



Route of Peace European Sculpture Route



Germany • St. Wendel
James Rehneking: **untitled**, 1996, steel, H 200 cm



European Sculpture Route – a Route of Peace • The objective of our association is the realization of a Sculpture Route that runs across Europe. It is intended as a symbol against war, which contributes to the enhancement of mutual understanding between individual nations. The West-East route (4,000 km) connects the Norman coast with Moscow, the North-South route (1,500 km) connects Amsterdam and the Pyrenees. Both routes intersect at Verdun and at Auvers-sur-Oise just outside of Paris. The basic idea of a “unifying” Sculpture Route is the seed of German-Jewish artist Otto Freundlich (1878-1943, murdered in the Sobibor/Poland concentration camp). In 1936, he described his vision of “sculptures of humanity” that can be walked on as “beacons of peace and art” in the countryside. After World War II, his partner, the artist Jeanne Kosnick-Kloss, determined the exact route of the road. In memory of Otto Freundlich and his vision, sculptor Leo Kornbrust (born 1929) declared the “Sculpture Route” he had initiated in the St. Wendel countryside as a stretch of a European Sculpture Route in 1979. This marked the birth of the “Route of Peace”, made it possible to further substantiate this idea and laid the groundwork for future developments. Today, over 500 sculptures have already been put in place and a gigantic international network of art projects and peace initiatives was created.

The Sculpture Route in St. Wendel – the beginning • Over 40 years ago, Leo Kornbrust initiated the first Sculpture Symposium in the Saarland in his birth town of St. Wendel.

Kornbrust first learned about the idea of hosting a symposium in St. Margarethen (Austria), where he was invited from 1967 to 1970. Kornbrust created sculptures in the open countryside in 1971/72, together with fellow sculptors from across the world. In the 1980s these first sculptures were then integrated into the Route of Sculptures (about 25 km long). Two events were critical for the „leap“ from the symposium to the Route of Sculptures: firstly, sandstone blocks came loose during dredging work near St. Wendel and had to find a new home and secondly, the Saarland Hiking Trail was created. The sandstone blocks were laid along the hiking trail – marking the beginning of the Route of Sculptures. The first two sculptors started working here in 1977. At the same time, the route was dedicated to artist Otto Freundlich.



Germany 1971: International Stone Sculptors Symposium St. Wendel (Photos: Monika von Boch)
 Leo Kornbrust: **Hommage à Bunuel**, basalt, H 305 cm
 Hiromi Akiyama: **untitled**, red sandstone, H 230 cm
 Paul Schneider: **Landscape view**, red sandstone, H 230 cm



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Otto Freundlich • Otto Freundlich was a versatile man. He started off by studying dentistry, followed by art history and philosophy and ultimately painting and sculpture in Berlin. He published articles on art and music criticism and displayed his own work in a great number of exhibitions. A contemporary of Picasso, he lived in Paris from 1930 on, where he established a private arts academy. The Nazis declared his art to be „degenerate“. After the outbreak of World War II, Freundlich fled to the Pyrenees. He was denounced in 1943, arrested, and murdered at the Sobibor/Poland concentration camp.

Leo Kornbrust • After a carpentry apprenticeship, Leo Kornbrust studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich where he was appointed professor of sculpture with a focus on architecture in 1978. The starting point for his sculptures is the human body, even though Kornbrust’s later works appear to be more abstract. His work is not only displayed at numerous exhibitions but also in public spaces of various cities. Kornbrust had

been sent to war as a 15-year-old, leaving an indelible mark on his soul. This is another reason for his work with the symposium being in the name of peace.

„It takes time“ documentary film • The title page of the Degenerate Art catalogue (1937) depicts a sculpture by Otto Freundlich. He had the vision of a global community and wanted to build sculpture routes across Europe. The National Socialists sent him to his death in 1943. However, his idea survived: Sculptor Leo Kornbrust rediscovered this lost track.

*Written and directed by: Gabi Bollinger •
 Camera: Stefan Urlaß, Klaus Hennrich •
 Music: Tzvi Avni • Film editing: Stefan Urlaß
 • The film is available on DVD for the price of 20 Euro (Languages: English, German)*



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