

Benjamin Kreže: Gefallener Engel – Abschreckung Maschine

(an art installation)

KIBELA / KIBLA Maribor

The works of Benjamin Kreže are more than just installations; they are events that submerge the spectator visually, acoustically and temporally into the field of exposition. The artist is not satisfied merely by the conceptual and intellectual framework of the artworks, but by the materialization that sets off the irrational, sensuous experience.

About Gefallener Engel – Abschreckung Maschine:

"I believe that if you want to fight pure evil (the system) and defy it, you're really only feeding it, and there's no way you are ever going to win this way. But if you use its inertia, its power – and turn it against itself, you will be able to expose it bare; his energy will self-destruct and it will become a mockery of itself. I think such a turn can be achieved by employing its own means, the language of the system itself, and an over-perfected (bureaucratically-mechanized) performance of its own rituals.

Project 'Gefallener Engel – Abschreckung Maschine' is an attempt to confront and to expose, an attempt at a retrograde view of an ideationally-ideological projection into the time of today. For history repeats itself inevitably, and the fascist dictators seem to be immortal through their incarnations." (B. Kreže)

In his work the author addresses complex issues raised by the new technological sciences, and the co-existence of modern society along them. His kineticons with their optically aggressive illusions destabilize and test the spectator, yet they always contain a certain amount of healthy cynicism and humor. Since 2009 he has been working with the multimedia band Laibach as an active member of their visual team.

"He began constructing Abakus, his first three-dimensional mechanic construction out of realist portraits. He always draws on the original conceptual installation framework out of ancient inventions and crafts, to be able to translate them into the contemporary era. The Abakus consists of small realist heads and same-size skulls attached to a rotation machine. They spin so fast they mislead the eye, and it seems we can see with x-ray vision. To the spectator, saturated with visual messages, such a memento mori is a stop sign, a shock, a derailment – or a lifeline and a fascination. This mechanic installation based on an old illusionist invention called the zoetrope, addresses the 21st century man much more efficiently than the unmanageable mass of atrocities brought to us on television screens.

In the subsequent mechanic installations Kreže has managed to deepen even further the perceptive experiences, making them even more compelling and conceptually more structured. He employed the adaptability of the brain to process individual images and connect them into motion on the basis of similar principles that Muybridge used to create the first motion illusions with photo-sequences. The same principles are used in the creation of animations and films, except that with these the viewer is less and less aware that they are really illusions. Kreže restores the possibility for the spectator to recognize the hologram as a deception of his own eyes, but the fascination with the object is no lesser, quite the contrary. When trying to analyze the content and experiential elements of the mechanism with twelve plaster statues portraying a full-scale Nikola Tesla feeding pigeons, an unusual contradiction appears. On one hand, the spectator is faced with an exceptionally peaceful and greathearted gesture of the great inventor, and on the other he is slammed by the forceful movement and commotion produced by the kinetic installation that spins 40mph – as if to demonstrate the lines of force abusing the scientist's findings. Unlike Gregory Barsamian who also deals with hologram effects of moving statues, the work of Benjamin Kreže is much more chamber-like, more serious and subject to pure formalized esthetics. Nonetheless, his work includes a humorous touch as well, or rather, subtle irony, but he is mostly characterized by the search of "magic".” Ida Hiršenfelder

The exhibition will be showing until January 2013

Opening: December 20, at 7 pm

KiBela / KIBLA, Maribor, Slovenia

KiBela, space for art, is open on weekdays and Saturdays between 9am and 10pm, and closed on Sundays.

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