
Thomas Schulz

THE EUROPEAN SCULPTURE

A Hand in the Weather

The idea of presenting the artistic work of Thomas Schulz under the term **The European Sculpture** arose during the early nineties, as he was making his acoustic and photographic observations of the drilling work for the so-called Euro Tunnel, which today connects France and Britain under the Channel. To that was added the investigations at the Europe Parliament in Brussels and Strasburg, where he was able to accompany former Vice-President Hans Peters during his administrative and parliamentary activities.

The basic idea here was to understand the process of the coming into being of a construct called "Europe", newly emerging, politically and economically, as a sculpture, the context of which can no longer be represented as an illustrative continuity. The technical networking and communicative compression which results from this process can only be imagined as such a process, and this precisely corresponds to the sculptural work style of Thomas Schulz: it has merely been devoted to the indirectly comprehensible relationship of objects, sounds and photographic relationships.

If we return this thought process back to its mythical context, Europe is not simply the image of a girl on a bull, but is rather a moderating event which made the context of the Greek world of the Mediterranean narratively comprehensible and graspable as a universality, equally political and ideal. Zeus, who has turned himself into a bull, develops a new world relationship: the abduction of the Phoenician king's daughter is first and foremost an attack on the hegemony of Phoenicia as a trading power. But by carrying her off as a bull, abducting her across the sea to Crete, and impregnating her there as an eagle, he – through work, as a divine activity – combines and integrates the cosmic dimensions, which, in their separate nature, could each act as powers in their own right. Zeus is linked both to the terrestrial forces and to the heavenly ones: in Dodona, he appears as an oak, and the rustling of the leaves in the wind is his oracle; in Olympia Phidias builds him a statue of ivory and gold, an idea materialised, which, as the ruling power, represents the materialisation of economic power.

In terms of European sculpture, it is this plastically congealed illustrativity of the idea that is epitomised in the classical art of Greece. As a combination of diverse forces, it embodies a kind of dynamics which, as early as the fourth century B.C.,

led the stoic Kleanthes to speak of Zeus as an abstract principle. He thus defined, even then, the law of abstraction as a concept which has for 200 years been the guiding characteristic of our modern age.

Since then, the perspective of nature has no longer been immediately present. It now shows itself as a reflection in art, and thus, extended further, the non-illustrative nature of the moderating event "Europe" has migrated to the realm of art. It thus replaces the rustling of the leaves in the wind and the breaking of the waves as sources of sensual, particularly tonal, consciousness, and when it rises and congeals itself to a rustling, a rush, it leads, as in a literal rush, to the cataclysmic power of chaotic complexity. It becomes a perfect example of nature unordered, untamed by humans. Against it, and, at the same time, with it, humanity has designed and built a horizon which has led beyond it, in the period of validity of legal processes, and likewise in the present, unforeseeable event. In the medium of art, humanity experiences itself between technology and empirical existence.

It is in this intermediate realm that the work of Thomas Schulz demonstrates how society networks itself according to laws which it has copied from nature, which it has bestowed upon itself in relationship to this nature with a strength of will foreign to it. That is not a reference to evolution, through which society can see itself as part of nature. Rather, for its own sake, it may not subject itself to the logic of that nature. It is the artificial nature of abstraction through which the strangeness of the strength of will of art is experienced, that causes the irritation in which nature becomes accessible and can be experienced as the consciousness of that self-estrangement that is unique to us. It is from this point that our relationship to nature, societal and personal, would have to be determined anew.

Nature is not idyllic, and what we see and experience as beautiful – beautiful, too, in terms of a convention of the idyllic – is relief from nature, an awareness being within oneself in view of its magnificence, its horizons spreading endlessly or enclosing us protectively, its bodies resting in themselves returning home after work, or the almost meditative sinking into oneself when patching a net, as can be seen here in the exhibition on the great projections. Technology makes persons accessibly and comprehensible in their physical and vocal appearances, and likewise in their social and natural forms – through the abstractions which lend them their respective shapes. Thomas Schulz's "hand in the weather" permits you to practice a seismic reaction to the individually characteristic strangeness of the abstractions, the comprehension of the cryptic nature of free vibrations in the interior space of their networks.

Thomas Schulz

1950 Arrival in Berlin

1977-83 Study at the University of the Arts, Berlin;

Since 1979 Beginning of the development of acoustic sculptures of steel wire and glass

1985/86 Work with rooms up viewable by means of optical lenses/ Spy in New York and Berlin

1989 The beginning of the project "THE EUROPEAN SCULPTURE"; acoustic and photographic research in and near the construction sites of the Euro Tunnel

1993/2006 Work in and near the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasburg.

Grants

1985 Project studios 1/P.S.ONE – New York

1986 Studio, Bethanien Artists' House, Berlin

1989 Work grant from the Senate Department of Culture, Berlin

1995 Work grant from the KUNSTFONDS Foundation, Bonn

1995 Project grant of the KULTURFONDS Foundation, Berlin

1999 Work grant of the Senate Department of Culture, Berlin

2000 Villa Serpentara, Academy of the Arts

Project grant for PARLIAMENT OF SOUNDS, KUNSTFONDS Foundation, Bonn.

Exhibitions – Selection

1981 "Faced Mirror" – "*Im Westen nichts Neues*" ["All quiet on the western front"; but literally: "No news in the West"] Lucerne Museum of Art / Ludwig Collection

- 1982 "First Secret Service Permanent Congress Music", Biennale de Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
 "Sonata Somnambulica" Gallery Donguy, Paris
- 1983 "Galera ambulante", Symposium d'Art Performance, Lyon
 "IM THEATER"/ Berlin office
- 1984 "TRANSATLANTIC TABLEMUSIC", Musée d'Art Moderne, Montréal;
- 1985 "CULTUR SHOC BOXES" Clock Tower / P.S.ONE, New York
- 1986 "1 hoch Null/Tage zur Ansicht [one to the zeroeth power/days on view]
 Bethanien Artists' House, Berlin
- 1987 "The house speaks" Documenta 8, Kassel Audiothek
 "SEHSTRECKEN" [Seeing ways], Gallery RUIIMTE MORGUEN, Antwerp
 "RED SQUARE/GREEN FIELDS", Moltkerei Cologne;
- 1988 "QUIEMS" in the Merve Verlag, Berlin cultural capital of Europe
- 1989 "CORRESPONDENCES", Berlinische Galerie, Berlin;
- 1991 "CORRESPONDENCES", Musée d'Art Moderne Saint Etienne
- 1992 "NOT HERE BUT UNDER THE SEA," NBK BERLIN
- 1993 "DOSSIER ANTWERP", cultural capital of Europe & RUIIMTE MORGUEN
- 1996 "*Von Laut bis lautlos*" [from sound to soundless], Brandenburg Art Collections, Cottbus;
- 1997 "*Gegenstimmen? Enthaltungen? Ist so beschlossen!*" [Nay votes? Abstentions? The motion passes!] Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
- 1998 "MEGAPHONIE z", ASCII, Berlin
- 1999 "Contract tendencies", Haus des Rundfunks, Berlin
- 2000 "We come to the votes now", Donaueschingen Music Days
- 2001 "European Drawings", Microphony no. VI in the Symposium "Art as a Science, Science as Art", Gemäldegalerie Berlin

- 2002 "Let's hear what the fisherman [or: Fischer] has to say" Strodehne
Surveying Station

Start of the investigation "Fischer Schröder Havelland"
- 2003 "Schichtweise" [layer by layer] Microphony no. VII, New Masters Gallery,
Dresden
- 2004 "Sculpture Europe/Top view of future parliament grounds", Baltic Sea
Biennial of Sound Art, audio-visual projection 54, Rostock Art
Gallery

"NEWROPEAN", CDR projection Donaueschingen Music Days;

"MUTABOR If you laugh, you get thrown out" 21 Kanaille in „EU positive“,
ADK
- 2007 The beginning of the Havelland Landscape Project
- 2008 SONORIC PERSPECTIVES, the Nordic embassies, by C. Metzger, Berlin

"Expulsion from space", DVD Prod. HYBRID Verlag, Berlin

"Forged Relative IV" – Baltic Sea Biennial of Sound Art, Usedom
Music Festival, Heringsdorf Art Pavilion
- 2009 "The organised promise in the voices of the sole", Brennabor Art Gallery in
Brandenburg.