

Krastal sculpture symposium

The sculptor: inside symposium [kunstwerk] krastal in the Krastal near Villach in Carinthia (Austria) took place for the first time in 1967 as a European sculptor symposium with twelve sculptors of different nationalities. It is the only sculpture symposium from the 1960s that has taken place every year since its inception to the present day.

The idea of holding European Sculptor Symposia goes back to the sculptor Karl Prantl and others, who brought international stone sculptors together for the first time in 1959 in a quarry in St. Margarethen in Burgenland. In addition to the creation of sculptures, culture was also presented in these symposia, such as readings and music.

The idea of doing free, sculptural work in the open air and combining a modern sense of form with an old-fashioned attitude towards craftsmanship has been taken up all over the world, especially in Israel and Japan. The international impetus of the symposium idea is one of the most convincing proofs of the unbroken creative power of modernity. (Quoted from Hartmann/Pokorny 1988)

In addition, workshop talks later took place in the Krastal, as well as exhibitions and documentation of the works of art both in the Krastal and nationally and internationally. From the beginning it was intended to make large sculptures from Krastaler marble and to exhibit them in public space.

The Austrian sculptor Otto Eder was one of the most important initiators of the first Krastaler Symposia in 1967, and in 1970 he founded the meeting in Carinthia – Krastal workshop. Heide Hildebrand, Felix Orsini-Rosenberg and above all the quarry foreman Viktor Brojatsch were also involved in setting up the first symposium. Eder was the one who most persistently pursued the concept of the Künstlerhaus im Krastal.

In the years 1968 and 1969 the symposium took place in the Europa Park in Klagenfurt, where the sculptures of those years were also set up, and then again in the Krastal. From 1989 there were symposia in the Krastal and at another location such as in Villach (1989, 1990 and 1993), St. Paul im Lavanttal (1991 and 1993), Klagenfurt (1994 and 1995), Großglockner (1999), Öhringen (2003) Wolfsberg (2006) and Bergstein/Völkermarkt (2020). The sculptures are made of Krastaler marble by the Lauster company, for which they received the Maecenas art sponsorship award for their cultural sponsorship in 2005 and 2007.

From 1974, the concrete construction project for an artists' center House of the International Meeting in Krastal, an initiative of Otto Eder, began. A workshop and accommodation for artists and rooms for art exhibitions were to be created. The building was to be created on the artist's own initiative, like one of the early builders' huts. However, this project could only be considered largely completed in 1992, when simple exhibition rooms, workshops and a bathroom and kitchen wing were completed. The building was later renamed the [kunstwerk] krastal, as was the association Treffen im Krastal in 2007.

The annual program, which takes place every year, has included an artist-in-residence program for 12 years, as well as the personal of one of the members and for some years now also a cooperation with the university of applied arts vienna, since stone sculpture is gaining more and more interest among young artists.

For more information and the full list of participants since 1967 see online at www.krastal.org.