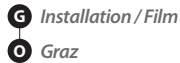


Lundahl & Seidl (SE/GB) An Elegy to the Medium of Film



Das Medium Film prägt unser Denken, Fühlen und Handeln stärker, als wir glauben. „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“ basiert auf der Annahme, dass wir filmische Erfahrungen so weit verinnerlicht haben, dass bereits kleinste Reize von außen reichen, um sie wachzurufen. Lundahl & Seidl dringen in die Tiefen unseres Bewusstseins vor, führen in einen abgedunkelten Raum, wo das Zusammenspiel von Filmprojektionen, Audiomaterial und choreografierten Berührungen sowohl Sedimente als auch Sentimente unserer filmischen Erinnerung aufwirbeln.

Besucherinnen und Besucher sehen sich anfangs vertrauten filmischen Instrumentarien gegenüber, bis die Kamera ein eigenes Bewusstsein zu entwickeln scheint. Sie werden eingeladen, über den Rahmen der Leinwand hinaus zu gehen und sich physisch in Szenen zu bewegen, die sie aus der Geschichte des Films kennen. Eingetaucht in diese Geschichte, treiben sie zwischen monumentalen Szenen, Klängen und Orten.

Lundahl & Seidl's Arbeitsweise kommt aus der bildenden Kunst, sie lassen allerdings den Performance-Gedanken in ihre skulpturalen Arbeiten einfließen. So schaffen sie ein Gesamtkunstwerk, das genau im Moment seiner Entstehung gezeigt wird – als Elegie nicht nur auf bedrohte Kunstformen, sondern auch auf die architektonischen Hüllen, in denen sie präsentiert werden. In ihrer international viel beachteten Arbeit „Symphony of a Missing Room“ setzte sich das Duo mit dem Museum auseinander. „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“ hingegen wirft ein Schlaglicht auf eine mögliche Zukunft von Film und Kino, indem es die Besucherinnen und Besucher zu einer intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit dem filmischen Medium und seiner Schnittstelle zu unserer Welt animiert.

Inspirationen, Zusammenhänge und Hintergründe: Christer Lundahl und Martina Seidl im Gespräch über den Arbeits- und Recherche-prozess von „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“

Your work ranges between visual, installation and performing art. „Proscenium“ was about theatre, „Symphony of a Missing Room“ was set in a museum. Your current work is about the medium of film. Is it a trilogy on art?

Christer Lundahl: Yes, definitely, we have developed a quite unusual practice of making artworks as elegies to specific art forms and the institutions where those forms are presented. The museum, the theatre, the cinema, the concert hall and the opera house – our work both reflects on the mythologised histories of these places, as well as contributing to the invention of their futures.

Are there artists, films and other sources that inspired you most for „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“?

Martina Seidl: There is the work of the Soviet film-maker Andrei Tarkovsky to be mentioned. In his film „Solaris“ from 1972 there is a scene when the protagonist, cosmonaut Kris Kelvin, together with his deceased wife becomes weightless inside a space station orbiting the ocean covered planet Solaris. They slowly float through a room resembling a gallery filled with work by 16th-century painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder, the pair rotates as the camera pans over the gallery room.

Lundahl: We were intrigued by the genius of the scene: of choosing Bruegel's paintings as a reminder of earth and human life, and the medium of painting as a philosophical object representing a place that exists outside of time.

Seidl: We wanted to go back to the room of the original shot and that is why we filmed in the Bruegel collection in the Picture Gallery at Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Lundahl: One of the questions „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“ is asking is if a film – although being just a recording of a time and place that once was staged for the camera and never existed outside its own frames – can somehow be entered, mentally and physically. We decided to make a shot that replicates the moment and the gaze of Kris' wife, rotating around in the gallery. We did this with a camera recording in 3D. The result is somewhat the experience of going back in time, leaving the camera's disembodied view and entering the vision of Kris' wife, from a first person perspective.

What is the biggest challenge while working on „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“?

Seidl: There are so many! We developed the choreographed leading of the visitors together with Sara Lindström, Rachel Alexander and Lisette Drangert. The physical touch and the leading of the visitors evokes a sense of „being a camera“ that zooms, pans and cuts the imaginary scenes inside the visitor's mind as a result of their imagination and the sound that acts as a stimulus.

Lundahl: The term in neurology „ideo-dynamic response“ is suitable here, it explains how a stimulus of the mind – a suggestion, a verbal instruction et cetera – can have a physical, bodily response. The suggestion is that a small narrow corridor creates an image in the mind of the visitor. The three-dimensional sound of the corridor strengthens the image – and the choreographed way of being led through it defines the way we see this inner film in front of us.

The phrase „An Elegy to the Medium of Film“ could imply a decline of the cinema. Is cinema, in your opinion, fated to die?

Seidl: All through history there have been announcements of „the death of“: painting, theatre, economics et cetera but always followed by the implicit „as we know it“. Any medium or discipline is in transformation in tandem with an evolving and changing reality.

Lundahl: Before the collective viewing of cinema that we have today there was a precursor called the Kinescope, where one single viewer looked into an opening, this is maybe more similar to how we look at film on laptops from the web today, sitting closely towards the screen focusing on the screen to assimilate with it.

Seidl: But another direction today is through immersion and interaction – not necessarily only in a digital, virtual reality way as with 3D and with head-mounted displays as in Oculus Rift. The medium of film also governs the way we perceive the physical world. Examples of this can be when we walk through the city listening to music in our headphones; naturally this creates a soundtrack to our lives. From this principle, immersive theatre and audiowalks find their motivation to start to orchestrate reality, organising and choreographing it into sequences, like a film.

Lundahl: One could maybe say, this would be to simulate a kind of produced synchronicity of reality – reality unfolds in a magical way, creating meaningful connections between one event and another, like a finely edited dramaturgy.