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Michael Sailstorfer

JOHANN KÖNIG

It has been stormy seas for the world's stock markets, and financial giants are tumbling from their pedestals, but meanwhile, a silver metal storage building on a snowy meadow is pulsating: The metal walls puff up until they look about to burst, then the building shrinks back to its original size. Michael Sailstorfer recorded this "breathing" building with a high-speed camera. Indeed, what looks like suspiration in the artist's film *Untitled (Lohma)* (all works 2008) is nothing but a loop showing the moment before the structure explodes. Sailstorfer had the edifice (which he also built) dynamited, but all he shows us of the blast is its slow-motion buildup, forward and in reverse in an endless loop. It's the perfect film to accompany the bursting of the housing bubble. Appropriately, Sailstorfer previously showed this piece last summer at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, in the heart of the German financial center.

For years, Sailstorfer has been recycling and transforming things: In earlier works, a building becomes a sofa (*Herterichstraße*, 2001), an airplane becomes a tree house (*D-IBRB*, 2001), a lantern becomes a shooting star (*Sternschnuppe* [Shooting Star], 2002). Now, in *Untitled (Junger Römer)* (Young Roman) a billboard from the former East Germany has become a minimalist neon work. In this case, the recycling isn't brutal but rather carefully balanced: The title refers not only to the Römerberg, the center of Frankfurt and home to the Schirn, but also to the song of the same name by Austrian pop musician Falco, who sings in it of a carefree youth in an endless night. The original sign, which advertised the East German Sternradio factory, is still mounted (though much decayed) near Alexanderplatz in Berlin. For a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, kids from Mitte would frequent the Sternradio nightclub. Sailstorfer combines the echo of disintegrating systems—dancing as the ship goes down—with sound and light waves to create an abstract installation.

In the show's catalogue, titled *Reaktor*, critic Jennifer Allen describes Sailstorfer's work as the "revenge of the goods." Instead of being thrown away, they can be reused even while being destroyed: They burn out and become stars. The street lamp that Sailstorfer launched into the Bavarian sky from the roof of an old Mercedes shattered on the ground, but a photograph preserves its brief existence as a "shooting star." Sailstorfer's career has seen a similarly rapid rise: He was still a student at the Akademie in Munich when he became famous for *Herterichstraße*, the house-*cum*-sofa. Soon he was showing his work at the Lenbachhaus and in Berlin, and he is now widely known in the German-speaking world. But subsequent works like *Dean & Marylou*, 2003, for which he joined two buses together, seemed stagnant, lacking the playfulness and lightness of his earlier work.

Michael Sailstorfer, *Raketenbaum* (Rocket Tree) (detail), 2008, diptych, Diasec on aluminum, each 78¾ x 59".

With *Lohma* and *Junger Römer*, Sailstorfer has found his groove again. In *Raketenbaum* (Rocket Tree), he has a plum tree somersault through the air, giving free rein to his impish, inquisitive side. And in *Kässbohrer-Museum*, he conserves parts of an old Kässbohrer-brand school bus that has been painted by children. Sailstorfer cut out these records of the children's memories with an angle grinder and mounted them. And this might be how art beats the stock market: Although the price of scrap metal is on the rise, this scrap bus isn't being melted down.

—Daniel Boese

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

COLOGNE

Dan Graham and Jeppe Hein

GALERIE JOHNEN + SCHÖTTLE

The American artist Dan Graham has always been a source of fascination to Jeppe Hein, who is more than thirty years his junior. But Hein became a real fan in 1998 when, still an art student, he curated an exhibition in Copenhagen that included Graham's unrealized 1997 design for the Liza Bruce boutique in London. The encounter with Graham and his seven glass sheets, which form a clouded two-way-mirror installation, remained a powerful influence. Now the artists have collaborated on a joint exhibition. Over the course of two years, they exchanged thoughts, designs, and sketches, sending faxes back and forth. The conversation had its ups and downs—"I am not enthusiastic about any of your last proposals," writes Graham in one of the faxes displayed as documentation.

An exhibition was not the only thing to come out of the collaboration. Graham also constructed a pavilion, which he installed in the middle of Cologne, in front of the Hotel Barceló. Titled *Water Play for Terrace*, 2008, it stands on a lawn next to a playground. On a wooden platform, into which two zinc basins filled with water have been set, three segments rise up like a folding screen, their wooden frames alternately surrounding perforated sheets or two-way-mirror glass. Elegant and transparent, playful and diffractive, this pavilion is a fitting response to the sobriety of the architecture of the multistory hotel as well as to the ludic playground.

Dan Graham, *Water Play for Terrace*, 2008, two-way mirror, Sipo mahogany, stainless steel, and larch tree, 7' 2⅝" x 22' 9⅝" x 10' 8¼". Installation view.

In the gallery, the individual works of the two artists continually meet or avoid each other. These sight lines and perspectives, the reflections and refractions, and the self-reflexivity of this installation make the exhibition worthwhile—unspectacular, as is always the case with Graham, but at the same time not simply winsome, as is sometimes the case with Hein. Graham's *Pyramid*, 1999, is a small model on a high white pedestal; made from two-way-mirror glass, it varies in its transparency according to the angle of the light or the blink of an eye. On the wall opposite, at eye level, Hein's *360° Illusion I*, 2007, is made of mirrors joined at right angles to one another. The structure revolves on its own axis: One could watch the changing reflections of the room and oneself for hours. Between the pyramid and the rotating mirrored object is Hein's *Field of Visions*, 2005, a hexagonal peep box standing on high stilts. If you look into one of the holes, you see nothing, only a bottomless void.

What unites the two artists is humor. You laugh upon finding Hein's *Double Exposure*, 2008, in the back room of the gallery—a pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses bent so that their mirrored lenses are at right angles to one another. Graham's wit comes into its own in his photographs, such as *Megumi with her cat, Tokyo, Japan*, 2003, a photo of a young

Japanese girl who clings stiffly to her pet, or *Self-Portrait in Penguin Exhibition, Antwerp Zoo*, 2002. In comparison to his objects, Graham's photographs are often wryly personal.

On view in the front room of the gallery, together with Graham's design for the Liza Bruce boutique, was Hein's neon text *Please...*, 2008, a bustle of white neon letters and their respective cables, which is not always easy to decode. Please do this or that, it enjoins; ENJOY RELAX STEAL DANCE TOUCH . . . But the word STEAL is crossed out, and so are SMOKE, TOUCH NEON, and others. Should one heed these requests? The decision is left to us. And this is precisely what continues to bind these two artists: The viewer's response brings their objects to life.

—*Noemi Smolik*

Translated from German by Emily Speers Mears.

HAMBURG

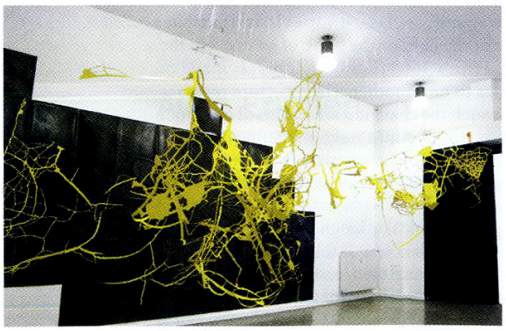
Ken'ichiro Taniguchi

MIKIKO SATO GALLERY

The conventional wisdom used to be that there was no spot on earth that hadn't already been mapped and surveyed. But in recent decades, artists have been showing us how much we've overlooked, inventing or postulating new criteria to help us locate our surroundings in fresh ways. Among these artists is Ken'ichiro Taniguchi, who since 2000 has been defining his art of the urban map using the Japanese concept of *becomi* (crack, indentation, or, figuratively, exhaustion). This fall, Taniguchi showed his recent work in Hamburg as the fourteenth installment of this ongoing project.

Delicately branching cracks and furrows that resemble river deltas are the forms that capture Taniguchi's interest. He uses transparent film to transfer their outlines to yellow plastic—or, sometimes, to other materials like stainless steel—creating an exact negative. He then transforms these raw materials into foldable sculptures by slicing through the casts, often at the thinnest possible points, and mounting hinges at each fold. And so every crack, every crevice, is transformed into a literally manifold sculpture that can be given many different configurations. Each sculpture is named for the location of the cracks that produced it, including addresses in Russia, the Netherlands, and Thailand. Taniguchi's largest "*becomi*" to date, *Brunnenstraße 10 #3, Berlin*, 2008, would have an unfolded length of more than thirty-five feet.

Taniguchi's way of transforming the most ordinary, inconspicuous things into noteworthy artifacts has reminded commentators of Leonardo's interest in finding chance landscapes or figures within the heterogeneous surfaces of stones and walls. Imaginative viewings of Taniguchi's variable sculptures allow one to picture things such as futuristic clockwork, delicate webbing, or animals. While photographs included in the show identify the original sites of the cracks, once these accidental forms have been removed from their original contexts and turned into sculptures, they lose any sense of local reference. The scars on the street or the fractures in the wall are given lives of their own. This conversion of negative to positive, of in-between space to autonomous space, characterizes Taniguchi's topography. Holes within places previously charted are made accessible; separated from their original, conventional maps, they assume the form of manipulable and contingent constructions.



Ken'ichiro Taniguchi, *Brunnenstraße 10 #3, Berlin*, 2008, plastic and hinges, 7' 5" x 16' 6" x 9' 6⅝". Installation view.

Inevitably, Taniguchi's sculptures recall other Japanese traditions: the art of folding paper in origami or, as one author has remarked, the ancient practice of not concealing the cracks in fine ceramics when repairing them, but instead using gold dust to highlight these precious marks of time. If Taniguchi recounts that when he began producing his folding sculptures, he was fascinated by the mechanism of a Swiss Army knife, his sculptures nevertheless remain strongly rooted in Japanese contexts. Mikiko Sato (who has been running her gallery since 2002, formerly as CAI Contemporary Art International, now under her own name) concentrates on this quieter variant of Far Eastern culture—more tea ceremony than manga, as the gallerist herself puts it: the work of artists like Taniguchi, whose oeuvres can be read as slowly unfurling meditations on space and time.

—*Wolf Jahn*

Translated from German by Oliver E. Dryfuss.

ZURICH

Arthur Zalewski and Eiko Grimberg

ARTREPCO

"The infinitely identical and the infinitely varied are extremes between which all man can do is split things apart and put them together again," Paul Valéry wrote in his *Cahiers* in 1918. In his view, *similarity* is what activates the intellectual free play between identity and difference. Arthur Zalewski and Eiko Grimberg, who have exhibited together before, notably at Amerika Gallery, Berlin, in 2006, share a comparably sensitive view of objects and their mutual affinities. The six works presented in this carefully calibrated show—two videos, a slide projection, photographs, and a poster, most of these executed in black and white—point emphatically to formal and functional similarities between objects, architecture, and linguistic elements, challenging viewers to develop swift and self-reflexive forms of apperception. Often the two artists juxtapose pictures in such a way as to suggest possible comparisons or narrative structures that the viewer then has a hand in creating.

Zalewski's video work *Katowice* (all works 2008), projected against a backdrop that hints at the architectural, is particularly striking. The silent, eight-minute, black-and-white film shows documentary exterior and interior views of the heavily frequented train station in Katowice, Poland, which was built in the 1970s by an architect who shares Zalewski's name. The choice of views seems arbitrary at first glance, but it turns out to provide a sort of catalogue of architectural forms and structures in both foreground and background that offer themselves to the viewer as variations on the theme of similitude: Steps, grillwork, guardrail supports, pillars, and surfaces devolve into increasingly abstract vertical and horizontal patterns. This dismantling of representation is completed in the second part of the film, *Shapes/Structures*, which shows, from various angles, close-ups of a monumental sculpture made of massive blocks of stone. The point of these perspectives and their combinations appears intentionally ambiguous; the viewer is constantly called upon to reassemble and deconstruct what he is seeing. The exhibition's title, "Today is the Tomorrow You Were Promised Yesterday," taken from a 1976 work by Conceptual artist Victor Burgin, functions as a metaphor