

Renate Hampke – *addendum*

December 10, 2022 – January 28, 2023 (prolongated)

With humor and great self-awareness, the artist - now 87 years old - has worked in recent months on two groups of works that are brought together in *addendum*.

Her room-sized installation »Concert for Rose Sélavy« condenses her experiences of recent years, during which she has realized several site-specific installations*.

For some time now, the artist has been preoccupied with Marcel Duchamp and pays homage to him with her installation »Concert for Rose Sélavy«.

The formation of her stele sculptures - arranged as a group - could refer to an orchestra, and the one twice as high, singly placed opposite the group, could mime the conductor. The installation title written on the wall puzzles the viewer who is not versed in modern art history. The bicycle rim with spokes, mounted on the wall as an exciting counterpoint to the group of figures, could be the solution to the riddle. Duchamp's famous readymade Bicycle Wheel is familiar to most, even if the fork and stool are missing. The wall sculpture, on the other hand, formulates the quote to it with a wink.

The presence of the group of figures in the exhibition space is unique. Even though Renate Hampke already rhythmically and geometrically rigorously traversed the space with stele sculptures in her 2016 exhibition »Pneuma-Tacs«, the new ones, loosely arranged to each other as a group, are here ascribed a meaning in terms of content. On each stele rests a transverse, slightly overlapping bundle of bicycle inner tubes, martially tied together with 4 to 5 large black cable ties that have literally squeezed the air out of the tubes. They dominate the upper (air) space with their long free-swinging ends in strikingly synchronous movements with and against each other. The individual stele sculpture thus acquires a lightness, as the optical heaviness of the wooden cube is dissolved, incidentally reinforced by the up-and-down painted black angular surfaces on the floor edge, which suggest and fuel an 'atonal rhythm' of the stelae among themselves. In their formation in relation to each other, they could translate the movements in the orchestra body, which, if one observes a concert with a large orchestra, move the instruments synchronously in surges toward and against each other. The violins formulate a slightly tilted, moving horizontal surface, while the bows cut through the space rather vertically.

The dynamics of the orchestral body is contrasted by the conductor, who rests in himself, dressed - one might think by the painting of the attached black pedestal - in a tailcoat. His vertical and stiff silhouette is enlivened by three bicycle tubes hanging next to each other, which at the 'head end' with their serially arranged valves

pointing upwards, complete and thus emphasize the maestro's vertical movement. He could also just perform the downward movement from above with his conducting baton to convey an adagio to the orchestra.

The fascination that this installation exerts on the author of this text lies in the multiformity of the work and the manifold connotations that it is able to trigger, whereby the artist refuses a defining unambiguity. Great art is that which touches and is open to free interpretation, like a spiritual vessel.

The second group of works, her wood drawings - titled »Fingerwerk« as the work group name in this exhibition - she joins the installation on the wall, except for one outlier leaning against the wall at floor level. A misunderstanding between the artist and her gallerist, but one that contributes a poetic and cheeky impulse to the exhibition.

With her blackened fingertips, Renate Hampke fills the wooden surface of the birch plywood panels in a strict and serial manner. Sometimes dominantly black, sometimes more 'breathed into', one fingertip imprint lines up with the next, forming successive rows in the classical manner of reading, thus creating an austere image that nevertheless experiences an individualization through the organic rounding of the paint application (mostly it is charcoal), especially since this deliberately avoids a cool and sterile, geometric precise juxtaposition. The individual works vibrate.

Within the series of finger works, there is a group that suddenly opens up an imaginary space into the depths, yet individual of their fingertip rubbings are set in such a way that they seem like abstract figures in the empty space, thereby defining it in relation to each other. Suddenly, dynamics emerge that are reminiscent of dance formations in which numerous dancers move towards and against each other. Two solitaires fall out of the frame: One makes the 'figures' dance wildly over the wooden panel in arcing movements, and the other makes the injuries of the wooden surface visible in a proven manner. Here, the condition of the surface is the spiritus rector that allows the artist's sensitive perception to see images that others cannot even guess at. The surface injuries or the constellation of knotholes or darker annual rings tell their own not precisely definable story.

Even if »Concerto for Rrose Sélavy« can stand on its own, and would impress even more if the space were many times larger, and the orchestra body expanded accordingly, the density of the staging of the installation in conjunction with the wall works nevertheless results in a homogeneous picture - incidentally not unlike Renate

Hampke's studio apartment, in which the works were created and successively joined together.

The radicalization of the installation by the renunciation of the finger works and the e.g. tripling of the orchestra members can however - should it be granted to the artist - still take place at any time at another place, in an art association or a museum.

Semjon H. N. Semjon, December 2022

* Renate Hampke has created numerous site-specific installations since becoming a member of the artists' group »Endmoräne«, which has been making artistic interventions in mostly vacant buildings in Berlin and Brandenburg every year for more than two decades. Her solo exhibition at the "Gotisches Haus" in Berlin-Spandau in 2020 also surprised with her unorthodox way of intervening in space.

Parallel to this exhibition, the »Intervention XXX-02« by Marlies von Soden can be seen at »KioskShop berlin (KSb)«.