

Frederick Kiesler Foundation 2022

The program to mark the 25th anniversary of the Kiesler Foundation starts on 26th January with *Raumstadt / City in Space*.

Ever since it was established in 1997, the **Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation** has pursued the role of researching the work of Frederick Kiesler and positioning his legacy vis-à-vis contemporary architectural and artistic production with the help of research projects, exhibitions, symposia and publications. The anniversary year 2022 will present practical and theoretical aspects of the work of the Austro-American architect, stage designer, designer, artist and theorist Frederick Kiesler (1890–1965) on a number of levels and offer a continuous, year-long programme of exhibitions and discussions that will invite participants to comprehensively engage with his work. The exhibition ***Raumstadt / City in Space*** opens in the premises of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation at Mariahilfer Straße 1b on 26th January 2022.

Raumstadt / City in Space

26th January – 27th May 2022

The focus of the presentation is the ***Manifesto of Tensionism. Organic Building – the City in Space – Functional Architecture***, which pursues the idea of a city of the future that floats freely in space. First shown by Frederick Kiesler at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris in 1925, this was regarded at the time as one of the most radical architectural concepts to have ever been presented to the public.

Alongside the manifesto, the exhibition will also present photographs, a model and audio elements. An accompanying program with discussions of the exhibition is also in preparation, as is a publication with photographs, the manifesto and further bibliographic references.

Paris 1925: Frederick Kiesler is invited by Josef Hoffmann to design the section on Austrian theater at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*. However, he merely uses the exhibition architecture as a pretext for developing a monumental abstract geometrical sculpture that is suspended from the ceiling. Alongside its actual function as a support for the items in the exhibition, he principally employs this as a model-like visualisation of his idea of a freely-floating city of the future, which he propagates, with great medial extravagance, as the *City in Space*. Alongside Konstantin Melnikov's Soviet Pavilion and Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau*, the *City in Space* is one of the most radical architectural concepts of the Paris exhibition. Even at the time it attracts considerable attention in the international art and architecture scene and rapidly develops into a 20th-century architectural icon.

Kiesler outdoes the radicalism of the model-like realisation in the exhibition space in *Manifesto of Tensionism. Organic Building – the City in Space – Functional Architecture*, which he releases in two of the leading avant-garde magazines, *De Stijl* and *G*, which are published by Theo van Doesburg in the Netherlands and Hans Richter in Berlin, respectively.

Extracts from the manifesto

(From: Frederick Kiesler, *Manifesto of Tensionism. Organic Building – the City in Space – Functional Architecture*, 1925)

Compulsion directs the new form of the city:

The Country-City: the division of city from country will be abolished.

The Time-City: time is the measure of the organization of its space.

The Space-City: it floats freely in space in a decentralized federation dictated by the ground-formation.

The Automatic-City: the processes of daily life are mechanized.

What are our houses but coffins towering up from the earth into the air? One story, two stories – a thousand stories. Walled up on two sides, on ten sides. Stone entombed – or wood, clay, concrete. Coffins with airholes.

We want:

1. Transformation of the surrounding area of space into cities
2. Liberation from the ground, abolition of the static axis
3. No walls, no foundations
4. A system of spans (tension) in free space
5. Creation of new kinds of living, and, through them, the demands which will remould society.

Raumstadt / City in Space

Exhibition in the Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation

Mariahilfer Straße 1b/Top 1, 1060 Vienna

A message of welcome to mark the start of the exhibition: On 25th January 2022 at 7 pm, the Frederick Kiesler Foundation will release a digital video greeting that it will broadcast on its social media channels.

Duration: 26th January – 27th May 2022 (soft opening on the first day of the exhibition)

Opening times: Tuesday to Friday 10 am to 5 pm and by agreement

Free admission. Please take note of the current COVID-19 protective measures.

www.kiesler.org/en

Further highlights of the program in 2022 will include a symposium, the presentation of a new publication and an exhibition in autumn, the ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary and several discussion and education programs. In addition to this, the presentation of the 12th Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts to Theater Gates, which had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will take place. The details of this will be released at a later date.

About the Foundation

The Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation was established in 1997 upon the acquisition of Frederick Kiesler's estate by the Republic of Austria and the City of Vienna and with the help of numerous private donors. Its role is to research the legacy of the Austro-American architect (1890-1965) and to position this legacy vis-à-vis contemporary architectural and artistic production.

In striving to achieve his goal of unifying artistic and social areas of activity, Kiesler pursued a multidisciplinary approach that combined theory and practice. He worked in a range of fields, architecture, the visual arts, design and theater. This holistic approach to thought and action forms the basis of the interdisciplinary and transmedial activities of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation. In their examination of Kiesler's oeuvre and historical impact, the Foundation's research projects, symposia and exhibitions focus upon both historical investigation and the contemporary cultural debate.

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