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BERND OPPL

Background

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We inhabit space. Bernd Oppl's objects highlight how human emotions are projected on to the architecture and interiors around us. His pieces are often absent of the actual human body. His practice sits between object and architecture, sculpture and installation. The environments he recreates – whether perfect detailed sculptures in miniature or animations and films - are seemingly neutral too, but their sterility makes them haunting. They resemble the future horror of Japanese and Korean horror films. The Ballardian fear of the suburban and corporate. The isolation and alienation of screen life.

*The artist plays with architectural modelling but this is not the utopic projection of a future urban landscape. Oppl creates scenes of the present. The laptop on a bare mattress on the floor. Oppl's works echo the atmosphere of Edward Hopper's paintings. There is a sense of noir in his figure-less interiors, a manifestation of the ideas in Olivia Laing's book *The Lonely City*. The horror here is muted. The haunted house is no longer a creaky 19th century mansion but an airport waiting room, or an office with black ink floating in space like a ghost. There is no sound in his work, except at times the whir of an analogue projector. Here the ghosts of cinematic or computer history emerge – such as his recreation of the *Black Maria*, a skeleton of a historic stage that would spin in front a static camera. Or a minimalist maze that resembles a pared down version of the iconic computer game *Wolfenstein 3d*.*

The screen is a central motif. Oppl embeds real screens into his work, using them in unusual ways. The artist plays with perception and perspective, choreographing how we view a scene like a director positions the camera in a shot. The angles of access and viewpoint are intentional. His black boxes and concrete cubes are placed on the wall at different heights, forcing the viewer to move and adjust. The screens in Oppl's work can form a window, or can be viewed at strange angles, through holes or reflections. Sometimes, his screens seem to breathe, their light pumping slowly on and off. Alternatively, the screens are blank and hazy with white noise.

There is a tactile quality to the work, even as he refers to the digital. The artist's take on media is both present and historic. White noise itself is something no longer experienced in contemporary life, but refers to an analogue past. It is now something fabricated to indicate emptiness. The phrase 'white noise' itself has connotations of ideology and bias. Oppl presents the ruins of media, given physical form. The materiality of modern concrete, and by extension Modernism, are echoed in the ruins of our televisual past.

Francesca Gavin

Bernd Oppl, 1980 in Innsbruck geboren, hat Malerei und Grafik an der Kunstuniversität Linz sowie Video und Videoinstallation an der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien studiert. Er lebt und arbeitet in Wien.

Seine Werke präsentierte er in Einzelausstellungen u.a. im Georgia Museum of Art (USA) im Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum Innsbruck (AUT), in Wiels - Contemporary Center of Art Brüssel (BLG), Kunstraum Kuiper Projects in Brisbane (AUS), im Kunstraum Dornbirn (AUT), im Lentos Kunstmuseum in Linz (AUT), in der Galerie Krinzinger in Wien (AUT), sowie bei zahlreichen internationalen Gruppenausstellungen und Filmfestivals u.a. im Kassler Kunstverein, Fridericinaum, Kassel (GER), Merano Arte, Meran (ITA), Greater Taipei Biennial, Taipei (TW), Mediamatic, Amsterdam (NL), Depo, Istanbul (TR) Vermilion Sands, Kopenhagen (DNK), Künstlerhaus – Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz (AUT), Kanderline Art Gallery, Saskatoon (CA), Stadt Galerie Bern (CH), Kulturstiftung Schloss Agathenburg (GER), National Gallery, Sofia (BG), Musée Ziem, Martiques (FRA), De Markten, Brüssel (BEL), Landesgalerie Linz (AUT), University Museum and Art Gallery Hong Kong (CN), Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (LI), Optika Pavilion, Moscow (RUS), NEST, Den Haag (NL), OK Offenes Kulturhaus OÖ, Linz (AUT), Tokyo Wonder Site (JP).

Bernd Oppl wurde ausgezeichnet mit dem Förderpreis für zeitgenössische Kunst des Landes Tirol 2008, dem RLB Kunstpreis 2012, dem Kunstpreis der Stadt Innsbruck 2015, dem Residency Stipendium 2018 in Wiels (Brüssel), dem Österreichischen Staatstipendium für Bildende Kunst 2019, mit einem Arbeitsstipendium am BANFF Center, Canada 2021.

Background ist nach *Spatial Distortions*, 2013 und *Intermission*, 2016 Bernd Oppl's dritte Einzelausstellung in der Galerie Krinzinger.