

KICK UP A BREEZE

In contrast to the arts of painting and photography, sculptures do not only call for the viewer's sense of sight, they almost demand for a physical confrontation. Moreover, a sculpture faces its spectator with a task: he has to move around it, varying the distance and perspective, find it under different lighting conditions, perhaps even feel it, to discover all the facets that lie underneath. Sculptures require an action and demand physical response. They release processes of reception, that can be more intense but certainly differ from the perception of an artwork with the eyes only.

The moment I discovered steel for my artistic work, I realised the challenge the material entails. Among sculptors there is the widely held perception that steel - in contrast to other materials such as wood, plaster or stone - is mainly focussed on its everyday utility. It is perceived as too cold and static. However, I was inspired by the idea to transform the material's inherent static into a dynamic liveliness. I wanted to free the material from its roughness and turn it into something organic.

Sculptors are known for their need to do everything themselves. I certainly cannot object to this as all my works grow throughout the creation process. I find steel plates on the scrap yard, cut them into pieces and put every single segment into the forming forge. Piece by piece the figure comes together. Its precise dynamic and its exact spatial extent are unclear at the beginning of my work. Only during the process of welding on the segments I make concrete artistic decisions on present and absent body parts. I start with the torso or a head. The motion lines of each segment indicate a direction, a gesture, therefore the figure is alive at any point during its development.

That life within steel takes a great toll on the artist and involves struggle, too. Steel fights back. It demands strength and stamina and can only be forged in fire and under heavy hammering. Steel independently helps to shape the figure and can only be tamed with experience and patience. It is thus hardly surprising, that fragile and gentle figures can only be elicited from steel with great difficulty. Steel is determined to retrieve its hardness in the form shown.

At the same time, the accumulation of the steel plates establishes a state of suspense between construction and deconstruction, between creation and decay.

What keeps me constantly motivated, is the physical compassion during the vivification of the metal body. Factors such as texture, structure, surface and process create a dialogue between hands and head. Perhaps, it is that immediacy of such a communication, this subjective enhancing of experience, perhaps the long and conflictual formation process, that one can sense in the end. Out of this developing discourse between applied empirical knowledge and materialistic resistance, timeless sovereignty and peace emerge along with fascinating perceptions of space and time. During my work I experience them on my own, individually. The final sculpture conveys these perceptions to its spectator and becomes a collective experience.

This is the hour of the figure, that very moment, that envisions the before and after of a visually captured event. In terms of the original notion of object (objectum - something thrown over), a perceptive event evolves out of the figure, creating a new level of meaning, that, however, is not supposed to be a suggestion for a better world. My works do not instruct the spectator to feel morally disgusted. In fact, they should rather grasp the liveliness of the material, sense open volumes within space, conceive landscapes around the figure and be able to recognise the peripheral areas of a plastic as its basis.

There is a bodily relationship between humans and animals in the iconography of figures. In its tradition, boundaries between mankind and the animal kingdom are not existent. In allegories and metaphors, humans recognise themselves as animals along with their peculiarities, characteristics and archetypes. Both, human and animal, become one within the sculpture, offering a direct experience for the spectator. The figure is thus referring to our individual reminiscence and its shown character becomes something familiar.

Our brain uses the accumulated information to grasp its environment. Reality is a construct; therefore a piece of art must deceive. It creates a different, a new reality.