

Press Release

Official Presentation of the Frederick Kiesler Prize to Theaster Gates in Vienna

The Executive City Councillor for Cultural Affairs Veronica Kaup-Hasler hands over the prize to the exceptional artist from the USA

Last September, a distinguished international jury selected Theaster Gates as the 12th winner of the Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts: Born in Chicago in 1973, Theaster Gates is one of today's most original artists. He is a sculptor, potter, and social innovator. He addresses subjects such as urban planning and the revitalization and reactivation of buildings as well as the building of communities through ambitious cultural projects and the preservation of black culture in the USA. His long-term cultural projects are united by the objective of triggering social, political, or artistic change. Theaster Gates has become well-known through the work of the *Rebuild Foundation*, his non-profit organization in Chicago, which transforms abandoned spaces and buildings in the south of the city into a cultural location for the neighborhood. His latest works include the design of the Serpentine Pavilion in London, which was opened last week.

The award ceremony, which was originally planned for fall 2021 and had to be postponed due to the pandemic, finally took place yesterday afternoon: In the presence of the many guests who attended the event in the auditorium of the University of Applied Arts, Vienna's Executive City Councillor for Cultural Affairs Veronica Kaup-Hasler, presented the Frederick Kiesler Prize to Theaster Gates.

"Spatial platforms that highlight the contributions of Black artists and designers have been long overlooked. Projects that consider people as much as they consider the implications of the built form deserve merit. I'm so grateful to be part of this precedent and honored that the selection committees would acknowledge my practice as part of the amazing work by luminaries who have received this award in the past. I'm thankful to all who have supported my practice both within museums and on the street," states Theaster Gates.

"Theaster Gates understands how to use his art as a vehicle for triggering and facilitating processes. By creating social, cultural, and architectural spaces for civil society he has a long-term impact on cities and their structures and brings us a little closer to the goal of ensuring that every citizen enjoys a good life. I am delighted that the prize named after the visionary architect Frederick Kiesler is being awarded to an artist who uses his diverse artistic practice to push for essential urban and social change," emphasizes Vienna's Executive City Councillor for Cultural Affairs Veronica Kaup-Hasler.

Elke Delugan-Meissl, President of the Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, is equally delighted by the choice of the artist: *"It is a particular honor for the Kiesler Foundation, that Theaster Gates receives the award. It is a more than logical choice, given the way in which his work combines aesthetic values with a social agenda, a correlation that also shaped the work of Frederick Kiesler and generated a holistic oeuvre that continues to resonate to this day. Theaster Gates combines social issues with a range of disciplines such as architecture and planning, painting and*

sculpture, music and film with apparent effortlessnes. His works show us how we can reclaim the room for maneuver in our actions and our design work.”

Video installation “Public Notice” in the Frederick Kiesler Foundation

The Kiesler Foundation is marking the presentation of the award by showing a video installation and analog prints by Theaster Gates in its premises at Mariahilfer Straße 1b. “Public Notice” and “Landed: Gates et al.” are the titles of the film work and the analog prints, respectively, that were originally created for the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial and have now been adapted for display in Vienna. The video principally shows abandoned spaces and buildings in the city of Chicago, which have been transformed and revitalized by the work of Theaster Gates. Historical material, documents, and interview sequences demonstrate, amongst other things, the power of language in the transformation of spaces and the role of artists, urban planners, and citizens in such processes. The exhibition has a soft opening on Friday, 17th June between 10:00 and 17:00 and continues until 1st October.

The Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts

The *Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts*, one of the most highly endowed international prizes in this area, was awarded for the 12th time in 2021.

The prize for outstanding achievement, which is endowed to the value of 55,000 euros, serves to celebrate the visionary work of the artist, designer, set designer, and architect Friedrich Kiesler (1890-1965), who was born in Czernowitz in 1890 and emigrated to the USA in 1926. The distinguished jury included Elizabeth Diller (Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York), the jury chairperson Bettina Götz (ARTEC Architekten, Vienna), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (Paris), Anab Jain (Superflux, London and the University of Applied Arts Vienna), and Wolfgang Tschapeller (Wolfgang Tschapeller ZT GmbH and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna).

The prize is awarded and endowed alternately every two years by the Republic of Austria and the City of Vienna and organized by the Vienna-based Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation. Due to the postponements made necessary by the Covid-19 pandemic, the next Frederick Kiesler Prize will be awarded in 2024.

Further press material about Theaster Gates, previous prizewinners, and the activities of the Kiesler Foundation are available from the **Press Download Service**: <https://www.kiesler.org/en/press/>

Visitor information:

www.kiesler.org

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