



9 June 2017

A “Vision” of the Ringturm

Acting Serbian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić and Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz today unveiled the new artistic wrapping of the Ringturm: “Vision” by artist Mihael Milunović. The office tower has now been transformed into an art installation in the heart of Vienna for the tenth time.

This year, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, the main shareholder of the Vienna Insurance Group (VIG), has devoted the tenth artistic covering of the Ringturm to its partner country Serbia, a decision which also reflects the successful growth of VIG’s Serbian Group company Wiener Städtische osiguranje Beograd (WSO). After an in-depth analysis of the local art scene, a painting by Belgrade artist Mihael Milunović was chosen as the covering for the historic office tower. His piece “Vision” will turn the Ringturm into an eye-catching work of art by Vienna’s Danube Canal once more in summer 2017.

A special ceremony celebrating the completion of the giant canvas took place on Friday 9 June on the 20th floor of the Ringturm. Unveiling this year’s covering, Acting Serbian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Ivica Dačić** commented: *“I am very proud that Serbian artist Mihael Milunović’s work was selected as the covering for the Ringturm. This art initiative underlines the close, firmly established relationship between the Republic of Serbia and Austria.”*

“The artistic wrapping of the Ringturm has become a symbol of art’s cross-border impact: it promotes cooperation between different countries and peoples to achieve common goals. Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein’s commitment to the arts is representative of Austria’s steady and fruitful dialogue with the Republic of Serbia,” said Austrian Foreign Minister **Sebastian Kurz**.

“Wiener Städtische osiguranje Beograd has grown to become one of the leading insurance companies on the Serbian market in a short period of time. The company is also a dedicated supporter of up-and-coming local artists, as its rich art collection demonstrates,” explained **Günter Geyer**, Chairman of the Managing Board of Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, VIG’s main shareholder.

Alongside the two high-level political representatives, a number of prominent figures from the worlds of politics and culture attended the celebration at the invitation of Günter Geyer, including: Pero **Janković** (Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to Austria), Johannes **Eigner** (Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Serbia), Alexander **Schallenberg**, LL.M (Head of Europe Section, Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs), Markus **Figl** (District Chairman of the first district of Vienna), Elisabeth **Leopold** (Leopold Museum), Boris **Podrecca** (architect), Peter **Schöber** (Managing Director, ORF III) and artists Prof. Robert **Hammerstiel** and Dorota **Sadovská**.

The event was also attended by Elisabeth **Stadler** (CEO, Vienna Insurance Group), Zoran **Blagojević** (CEO, Wiener Städtischen osiguranje Beograd) and Vidan **Slana** (Managing Board Chairman, WIENER RE a.d.o. Beograd).

The work: “Vision” by Mihael Milunović

“Vision” portrays a blue mountain massif. Thanks to the numerous blue tones, the Ringturm blends into the sky above the city. A red train struggles up the steep track to the summit, where an antenna rises into the blue ether. The mast on top of the Ringturm is a valued source of meteorological information for the people of Vienna, but the signal from the antenna is scrambled.

“The motif of my painting is the individual and their relationship to the wider group, which is driven by the pursuit of transcendence. The red train is an allegory for togetherness and perseverance, and the mountain-top antenna is intended to symbolise the willingness to share positive energy with others,” said Mihael Milunović, who was born in Belgrade in 1967, of his work “Vision”.

Mihael Milunović studied at the Belgrade Faculty of Fine Arts and then at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. His multidisciplinary oeuvre includes painting, sketching, photography, sculpture and installations. A native of Belgrade, his works have been on display on various high-profile locations all over Europe, including MUMOK – Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation Vienna (Austria); the Jeu de Paume in Paris (France); the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Saint-Étienne Métropole (France); the Fridericianum in Kassel (Germany); and Vienna’s Secession (Austria).

The 4,000m² artwork consists of 30 printed netting sheets, each around 3m wide and about 63m long. “Vision” will adorn the facade of the Ringturm until September.

Architektur im Ringturm: Aleksej Brkić – Architect in Belgrade

To accompany the artistic covering of the Ringturm, and as part of the Architektur im Ringturm series, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein is devoting an exhibition to the architecture of Aleksej Brkić (1922-1999), who was instrumental in paving the way for Serbian modernism. Many of his designs, which are now seen as cornerstones of Serbian architecture in the second half of the 20th century, will be on display. Works from Mihael Milunović will be on show at the Ringturm Exhibition Centre as well, and there is also a focus on the oeuvre of Robert Hammerstiel, who was born in the Serbian town of Vršac and was commissioned for the 2007 Ringturm wrapping. The exhibition is open from 12 June to 8 September at the Exhibition Centre in the Ringturm. Admission is free.

Supporting Belgrade’s arts scene

The Vienna Insurance Group set up greenfield subsidiary Wiener Städtische osiguranje in Belgrade in 2003. The life and non-life insurer has quickly grown to become the number four on the Serbian insurance market. WSO is also committed to supporting the Serbian arts scene, and has built up an extensive art collection in the past few years.

Commitment to the arts in Austria and Europe

Supporting various art projects in Austria and abroad, and promoting cross-border cultural dialogue are top priorities for Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, the main shareholder of Central and Eastern Europe’s leading insurance group. The covering of the Ringturm is a prominent symbol of this philosophy. Since 2012 artists from Austria as well as neighbouring countries have been invited to create designs for the giant artwork:

2016	Ivan Exner	Unburdened
2015	Tanja Deman	Summer Pleasures
2014	Arnulf Rainer	Veil of Agnes
2013	Dorota Sadovská	Ties
2012	László Fehér	Society
2011	Xenia Hausner	A Sense of Family
2008	Hubert Schmalix	Tower in Blossom
2007	Robert Hammerstiel	Tower of Life
2006	Christian Ludwig Attersee	Don Giovanni

Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein is the main shareholder of the Vienna Insurance Group (VIG) and supports the Group's cultural and social activities, with a focus is on enhancing cross-border, intercultural exchange. There is also an emphasis on creating an environment in which individual cultures can thrive. Partnerships and initiatives are geared towards supporting the activities of social organisations, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries in which the Vienna Insurance Group has a presence.

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Caption:

From left to right: artist Mihael Milunović, Ivica Dačić (Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Serbia), Günter Geyer (Managing Board Chairman, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein) and Sebastian Kurz (Austrian Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs)
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Print-quality press photos of the 2017 artistic wrapping of the Ringturm are available free of charge at www.wst-versicherungsverein.at/en/press/ and on request from presse@wst-versicherungsverein.at.

Photos of the event are available at:
<http://www.wst-versicherungsverein.at/en/press/10289/>