

Carved in Stone? – Beam me up.

What came to my mind- when viewing the art work of Suse Stoisser by *Burkhard Richter*

Getting to know Suse Stoisser in the small coastal village of Cadaqués in Catalunya she seems to be an antipode to the lighthearted easiness and idle nothingness of this seducing village. Part of her artistic expression is driven by the existential argument of the “from where”, “whereto” and “how” under the scrutinisingly observation of actual contemporary history. Her contemporaries are forced to appreciate and understand artistic concepts pertaining to principle questions which are woven into her work.

The rather intriguing effort for the spectator is the search of spiritual enhancement. Cut out of a metal plate the backrest of a person, who may have sat on a chair, is juxtapositioned into the contour of the cutout. This strikes me as the beginning of a story that awakens curiosity. A switch was created. The cutout person, who looked without any particular aim, possibly into infinity, may have followed her pondering thoughts out and away of the art piece, leaving behind the mere contour of her former self. Nonetheless, the observer is left with questions to ask himself; was it a man or a woman driven by the longing for life or death, towards tragedy and loss? These are possibilities intended by the artist who wants the spectator to interpret the story. Same holds true for later works such as in the “undressed” jeans, the slipped shoes, sometimes applied, sometimes cut out, all starting points for perusion by the observer.

Similar mechanisms are put into motion with works that do not at first sight appear as recognisable but are transformed into virtual images by the observer. “Carved in Stone!” could be representative for this portion of her ongoing oeuvre. Same holds true for what could be meant as eternally empirical, as well as for the material upon which it is meant to be applied. Nonetheless, doubts arise whether the title should rather carry a question mark instead of an exclamation mark. Often it is not just one word, but rather ideas, concepts, inuendos pointing to small differences in orthography and pronunciation (“and” versus “end”) which raise questions about what is supposed to be empirical. One can assume that the artist wants to warn to contemplate before declaring something as “a posteriori” true, sometimes even to influence the observer in his subjective thoughts by enhancing positive association points by means of collage technics (“Mariposa, Butterflies”).

Sometimes she tends to deepen the danger of premature understanding by compressing different notions into a knot to show the observer how a whirlwind propels nuances in life. These thoughts are very much subjective and it is no surprise that Stoisser titles one of her works, almost disillusioned, “Without Message”. “Carved in Stone!” could be rather a question: “Carved in Stone?”

To get to the heart of things is a deeply anchored wish in Stoisser’s works, which manifests itself by the fact that many pieces have two sides that require individual perspectives. This can happen by arranging individually parts or ensembles of her sculptures (Box-series A&E). It also holds true for the individual arrangement of cards depicting the evolution that are mounted on metal rods. She uses a simple mechanical trick by offering a backside without putting in doubt the front side, yet one is forced to ponder the possibilities. It is necessary to follow this thought process to understand her creative evolution. It is not necessarily important to the artist where the spectator eventually ends up. It seems to feel that she puts more importance on the “where from” than on the present level of enlightenment of mankind, if only the “where from” is sufficiently questioned. Only then can creative spaces be recognized and consciously used in relation to the “where to” and “how”. Without clarification of the “where from” there is little hope to successfully complete her endeavor.

The various materials the artist uses often contrast with the intended artistic expression. It is not only the concrete ships, that plow the waters, sheets of paper made of heavy steel, and discs of marble that are forced weightlessly into the air. It draws attention to the dematerialization, the absence of the human body, that left the pants and shoes it once wore; the chairs it once occupied; and cutouts in whirring Plexiglas. Deformation that documents the body’s physical dissolution. A process that Captain Kirk (Spaceship Enterprise) initiated repeatedly in each series, which however, could not be repeated scientifically in the non-fiction world. The respective use, and disuse, of material sharpens the observer’s attention and increases his ability of reflection. Heavy can be light and vice versa, transparency can be documented even if the view is obscured. The common way of seeing things is turned into its opposite increasing the ability to comprehend the artist’s statements. A fundamental curiosity leads her to constantly try out new materials and ways to manipulate them. In this process knowledge of material acquired during her studies with Bruno Gironcoli certainly helped. While not important for

the understanding of her art, one cannot help admiring how the rather slender artist manages to bring about such large, heavy and voluminous pieces.

*Alea jacta est.* What struck me about Suse Stoisser's art manifests itself strangely in "Play Dice". Anybody who ever played dice knows how easily they are tossed out of the wrist. Her dices made out of steel can hardly be tossed with ease. The spectator can decide which numbers he/she wants to look at. Arranged by the artist in various exhibitions, the dice are often balanced on its tip, leaving open the possibilities of how they finally fall. Are they falling at all, in which direction, or do they require a new throw? The theme of playing dice offers chance. The result cannot be influenced. The player, albeit spectator must know this. Possible part of Suse Stoisser's message.

*Burkhard Richter*, collector