



18 June 2015

Ringturm spreads ‘Sommerfreuden’ (‘Summer Pleasures’)

Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein welcomed a very prestigious guest to the eighth artistic wrapping of the Viennese Ringturm building: Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović was given a warm welcome by Austrian President Dr Heinz Fischer on her first state visit to the country.

Celebrations took place today to mark the artistic wrapping of the Ringturm with the piece titled ‘Sommerfreuden’ (‘Summer Pleasures’) by Croatian artist Tanja Deman, which aimed to highlight cross-border intercultural dialogue. *“The artistic wrapping of the Ringturm by a Croatian artist symbolises the strong bond that exists between our two countries. With her artwork, Tanja Deman brings a Mediterranean summer feeling and a Croatian joie de vivre right to the heart of our capital city,”* **Austrian President Dr Heinz Fischer** expressed in his speech. *“Art, as a universal language, is able to conquer walls and bring people together. This year’s decision to invite an emerging artist from Croatia to decorate the Viennese Ringturm is a welcome step that demonstrates just how firm the long-standing friendship between Austria and Croatia, which has at times been eventful, has now become,”* **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia**, emphasised on her first state visit to Austria.

The act of wrapping the Ringturm has become a tradition in the city and it expresses the Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein’s commitment to diverse cross-border collaboration in the realm of art and culture. *“We are particularly focused on opening up cross-border spaces for artists and, in doing so, we hope to engage and inspire a large audience. By decorating the Ringturm with Tanja Deman’s artwork ‘Sommerfreuden’, we have combined Croatian charm with that joyful feeling associated with Austrian holidays and integrated this feeling into everyday life,”* **Dr Günter Geyer, Chairman of the Managing Board of Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein**, stated.

In addition to many high-profile political representatives, numerous guests from diplomacy, culture, economy and society followed/joined Dr Günter Geyer’s invitation. The list included:

Margit Fischer, H.E. Gordan Bakota (Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia in Vienna), H.E. Roland Bimo (Ambassador of the Republic of Albania), H.E. Pero Janković (Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia), H.E. Mag. Sami Ukelli (Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo), H.E. Dr Andreas Wiedenhoff (Ambassador of the Republic of Austria in Zagreb), Prof. Mag. Dr Werner Varga (President of the Austro-Croatian Society), Mag. Dr Alfred Brogyanyi (General Manager of the Institute of Austrian Certified Public Accountants), Mag. Anto Sluganović, BA (President of the Association of Croatian Entrepreneurs), Dagmar Koller, Prof. Mag. Boris Podrecca (architect), as well as the artists Prof. Robert Hammerstiel, László Fehér and Dorota Sadovská. Dr Elisabeth Leopold (Leopold Museum), Dr Christian Strasser (General Manager of Museumsquartier Wien), Mag. Dr Johanna Schwanberg (Director of Dommuseum Vienna), KR Dkfm. Klaus Stadler (Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Wiener Städtische Mag. Robert Lasshofer (CEO of Wiener Städtische Versicherung), Snježana Bertoneelj (CEO of Erste osiguranje Vienna Insurance Group), Dr Walter Leonhartsberger-Schrott (CEO of Wiener Osiguranje Vienna Insurance Group), Mag. Peter Höfinger (Board member of Vienna Insurance Group).

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'Sommerfreuden' by Tanja Deman

In 'Sommerfreuden', Croatian artist Tanja Deman opens up the Viennese urban landscape and – inspired by the diverse waterscapes of Vienna – creates a fluent and smooth passage between the man-made joys of summer and the pleasures of nature. An initial glance plunges the spectator into the refreshing water of a swimming pool. Upon closer examination, the piece encourages an unlocking of personal memories combined with a longing for relaxation, giving rise to a completely new entity. *"With the artwork 'Sommerfreuden' my main drive was to find an answer to the question 'How to create a piece of public art with a message, one which can slow us just a little bit in our busy city lives and make the 'here and now' a bit more intriguing and inspiring?"* In the work public pools symbolise places of coming together and a space where memories are being created," Croatian artist **Tanja Deman** explains. This year's eighth artistic wrapping of the Ringturm using Tanja Deman's artwork marks a departure from paint (which was the medium of choice over the past seven years) and a shift towards new media.

Architecture in the Ringturm

Accompanying this year's wrapping of the Ringturm by Croatian artist Tanja Deman, the exhibition series 'Architecture in the Ringturm' will feature a display on Croatia's unique island world. Taking centre stage are the country's 1,200 islands (only 70 of which are inhabited), and their rich architectural heritage. Divided into three main eras, remarkable structures ranging from antiquity to the Middle Ages and from the 19th and 20th centuries are presented. The exhibition is rounded off with contemporary buildings.

Cross-border intercultural dialogue

Every year since 2006, the Ringturm – the corporate head office of Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein – has been transformed into a 'tower of art'. Over the past eight years, Austrian artists, as well as artists from Austria's neighbouring countries, have been invited to design the Ringturm's external decoration. Just like the annual wrapping, the Viennese Ringturm has itself become a traditional architectural highlight: in 2015 the Ringturm will celebrate its 60th birthday.

Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein is the principal shareholder of Vienna Insurance Group (VIG) and provides assistance to VIG in cultural and social matters. Great importance is placed on cross-border cultural exchanges, thus creating open spaces for cultural development. Through co-operation and initiatives, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein provides specifically targeted support for socially active organisations, especially in countries in Central and Eastern Europe where VIG has a presence. Furthermore, as the principal shareholder, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein also deals with strategic policy issues of the Group.

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Legend:

From left to right: Dr Günter Geyer, Chairman of the Managing Board of Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, Dr Heinz Fischer, President of the Republic of Austria, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, Artist Tanja Deman and Margit Fischer.

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For **printable press photos** of the 2015 wrapping of the Ringturm, visit www.wst-versicherungsverein.at/presse or send your request to presse@wst-versicherungsverein.at (images available free of charge).