

KARL PRANTL, SCULPTOR 1923 - 2010

Karl Prantl was born on the 5th of November 1923 in Pötttsching in the eastern province of Burgenland in Austria as the elder son of the civil servant Georg Prantl (1895-1963) and his wife Anna Noss (1898-1979). The maternal grandfather was a farmer and baker there. The father first Hungarian, later Austrian official administrator at the regional government (Burgenland is affiliated in 1921 to the newly founded Republic of Austria). In this time of political upheaval and radicalization, the family seeks support in the solid structures of the Catholic Church.

1930 - 39 K. P. visited the Volksschule and Gymnasium, which he spends at boarding school in Eisenstadt from the age of twelve. On school excursions he gets to know the hill and the quarry of St. Margarethen.

1939 - 45 After the "Anschluss" of Austria to the German Reich, Karl Prantl was recruited to the Labor Service and then to the Deutsche Wehrmacht. During World War II, he served as a soldier in Greece and the Balkans.

1946 - 52 Studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (class Albert Paris Gütersloh and drawing with Herbert Boeckl). He finished his studies with the diploma of painting.

1950 The attempt to run a farm with students of the 'Curakreis' (Father Alfred Focke) failed. Prantl moved back to Pötttsching. His first sculptures of wood and stone were created in the courtyard of the parental home.

1953 -1955 Karl Prantl lived and worked in a self-made hut in the Orangerie of the Esterhazy Castle in Eisenstadt. Due to a contract with the Russian occupying forces, the Orangerie of the Esterhazys was available to the young Artists Association of Burgenland – (Burgenländischer Künstlerbund) until 1955 as a workshop and showroom.

1955 First solo exhibition at the Neue Galerie Linz / Wolfgang Gurlitt Museum.

1956 He received a scholarship from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Art for Rome. A trip to Greece followed.

1957 He married the young painter Uta Peyrer.

1957-58 During the winter, small plaster sculptures were created, which were eventually cast in bronze.

1958 Birth of the daughter Katharina. First studio in the Stadtbahnbogen (a viaduct of Otto Wagner's Wiener Stadtbahn (Metro) architecture on the Danube Canal). Commission of the Provincial Government of Burgenland for a landmark "Grenzstein" on the route Vienna-Budapest (Hungary Uprising 1956). While working on the sculpture in the quarry of St. Margarethen, Karl Prantl experienced that artistic creation in open nature is determined by other optimal conditions than in the seclusion of the interior.

1959 This experience fostered the foundation of the first "Symposium of European Sculptors" (SEB), which he organized with Dr. Ing. Friedrich Czagan and Heinrich Deutsch. In consequence, Prantl spend always the winter month preparing annual symposium (working gatherings of 10-15 sculptors coming together over a period of two to three months,

increasingly spreading internationally in stone quarries, further on steel factories, city centers). Karl Prantl participated in 35 symposia around the globe.

(A side effect on location was the transfer of local passion plays of the community of St. Margarethen, which have been held since 1926, into the quarry and to stage it there every five years in a nature-related context.

1960 Birth of the son Sebastian.

1961 - 62 Moved with the family to Berlin to initiate the international sculptor's symposium, which was spontaneously launched confronting the erection of the Berlin Wall (13th August 1961). The message was to oppose the dividing wall of violence with a transcultural humane message by sculptors working near the Wall, on the Republic Square, where they are still positioned (currently not far from the Federal Chancellery). German Critics' Award of 1962 (Visual Arts) for the symposium and the special achievement of Karl Prantl.

1962 Participation at the symposium "Form in Space", Negev desert, Israel.

1965 Moved into the studio of a former exhibition building of the Vienna World's Fair of 1873 in the Vienna Prater. Reorganization of the symposia framework with the support of the gallerist Christa Hauer-Fruhmann / Galerie im Griechenbeisl in Vienna.

1967 First trip to the USA for his solo exhibition at Staempfli Gallery / New York, where he visited Mark Rothko in his studio and prepared sculpture symposia with American colleagues. He received two commissions for interior design for churches: Heiligenkreuzkirche in Langholzfeld / Linz, parish church Wernstein near Schärding, Upper Austria (altar, tabernacle, baptismal font and tomb for the artist Alfred Kubin).

1968 He received the Prize of the City of Vienna for sculpture. Travel to the US (with family) to New York and the Symposium Proctor, Vermont.

1969 - 1970 Trip to Japan, on the occasion of the Symposium for Steel as part of Expo Osaka 69'.

1970 Resigned from the post of chairman of SEB due the lack of support from the Austrian cultural administration towards the association "Symposium of European Sculptors, St. Margarethen".

1972 Easter journey of the sculptors of St. Margarethen to the "Table of Silence" by Constantin Brancusi in Tirgu Jiu, Romania. The meeting of sculptors from East and West fostered the reorientation of the symposium idea: to devoting more attention to urban spaces: redesigning the Stephansplatz in Vienna in the context of the subway construction was the goal for the investigatory research project of the Symposium St. Margarethen. (The sculptors would work on gravestone material of the city of Vienna - expensive, valuable granite from the turn of the century - in a particular conception around the cathedral). The project finally failed in 1976/77 in its comprehensive, international dimension due to the Viennese administrative setbacks and the responsible architects and Austrian colleagues.

1973 Commission of the Patrick Lannan Foundation, Palm Beach, Florida in the USA: the "Stones for Nicolaus Copernicus" was created.

1974 Attended the 8th International Sculpture Conference in Lawrence, Kansas at then University of Kansas.

1976 The fruitful cooperation with the gallery and publishing house "der Erker", in St. Gallen, Switzerland started.

1977-78 Ongoing stay with the family in New York and New Mexico.

1979 Stone for an exemplary meditation room at the International Center - UNO City in Vienna was created. Resigned as member from the association "SEB" in St. Margarethen.

1978 Chose Pöttsching as main residence and working place.

1980 Participated at the International Sculptors Symposium at the University of Punjab, Patiala in India. Journey to the USA, where he attended the 11th format of "International Sculptors Conference" in Washington.

1981-85 During the summer months he worked on the stone at Richisau, Glarus in Switzerland as a commission of the Cham foundation.

1984 He designed the church of St. Immakulata in Hünfeld-Sargenzell in Germany.

1984-91 Installation of large sculptures in the landscape, Lenz-Schönberg Foundation in Söll, Tyrol.

1986 He represented Austria at the Venice Biennale.

From 1986 collection and installation of his large sculptures on Pöttschinger field.

1988 Friedrich Cerha dedicated the orchestra piece "Monumentum" to Karl Prantl, which is premiered at the Salzburg Festival in 1989.

1986-89 The film "80cm 5t" by Michael Pilz is presented and shown internationally.

1989 Karl Prantl rejoined the association "SEB" of St. Margarethen ". Friedericke Mayröcker wrote the poem "Rising from a Stone - from a Relationship Heaven" commissioned by Erker Verlag, St. Gallen, Switzerland.

1990 Construction of the studio building on Pöttschinger Feld (architect Ernst Hießmayer).

Karl Prantl dedicated his historic consciousness to the "Kreuzstadl" near Rechnitz in Burgenland, which was site of a massacre of Jews in 1945. He created a memorial by acquiring the land with the abandoned building through donations (with the help of Marietta Torberg) and renovating it. The exemplary sculpture by Kosso Eloul, an Israeli artist (created in 1961 as part of the St. Margarethen Symposium) was positioned on site. In 1993 the area was presented and donated to the 'Israelische Kultusgemeinde of Vienna'.

1991 Realisation of "Nuremberg - Way of the Cross", consisting of 14 plates of granit of the marching grounds for the Nazi Party Meetings in Nuremberg (also exhibited at Graz Cathedral, "Zachęta" - National Gallery in Warsaw and at Stephansplatz in Vienna).

1993 "Klangsäule", design of a column made of stainless steel (the illegal weapons production for Iran of the Böhler Werke in Kapfenberg) for the Traisenpavillon of St. Pölten (architecture Adolf Krischanitz). "Klangsäule", a production of Tanz Atelier Wien / Sebastian Prantl. Friedrich Cerha composed "A piece for K" on this occasion.

1994 The stone altar for the ancient "Leechkirche" in Graz was created. One-year solo exhibition of large sculptures at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, England, later shown one year at the castle park of Ambras near Innsbruck.

1995 The "Nuremberg Way of the Cross" found its final location at the St. Lawrence Church in Nuremberg, Germany.

2002 Reorganization of the "Grenzstein" at Mitterberg near Pöttsching - the former K & K border Austria / Hungary (18 symposium sculptures from St. Margarethen were subsequently positioned there).

2003 The film »The Stone Track« by Robert Neumüller was finalized.

2006/07 Sparda Bank Prize for Special Achievements in Public Art, Mainz, Germany.

2009 Karl Prantl received the Grand Austrian State Prize.

2010 Karl Prantl died on the 8th of October in the presence of his wife in his private home in Pöttsching.