

Kat. Marko, Wilfried and sartenes gleichertiges / Triton

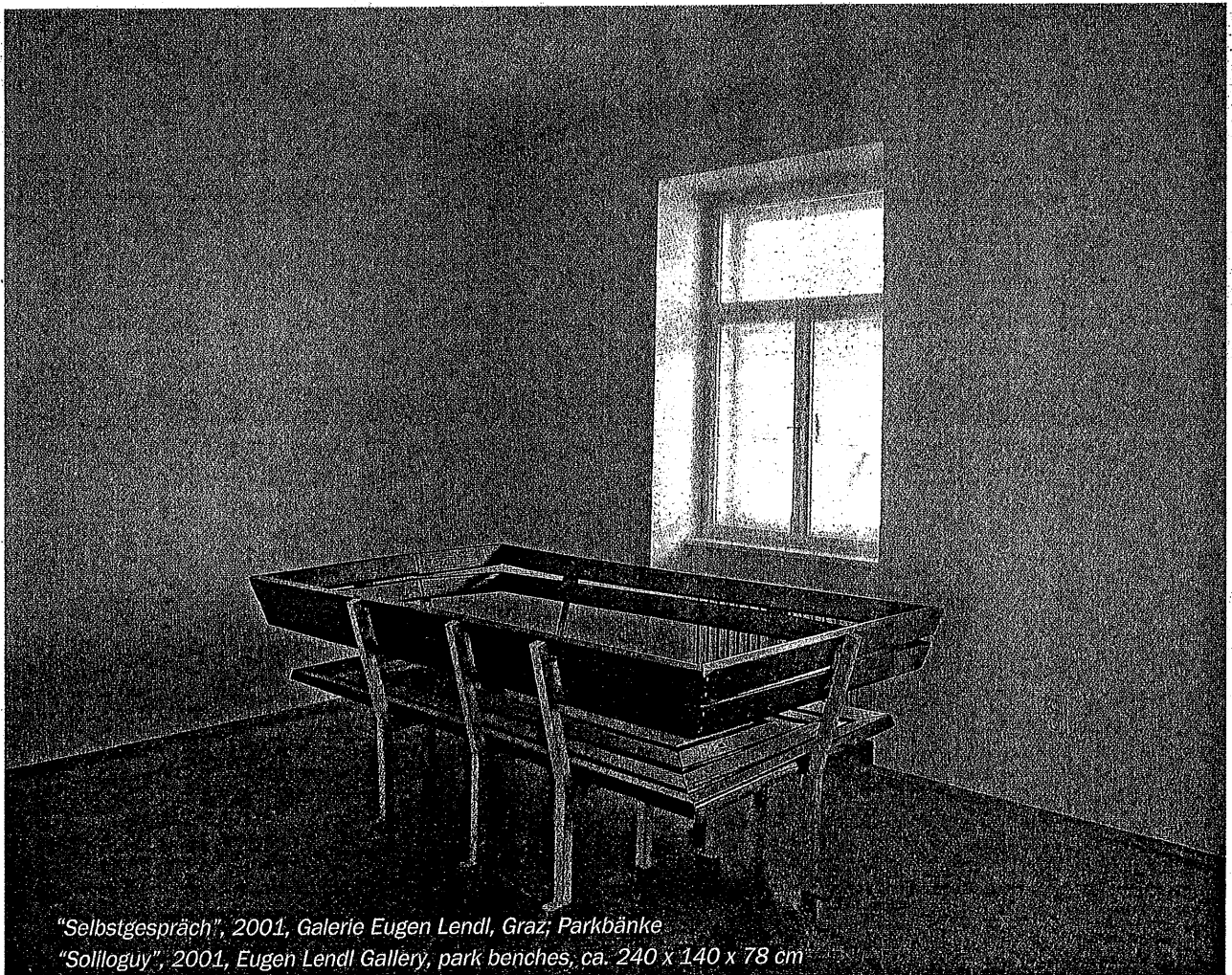
Viertel, Wien,
2002

Peter Weibel

The double of objects in the realm of the shadows

(2002)

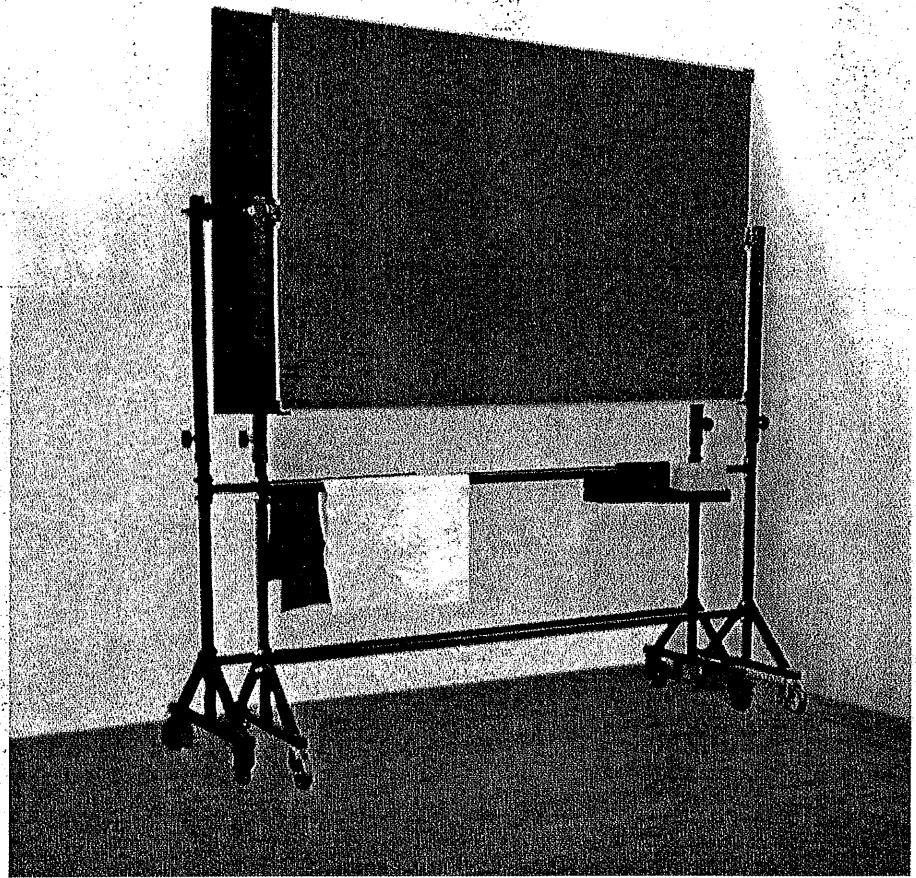
The beginning of the 20th century saw the introduction of the object as sculpture. Duchamp displayed industrial items such as bottle-dryers: objects that the artist selected and signed, but had not made himself. Brancusi exhibited everyday objects such as benches as sculptures or pedestals, objects that were usable but which the artist had made with his own hands. Industrially manufactured and hand-made articles extended the concept of sculpture. The marriage of sculpture and object together with the construction of sculptures with a utility value as furniture became a trend in the 1980s, and continued to liven up the art scene. The latest generation of artists has taken it further. In the 1980s likewise another typical trend developed, that of producing artwork directly for a specific site. The "specific objects" (Donald Judd) of minimal art became objects for a specific site. Site specificity became a relevant artistic production method.



"Selbstgespräch", 2001, Galerie Eugen Lendl, Graz; Parkbänke

"Soliloguy", 2001, Eugen Lendl Gallery, park benches, ca. 240 x 140 x 78 cm

Doppelsatz
auf A4

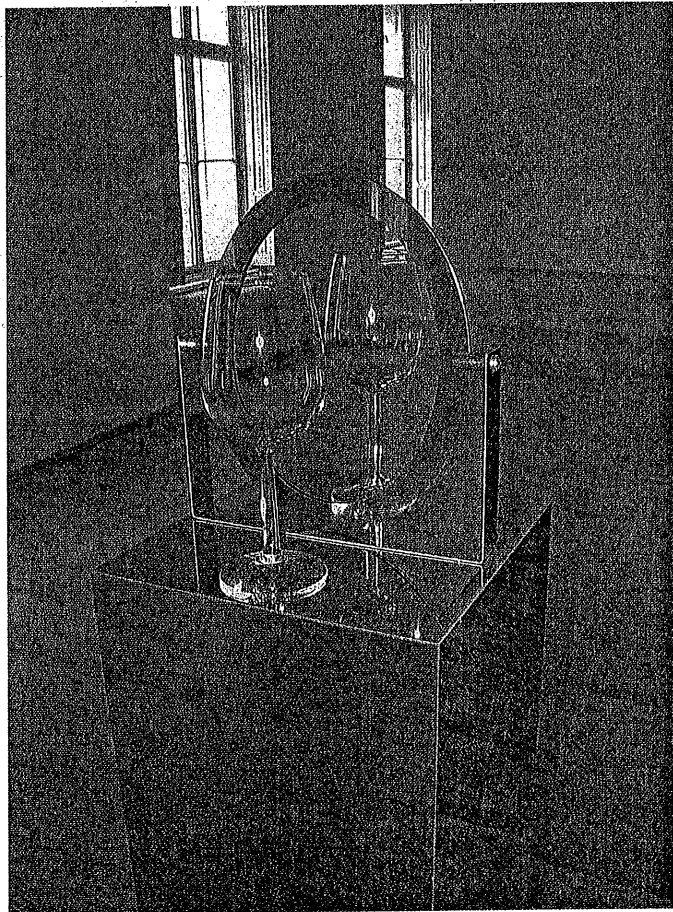


"Schattenobjekt"
Urania, Graz, 1998
Schultafel, Farbe.

"Shadow objects"
Urania, Graz, 1998
blackboard, paint

In his installation in the stairwell of the Neue Galerie Markus Wilfling combines both processes, the marriage of sculpture and furniture and site specificity. He places municipal garden benches as a sculpture in the shaft of the stairwell, but in such a way that the benches are only partly usable and as a whole both the function of the stairwell and that of the benches are called into question and reduced. The sitting room suggested by the benches hangs in the air. Private and public spheres (sitting room, stairwell, garden) penetrate each other in a slanted, mirror-image distorted way. The public and the private are reflected in a furniture sculpture which consists of a staircase and a set of benches. In its layering, the accumulation of these ready-mades conveys the state of today's public sphere, in which the gossipy seats of the talk show in the public arena of the media replace the earlier reasoning of the sovereign subjects. Wilfling's sculptural installation shows the furnishings of an absurd talk show without any meaning and without any subject, suspended in the vacuum of the space, in the pointless space of the media. A sitting room without walls, a platform without ceiling or floor, a stairwell as a lift without movement or chasis - this is the state of our society, the project of incomplete democracy.

The shadow and mirror objects are likewise a mirror-image of the state of our society: that is, phantomisation. It is a long time since art became a realm of duplication, a double of objects, as a result of this transition from sculpture to everyday object. The homes of rich collectors are overflowing with copies of seats, ovens, showers etc., which are fully functional but cannot be used because they are made by artists. These double objects reveal the collective unconscious, the suppressed, taboo knowledge that in capitalism every object exists in double: as exchange value and utility value, as a product and as a thing. This double existence of every object creates a shadow world, a world of phantoms and spectres, which do nonetheless actually exist: The real phantoms of the capitalist product world, the fetishes, stand alongside or opposite each other in Wilfling's sculptures. Once, when pictures were only really shadows of the real world, artists could not paint shadows. Victor I. Stoichita describes the long shadows of this art beautifully in his work "A Short History of the Shadow" (1999). Today they build a shadow object alongside every object, because the real world consists of shadows, spectres and phantoms.



"Ohne Titel", 2002, Edelstahl, Glas, Spanplatten, 150 x 25 x 25 cm
"Untitled", 2002, highgrade steel, glass, chipboards