

Rafa. G. Bielz, R. Schnell, Agosto 90, Venezia

GUDRUN BIELZ / RUTH SCHNELL

ART FROM THE WORLD OF THE INTERNAL OBSERVER

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O.S.

There are two fundamental characteristics of the electronic media art: interactivity and virtuality. Both of these qualities distinguish the electronic art from the historic two- or threedimensional art forms of experience as the easle painting or the sculpture, because they have not space or time as formal parameters. Interactivity and virtuality, the fundamental forms of experience of the electronic art, are best expressed by the electronic image and the digital environment. The musicians, painters, sculptors and electronic artists are followed by a new kind of artists: the artists of mise en scene. Gudrun Bielz and Ruth Schnell belong to the present generation of media artists, which is the one of artists of digital mise en scene.

On the one hand the most advanced results of the history of painting and sculpture, those of the artistic articulation of space, are further differentiated by the digital Scenic, on the other hand the results of the Time Based Arts as music and kinetics are connected with them. This synchronisation of different forms of art, inscenated in Real Space and Real Time, creates a new quality. Thus the possibility exists to confront or diachronize the Real Time of normal sensous perception and the Proper Time of the viewer with the Alien Time of the objects. The art of inscenation is formed by this dislocation or networking. Logically that also can be used for the modal degrees of existence not only of the space, but of the viewer. On the one hand the viewer stands real in the ambient of the work of art, on the other hand he can be found in the virtual space of the picture (image), when the camera sends his image into the monitor (a closed circuit installation). The observer becomes part of the observed, becomes part of the world of observation, the inner world. The Real Space itself can also change to the Imaginary Space of the image. The basis of the digital Scenic is formed by this complex orchestration of the Real Space of the sensous world of perception and of the Imaginary Space of the image, of Real Time and Simul Time, of the observer outside and inside the image. These works of media not only expand and form the syntax and semantics of space and time, but also their pragmatics. Therefore the work is defined by the obeserver's behavior in space and time, his reactions become part of the art work. In this respect, an art originates from the inner world, e. g. those of the electronic components or from the world of the inner observer. The new models of space and time, generated in such a manner, are just characterized by interactivity and virtuality: The viewer can enter the space and the time of the images. The work is only created by the observation, the look and the moves of the observer. As a result, in the present media art, the viewer no longer is an external observer, e.g. of an oil painting or a photo. Thus observation is part of the constitution of the

work. Only the viewer's active participation sets the art work afoot that is in operation and in existence. Therefore interactivity and virtuality are conditioned by each other.

Schnell' and Bielz' video sculptures and interactive computer installations, often developed in co-production of both media artists, are phenomena of this electronic virtual world. 'Tür' (door), 'Liege' (bed), 'Schwelle' (threshold) and 'Ball' belong to the vocabulary of some of the characteristic titles of their works ('Tür für Huxley', 'Traumliege', 'Videoschwelle', 'Punching Ball'), because they refer to conventional nodal points of space. But theirs is a space, whose geometry is distorted dynamically and whose viewpoint is mobile. As in a manneristic *tromp l'oeuil*, doors lead to windows and to other doors. The space itself almost hops like a ball and is only held up and stopped (the threshold) by simulated mirrors (video beaming). Real Space and Apparent Space fall into each other like the de-constructivist cubes in Frank Gehry's architecture. Real Time and False Time superimpose like in surrealistic films or in postmodern literature. Real motion and simulated motion follow and change each other. They alter each other and deceive us. Ruth Schnell and Gudrun Bielz show us by this triple intervention in space, time and motion, how we are deluded by the media and the reality, how man becomes a phantom in his new electronic environment. He is present, but only tele-present; he is an observer, but only an internal one; he transforms the world, but only its interface. Seeming and Being, reality and truth themselves become 'Punching Balls'. Bielz and Schnell not only develop artistic strategies of illusion, but also question them. They clarify, but they also construct reality. These are strategies of illusion as radical constructivism of the world — constructed images, constructed realities, artificial worlds. These new relations of mankind with the world and the reality (qua technology and qua media) outgrow the classic concepts of art and creation. Variable dynamic forms of Becoming and construction take the place of products of the closed stable Being. The participation of man becomes universal. There is the necessity of a global perspective in the orbital era. The earth becomes the house, *Oikos*. The inseparability of man and nature becomes an axiom of universal ecology. The denial of the universal participation of man, his co-construction of the world, threatens the world. The globe as 'Punching Ball', as satellite of our will, shows this menace and damage. In the monitor (box, window), the globe, simulated by computer, refers to a constructive strategy of illusion and an aesthetics of the virtual. The orbital aesthetics of today mirror a global responsibility. That forms an interactive, dynamic system in connection with the viewer, who sets the 'Punching Ball' in motion. Thus a practice of participation is formed, which opens an utopia: Man as 'Shepherd of Being' instead of 'Ruler of Being' (M. Heidegger).

Peter Weibel