



“Society” by László Fehér wraps Ringturm for the fifth time

Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, the main shareholder of the **Vienna Insurance Group**, is once again demonstrating its commitment to art in public spaces with the **fifth artistic decoration of the Ringturm**. The tower's prominent position on Vienna's Ringstrasse, at the northern end of Franz-Josefs-Kai where the ring opens onto the Danube Canal, offers a perfect opportunity to expose the Viennese public and the city's many visitors to contemporary art. **László Fehér's** work “**Society**” transforms the Ringturm from an office block into an **art tower**. This is the first time that an artist from one of Austria's neighbouring countries has been commissioned to produce an exclusive work for the tower's transformation.

The Ringturm opened in 1955, one month after Austria's new state treaty was signed, and was the first high-rise office block in the country. Designed by Erich Boltenstern, the building represented a milestone in Austrian architecture. For the people of Vienna, the Ringturm was a symbol of their regained freedom and of modern Austria. Today, the headquarters of the Vienna Insurance Group stands as testament to the Group's success, as well as its strong commitment to social causes, culture and the arts, nurtured by main shareholder Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein.

“This year we deliberately chose an artist from our friend and neighbour Hungary, László Fehér, to produce a work for the Ringturm's traditional artistic covering. Austria and Hungary share very close historical ties. Fehér's commission is a reflection of the Group's dedication to promoting cross-border cultural exchange. It is also intended to underline our close links with the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. His work is an expression of friendship and togetherness – values that are central to us as insurers,” commented **CEO Günter Geyer**.

The artist

Soon after graduating from the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest, László Fehér quickly established himself as a leading light in figurative art in Hungary. Using everyday settings, his paintings reflect basic human states of mind. His works are characterised by the use of only a few colours and a sensitive balance between contour-indicated forms and fine details.

László Fehér is one of the most important exponents of Hungarian contemporary art. He presented the Hungarian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 1990. In 1997, Vienna's Liechtenstein Museum put on a broad retrospective of Fehér's work. The artist has received numerous accolades, including the Mihály Munkácsy Prize in 1993, the Kossuth Prize in 2000 and the 2006 Prima Award in the Hungarian Visual Arts category. In 2007, Fehér was appointed Hungarian Ambassador of Culture.

The work: Society

“The Ringturm appears to embody the history of the last 60 years. In creating the work, I have attempted to find an abstract formal system that could characterise any decade from the 1950s to the 1990s and is also relevant to the present day. The figures represented in Society are permeated by light, air and the historical background – chiefly of Central and Eastern Europe – in which they exist. The robust architecture of the Ringturm provides the geometric foundation for this motif. My feeling is that this dreamlike, but nonetheless real composition complements the aura of calm projected by the Ringturm,” says **László Fehér** of his work.

The design – created exclusively for the Ringturm this year – depicts, in its soft tones, what at first glance appears to be an everyday situation. László Fehér’s oeuvre is concerned with snapshots that use apparently simple forms to depict complex, often existential questions, and explore diverse facets of our society.

The Ringturm as an “Art Tower”

The Ringturm has been regularly transformed into an “art tower” since 2006. In the coming months, the building will be adorned by Fehér’s work, “Society”. Over the past few years, a string of prominent artists have been commissioned to create the tower’s covering.

2006	Christian Ludwig Attersee	Don Giovanni
2007	Robert Hammerstiel	Tower of Life
2008	Hubert Schmalix	Tower in Blossom
2011	Xenia Hausner	A sense of family
2012	László Fehér	Society

Facts and figures: “Art Tower”

Duration of Installation: until mid-September 2012

Total surface area: approx. 4,000 square metres, made up of 30 printed netting sheets, each 3m wide and either 36m or 63m long.

The Vienna Insurance Group (VIG) is the company with the best rating of the leading index ATX of the Austrian Stock Exchange. The Vienna Insurance Group is one of the leading insurance groups in CEE headquartered in Vienna. Outside of its home base in Austria, Vienna Insurance Group is also active, through subsidiaries and insurance holdings, in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Georgia, Croatia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, Hungary and Belarus. Moreover, Wiener Städtische Versicherung has branches in Italy and Slovenia; Donau Versicherung has a branch in Italy.

On the Austrian market, the Vienna Insurance Group positions itself with Wiener Städtische Versicherung, Donau Versicherung and Sparkassen Versicherung.

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