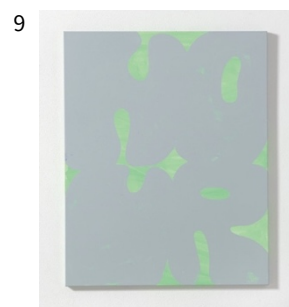
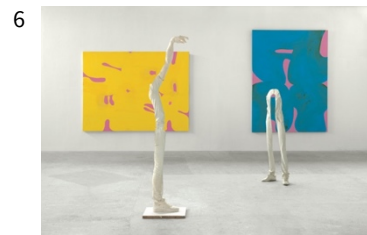
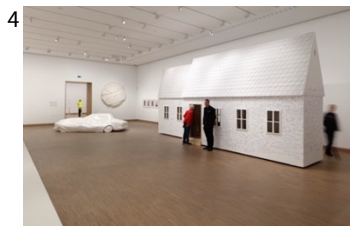
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Fax: +81(0)176-20-1138 / Email: media@towadaartcenter.com

10-9 Nishi-Nibancho, Towada City, Aomori. Tel: +81 (0) 176-20-1127

Towada Art Center Communications: Otani Sae



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