

STEPPING INTO THE



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12 seahorses serve as columns in front of the nearly complete Caterpillar building

By Friederike Schmid

Thanks to Bruno Weber, you can lose yourself in another world without having to leave the country. A Swiss artist, Weber is nearing completion of his life's work, the magical Bruno Weber Sculpture Park. Swiss News takes a step inside the surreal.

In Spreitenbach, Aargau on 20 km² of parkland, Weber has created a playful oasis – an unusual fantasy world. Concrete, glass and synthetics are just the backdrop of countless colourful creations in his multi-media Sculpture Park, which celebrated its 40 year jubilee in 2003.

A symbiosis of lived art and nature, the park serves as a foil to the boxy, soulless, concrete high-rises and industrial buildings typical of the Limmat Valley.

Around the massive complex,

countless objects in the shape of primitive animals and characters reminiscent of Aesop's Fables are cast in concrete and covered with colorful glass mosaics. Exhibits big enough to walk through, and even live inside, invite visitors to linger, dream and be amazed.

Ingenuity of youth

From a young age, Weber possessed a vision of a world he wanted to bring to life. The multifaceted artist began painting with oils before answering the call to

broader creative expression, from inventing to building. Later in his career, Weber used his love of the surreal to establish the School of Fantastic Realism in Switzerland.

Since the early 1960s he has been creating the sculpture park, the most significant of its kind in Switzerland and located just outside Zurich near Dietikon.

Weber chose the wildly romantic estate, covered in forests, meadows and lakes, on a mountainside above Spreitenbach, to be home to his visionary work. With a pure and unwavering vision, he went to work. The first sculptures came to life in 1963.

Comprehensive vision

Everything in the Bruno Weber Sculpture Park is consciously created with the belief that all objects in our environment and in our daily lives change the world and in return, us. Following his innermost ideals, Weber designs

every detail of his surroundings, both inside and out of doors, according to his personal desires.

For example, he transformed the children's slide into a snake above a pond to reflect how imagination changes the way we view our surroundings. The same can be seen when the grill in the garden morphs into a fire bird with a matching table and stools.

Nothing is too big or too minute to escape Weber's eye for the unusual. Cutlery, plates, tumblers, chairs, tables, belt buckles and hair ornaments for his wife and daughter, even the tower house – all were fashioned by the artist's design.

Fantasy into reality

Weber has infinite creative abilities and fantasies, as well as comprehensive technical know-how. He first invents by imagining new objects. Then he puts his vision on paper and precisely defines it.

The calculations and tech-

niques of on-site engineers and architects help him build his sculptures by hand. Nothing is left to chance as he always follows his internalised image of the selected object.

Viewers standing in front of the seventeen metre tall owl statue, which weighs 180 tons, will understand Weber's amazing knack of making the apparently-impossible achievable.

He believes art is a language that all people understand equally. "Everyone discovers something that they know here (the park). A Mexican, the old Aztec empire. A Norwegian, his Viking ancestors. A cultural minister from Shandong described my work as a bridge from Europe to China," says Weber.

His work inspires a loyal following, many of whom are personally committed to ensuring that his collection will continue to grow, in the sculpture park and in museums.

SURREAL



Bruno Weber in front of his self-designed studio-house

Nearing completion

Weber laid the corner stone for his sculpture studio in the 1960s. Today that studio is the artist's phantasmagorical residence, lit by a glass-front observatory and topped with a golden dome.

In the coming years, the 'Caterpillar' building will become the artist's personal museum, housing his oil paintings and other assorted early works. The forest garden and theater square have developed gradually, with creatures added as Weber created them. And his water garden is almost complete, although new creatures and installations continually add new life to the Bruno Weber Sculpture Park.

Bruno Weber is continually designing, building and adding more statues, mosaics, hamlets and hideaways. So it's doubtful the sculpture park will ever be 'done,' as long as the artist's creative juices flow.

Visitors and Events

The park is open to visitors of any age and nationality. Also available are a variety of locations like the 'Pyramide,' the 'Vogel-terrasse (bird terrace)' or the 'Theaterplatz' with a marquee, rentable venues for apéros, birthdays, weddings and other celebrations.

The park is open from April to October on Saturdays and the first Sunday of the month. Guided tours are available the whole year by advance appointment (01 740 02 71).

www.bruno-weber.com

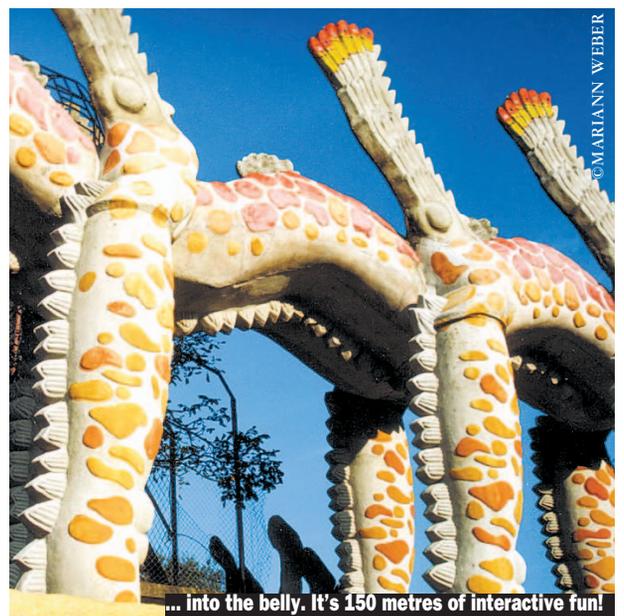
Bruno Weber

- 1931: Born in Dietikon on 10 April; attended elementary and secondary school in Dietikon.
- 1947: Attended the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich.
- 1949: Learned lithography under Orell Füssli in Zurich.
- 1950: Studied in Rome. Made study trips to Greece and Czechoslovakia.
- 1962 onwards: Built the studio-residence and continued to expand the Sculpture Park
- 2003: 40th jubilee of the Bruno Weber Sculpture Park

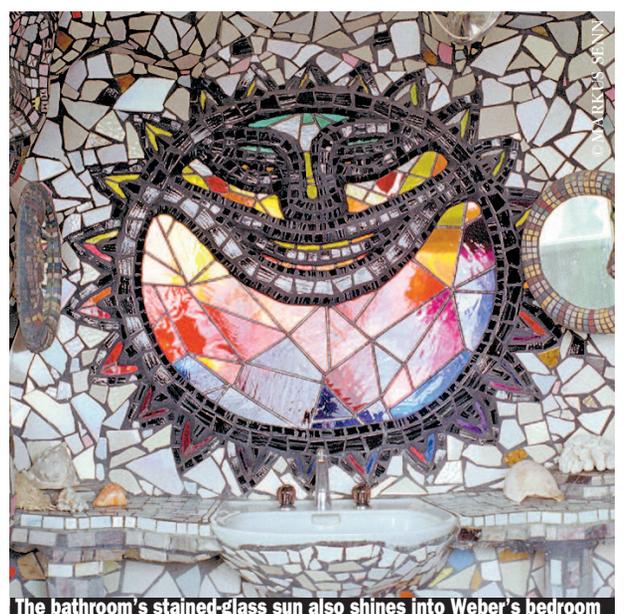
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Through the mouths of the winged-dog sculptures...



... into the belly. It's 150 metres of interactive fun!



The bathroom's stained-glass sun also shines into Weber's bedroom

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