

MEDIA RELEASE

Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G presents large-scale installations by Carlo Borer:

The effect of demographic explosion

Basel, 5 May 2022 – As nature is capable of reclaiming human habitats, Carlo Borer’s large-scale installations entitled „Sleeping with the Gods“ take over the exhibition space of Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G from 5 May until 10 July. The various installations and organic shapes, purposely designed for the exhibition space, have been made in a highly complex process of polished stainless steel and planned to a fraction of a millimetre. Each tapering or extension of the shape feeds on milestones on the evolutionary timeline – either on data of demographic development on earth based on models by the UN or on dramatic loss of biodiversity in the animal kingdom. It is a well-designed as well as an artistically powerful display of how both are related.

Carlo Borer calls himself a builder of objects. He creates art with very modern means. The techniques he applies and the materials he uses usually come from industry. Design, material, effect as well as his approach similar to that of a scientist in a lab are defining factors. He develops his ideas for a long time until he converts them into shapes with the help of complex software. Experts from Switzerland and abroad assist and support him with the implementation of his visions.

Demographic growth and extinction of species

The development of humankind, the speed by which humans populate the earth and their ruthlessness of exploiting it, worries artist Carlo Borer. On the other hand, he is fascinated by technological advances and related developments. They serve as the basis for his work where he uses complex scientific data to make unusual art with the help of CAD programmes. For him, this is not a contradiction and he says: *“In addition to insects, we are the most successful creatures on earth but I fear, this success will also be our downfall.”* That way, the major works in the exhibition represent the sheer number of people living on our planet. In terms of material and physical aspects, we are made up of biomass that constantly increases and therefore displaces other creatures out of their natural habitat, kills them off and destroys nature. But for Raphael, Suter, Director of Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G, this is not a reason to despair: *“We have the knowledge and ability to question our actions and need to make some radical changes. If art and our exhibition can provide food for thought in this respect, then this is an important objective for our cultural foundation.”*

Destructive machines and fragments of a vulnerable planet

Visitors’ first contact with Carlo Borer’s world is with his sculpture “Digger”, an eerie construction looking like a mixture between an alien and a mining machine. It symbolises the exploitation of nature by humans and seems to take on an existence of its own that its creator cannot control anymore. In a second exhibition room, an installation shows part of the moon landscape one-to-one but fragmented, based on data from NASA. For Borer, the moon represents a dead planet. In its shape shown here, it has disintegrated and serves science merely as a forensic research object whose destruction is examined with rational meticulousness like the debris of a plane wreckage. Both are united by the wish to understand retrospectively whether humans or technology have caused the disaster.

Demographic development as accessible statistics

At the heart of “Sleeping with the Gods” is a large-scale installation which occupies and takes over the whole back area of the exhibition space. The room transforms into three-dimensional, accessible statistics. In order to be able to read it, you have to imagine the height of the room as a time line from the year 1700 until today. The floor represents the time about 320 years ago. From there, various grass-covered cones of different heights taper steadily upwards until some of them fizzle out. In the middle, a mighty, highly polished cone made of stainless steel raises up but it is upside down like a static hurricane that gains more volume and power. It represents the rapid demographic development, the grass-covered finite cones the other species that are first decimated and finally eradicated during the time of the biggest human interference with nature. The different species get a symbolic commemorative plaque in neon writing. The writing is from the artists’ 91-year-old mother who neatly wrote the names down to be copied.

SLEEPING WITH THE GODS

5 May until 10 July 2022

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