

5th Total Installation by Experimental Setup

(December 14th, 2019 – January 19th, 2020)

Breathing Soul

The exhibition room is dominated by the steady sound of a ventilator with its constant and recurring rhythm which, reminiscent of real respiratory movements, is breathing air into an overall, which rests on the floor and is animated by an air-blowing apparatus hidden in its collar. The breathable cloth of the bag with its collar, torso, open sleeves and legs makes it rise and fall in a constant rhythm, just like a breathing human body. This smooth and soothing roaring could equally be the echo of the tide created by the waves rolling over the sand. The regular rhythm of this sound is distinctly accompanying the exhibition, subconsciously slowing down our pulses, and can even make us more attentive to get involved into the scenery created by the artist's collective Experimental Setup. The work titled *Soul* refers to something that cannot be exactly defined but of which we know that it escapes in the process of transition from life to death. The principle of duality or dichotomy is already inscribed into the essential, life-defining breath. The *Soul* or *Psyche* is the metaphorical bracket of life, and at the same time, the central theme in the *5th Total Installation* by Experimental Setup comprising Kata Hinterlechner and Bosko Gastager.

Already from the street the attention of the passers-by is guided into the exhibition space and the gaze is spontaneously ensnared by a cone of light measuring the room and put into movements by the aid of a rotating slide projector (without a slide inside), sometimes focussing on the wall as a small, white pool of light – as the machine is positioned close to the wall – and sometimes forming a large cone of light when striking the opposite wall. When the viewer is standing in the room, his/her shadow becomes part of the overall picture. This work is entitled *Seer/Seher* and refers to an ancient myth: the machine leaves oracular traces on the wall, telling of the visitor's presence, inscribing it into the artwork, as it were, without leaving any traces behind, mysteriously handing over to us the prerogative of interpretation – should we be open-minded for diving into the reality of this artistically shaped world

and visually conceiving objects and their beauty.

And beauty is the central theme of this work. *Lecture Performance* by Bosko Gastager, which opens up the *5th Total installation*, summarizes and explains the mythical creation of the world and the birth of beauty, *Harmonia*, as an act of unification between Ares, the personification of violence and war, and the love goddess Aphrodite, who is cheating therewith on her husband Hephaistos. The fruit of this union is *Harmonia*. Bosko Gastager: *Harmonia, the unifying spirit, is herself the result of a union of contrasts, of beauty and war. However, she is the result of a disgraceful union, and this disgrace will continue to accompany her. The ancient myth teaches us that harmony is the consolidation of difference, only to be accomplished by an act of violence. It is not the assonance and addition of already equal powers; it is the consonance of difference. Creating harmony means combining divergent elements into a coherent ensemble. And therein lies the beauty.*

However: also and especially in the striving for true harmony lurks violence, in the sense that it reaches far beyond purely aesthetic considerations, as harmony does not tolerate any difference, especially when truth is not conceived as a unifying element. The individual parts are thus regarded only under the perspective of their contribution to a harmonious whole; the beauty of harmony is always endangered and fragile.

And the two artists demonstrate in exemplary form how violence may be turned into beauty:

A chest-high wooden box with a depth of 30 cm, also referred to as offertory box, has a Perspex disc at its front, so that the inside becomes visible, and in the upper third of the box, suspended from its lid and fastened by means of nylon cords, is a delicate ring. Locked in this ring is a black-coloured egg; a plate-sized opening serves as access into the box. The egg is filled with paint and is detonated by means of a fuse. One of the artists closes the opening during the explosion process. In advance and as if in a ritual act, one artist assists the other in tying around a chest-high apron, which serves as a shield to protect from paint blasts. The artists become shamans. After the ritual the aprons with the paint splatters become another relic of

this sacrificial act and are installed on the wall as a pair of exhibition objects (cf. invitation card).

Here, the creative act becomes performance and its result, the artefact, becomes art. The three colours that are hurled against the Perspex disc of the box leave behind a kind of painting which meanders between paint explosion and drip painting, at the same time providing stability and creating a resonance space and a home for itself. And the painting is also an object, as the burst-apart eggs have been artfully scattered on the bottom of the box through the explosion. As a spatial sculpture the work has a lasting effect for itself and may, at the same time, tell the story of how it was created.

And so it is with all the other artefacts of the *5th Total Installation*: each work has its own history, each one has a title borrowed from the multi-faceted mythological world or referring to a mythological event.

As manifold as the Greek mythology, as multiform are the works of art created by the duo. All genres are present: from painting and drawing, from collage to object, from lighting installation to kinetic (light) objects to performative narration. This cosmos is a cabinet of curiosities expressing richness of creativity, which refers even physically to its narrative and the appearance of the same. All works are interrelated, together creating a whole: *Harmonia*. Placed right on the mark, the result is an exciting interplay within their own setting: a *gesamtkunstwerk*, the individual protagonists of which may also be separated (by purchase), as they are charged (each) with their own beauty and narrative.

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