

ATELIER BRÜCKNER

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WIELAND WAGNER – TRADITION AND REVOLUTION EXHIBITION IN BAYREUTH

From 24 July to 19 November, the Richard Wagner Museum in Bayreuth is showing the exhibition *"Es gibt nichts ‚Ewiges‘."* *Wieland Wagner – Tradition und Revolution* (*"Nothing lasts 'forever'."* *Wieland Wagner – Tradition and Revolution*). It presents the life and work of Wieland Wagner (1917–1966), the grandson of Richard Wagner, in a highly impressive setting. The occasion for the exhibition is the 100th birthday of the opera director.

"Wieland Wagner's revolutionary, radical and uncompromising style of stage production was an inspiration and incentive for our own scenographic work", said Prof. Uwe R. Brückner, creative director of ATELIER BRÜCKNER. The aim was "no less than to give the 'founder of New Bayreuth' a spatial presence without any obfuscation or idolisation on our part in order to meet him and his work on an equal footing."

The exhibition makes it possible to experience his personal and cultural development in a series of large images. The people that surrounded and had a lasting impact on Wieland Wagner are shown in the form of large-format photographs. They obstruct the visitors, box them in or accompany them on their way through the exhibition space, becoming milestones in the process. Winifred Wagner, who was his mother, and Adolf Hitler play a crucial role in this, followed later by Kurt Overhoff, Adolphe Appia and also Wieland Wagner's wife Gertrud Reissinger.

The routing through the exhibition illustrates the restrictive family expectations and guides visitors to the area where Wagner's liberating stage-production work is on show. Moving, space-consuming images are the destination. Here, visitors can immerse themselves in Wieland Wagner's work. The visitor himself is on a circular platform, surrounded by films of eight operas selected as typical examples. The interplay of historic film material and individual exhibits has an exhilarating effect – for example, the costume and costume sketch of the 'Norns' from the 'Ring of the Nibelung' from 1965 as well as the corresponding artefacts of the 'Landgraf' from the Tannhäuser production of 1961, all of which can also be seen in the films as well.

A look back into the past – on the rear of the large portrait – shows the fragmented opera 'Parsifal' (in the production of 1951) and the family house in Bayreuth, which was first built in 1872-1874 as Villa Wahnfried for Wieland's grandfather, Richard Wagner, but was destroyed in the Second World War. Critics' opinions and comments on the life and work of Wieland Wagner surround the space in the form of large-format quotations printed on the wall.

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"Nothing lasts 'forever'", wrote Wieland Wagner in the Bayreuth festival book in 1951 (Essay: 'Überlieferung und Neugestaltung' (Tradition and Renewal)). He himself speaks in collaged interview recordings. They show him as an energetic renewer of the world of opera with a clear vision and a will to put into practice his own ideas, which discard the naturalistic stage historicism of Richard Wagner. Visitors listen to the interviews via headphones overlooking the surrounding park and the Villa Wahnfried.

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