

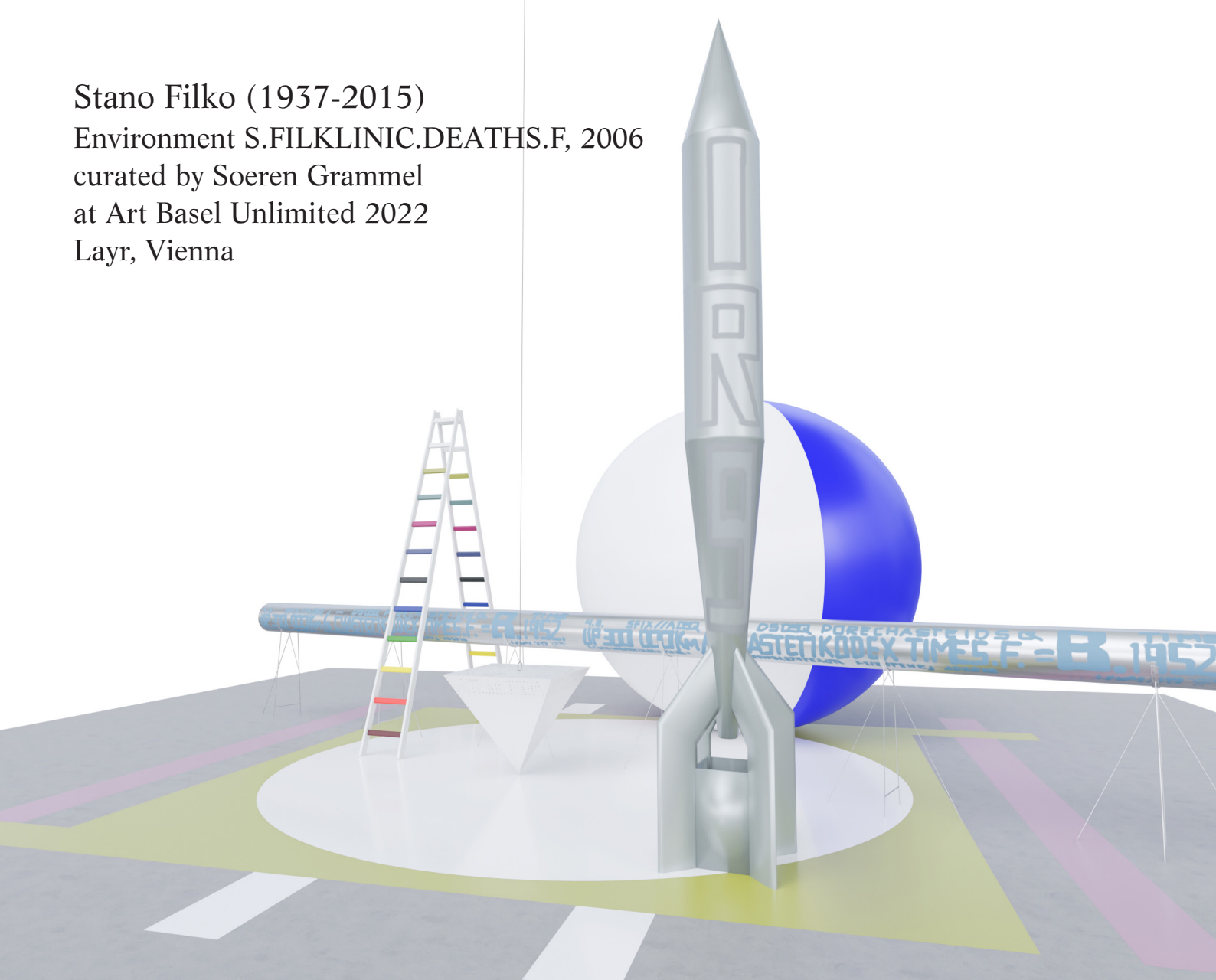
Stano Filko (1937-2015)

Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006

curated by Soeren Grammel

at Art Basel Unlimited 2022

Layr, Vienna



Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006, Inflatable balloon, metal tube, ladder, metal sheet, acrylic paint, and mixed media; 550 × 2000 × 800 cm (rendering)

Layr dedicates itself to the elaborate and challenging reconstruction of the outstanding, cosmologically inspired Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F by Slovakian artist Stano Filko (1937-2015). The complex work has been shown only once before in the milestone exhibition “Living Art; On the Edge of Europe”, in 2006 at the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, The Netherlands.

[Living art; on the edge of Europe Catalogue](#)

The environment consists of a giant silver gleaming tube inscribed with light gray paint, a tricolor balloon of 4 meters in diameter, a rocket almost 6 meters high, a coloured ladder, and a punch holed pyramid hanging upside down from the ceiling.

The elements hover like celestial bodies above a floor painting, whose nature is oscillating between guidance system and ontological symbolism.

The objects' colours, their textual and numerical references, and their positioning relating to one another reflect the complex system of Filko's individual cosmology.

The latter is an amalgam of the scientific and pseudo-scientific, philosophical, and aesthetic-practical spheres of the artist's activity, which are arranged within a twelve-part, self-assembled chakra system. Each sphere of this system is assigned its colour.

The dominant colors of silver, gold, and white in the environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F correspond to spheres 9, 10 and 11, which are dedicated to ontology and spiritual perception (quoting Husserl's phenomenology)–concepts, which in their cosmological dimension imagine a new form of human existence that is no longer dominated by mortality and the limited scale of dimensions in which humans are capable of perceiving and thinking.



Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006 (detail)



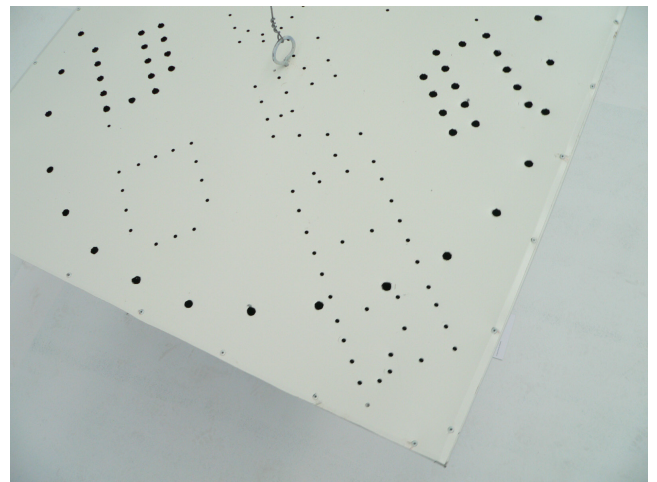
Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006 (detail)

Stano Filko is the key figure in Slovakian postconceptual and multi-, or rather anti-disciplinary art practice from the 1960s until today. From 1965, he began making so-called pneumatic sculptures, as well as designing utopian architectures. 1965, with the artists Zita Kostrovà and Alex Mlynàrcik, he co-authored the HAPPSOC Manifesto, taking place on the threshold between artistic agency and society.



Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006 (detail)

The white space represented the order of a metaphysical entity. The related manifesto calls for “pure art - emotion, in its nonphysicality, above past, present and future, the absolute. Pure emotion and pure art.” To a certain extent it transcends all existing spaces and symbolises a state prior to the creation of an artistic act, when everything is open and possible, where nothing has been predetermined. This text is a clear reaction towards various trends in contemporary art at that time: object art, environment, conceptualism and minimal art.



Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006 (detail)

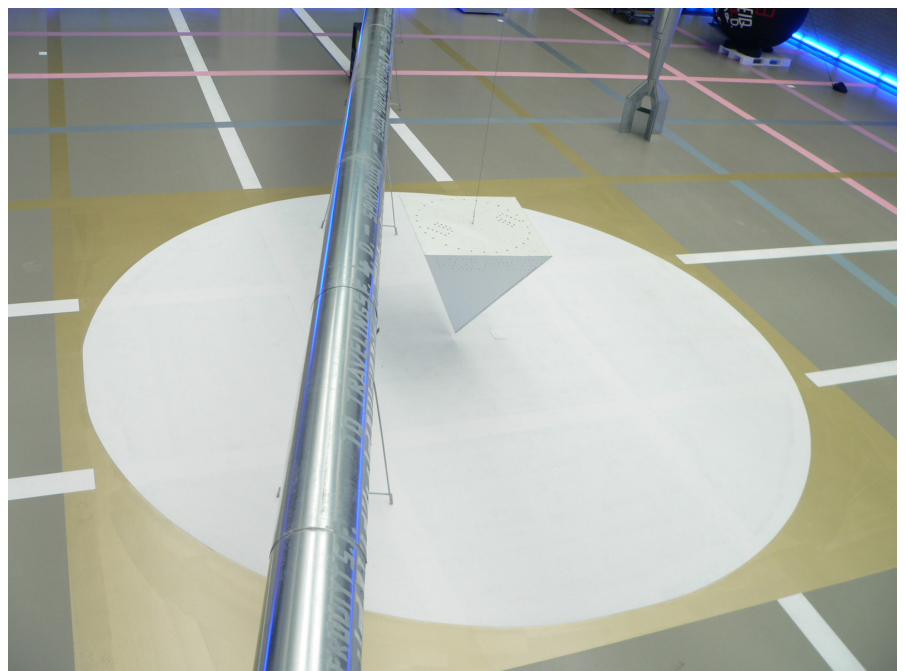
In the 2nd half of the 1970s, he started to build his cosmology on the three colors: 3. White – absolute spirituality (later White Ontology), 2. Blue – Cosmology, 1. Red – Biology, later called the three dimensions (3.4.5.D).



Installation view: Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006, in: ‚Living Art; On the Edge of Europe‘, at Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterloo, The Netherlands, 2006

In 1981, he emigrated to Germany in his Škoda 120, which he exhibited at documenta 7, Kassel in the installation *Liebe zur Ontologie* (ENG. *Love For Ontology*). A year later, he lived in New York and only returned to Bratislava in 1990 where he tirelessly worked in Bratislava until his death in 2015.

The 1980s in the US were not only boom years in economic terms, they also heralded a massive return to figurative painting (cf. *Transavantguardia/Neue Wilde*) and for Filko too, whose several years of absence resulted in a return to painting - in its expressive and gestural forms. In this period he completed large paintings of words and figures (abstract and semi-figurative) as well as installations that drew on issues raging in New York in the 1980s, with subject matter such as love and AIDS.



Installation view: Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006, in: ‚Living Art; On the Edge of Europe‘, at Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterloo, The Netherlands, 2006



Having experienced the failure of all institutions during his lifetime, Filko became an institution himself, which materialized in his studio on Snežienkova Street in Bratislava from 1990 onwards. In his holistic conceptual worldview, he kept using inspiration from art, philosophy, visual culture, science and technology as well as various mythologies. His approach was combining an obsessive creativity with a unique imagination and ability to deliver abstract thoughts.

Installation view: Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006, in: 'Living Art; On the Edge of Europe', at Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterloo, The Netherlands, 2006

Filko conceptually worked with time, repeatedly coming back to older pieces, re-working them, layering them, over-writing and multi-dating them. The motif of self-renovation, incarnation and reincarnation was manifested, especially in the changes to his name and identity, even imagining clones of himself: FILKO (1937-77) – FYLKO (1978-87) – PHYLKO (1988-97) – PHYS (1998-2037).

Over the years, countless works accumulate here, but they all find their place in Filko's ever-growing, colour-coded cosmology. Each room is dedicated to a different world within System SF, and when visiting the studio, one passes through them like through different subjective states of perception: from the physical, to the socio-political, through the ego and the cosmos to the sphere of transcendental, pure being.



Installation view: Stano Filko, Environment S.FILKLINIC.DEATHS.F, 2006, in: 'Living Art; On the Edge of Europe', at Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterloo, The Netherlands, 2006

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The works of Stano Filko (*1937 Velka Hradna, †2015 in Bratislava) have been shown in major institutions including the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava (SK), Kunstmuseum Basel (CH), Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz (AT), Kunsthalle Bratislava (SK), Zacheta - National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (PL), National Museum, Krakow (PL), Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples (IT), ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe (DE), Ludwig Múzeum, Budapest (HU), Garage Project Space, Moscow (RU), The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (NY), P. S.1, New York (NY), MACBA, Barcelona (ES), Centre Pompidou, Paris (FR), mumok, Vienna (AT), Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo (NL), státna galléria (State Gallery), Banská Bystrica (SK), Brooklyn Museum, New York (NY), Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (FR), Moravská galerie, Brno (CZ), FAIT Gallery, Brno (CZ) and Halle für Kunst Steiermark, Graz (AT). His work has also received international attention at the 11th Biennale de Lyon, Prague Biennale 3, 51st Biennale di Venezia, Documenta 7 in Kassel and EXPO in Osaka.

Public collections

The Museum of Modern Art, New York (NY)
Guggenheim Collection, New York (NY)
Tate Modern London (UK)
Kunstmuseum Basel (CH)
Slovak National Gallery (SK)
Folkwang Museum (DE)
Kröller-Muller Museum (NL)
Generali Foundation (AT)
Kontakt. Art Collection (AT)
Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (LIE)
National Gallery Prague (CZ)
Mumok, Vienna (AT)
V-A-C Foundation, Moscow (RU)

Publications

Stano Filko, Stano Filko. 1965/69, Bratislava/SK: A -PRESS, 1970
Patricia Grzonka, Stano Filko, Prague/CZ: Arbor Vitae, 2005
Nina Vrbanová, Stano Filko - Olkif OnatS. Transzscendenteaq 5.D. (4.3.), Bratislava/SK: Centre of Visual Art Brastislava - Old Town, 2013
Lucia Gregorová Stach, Aurel Hrabušicky , Stano Filko: Poetry on Space – Cosmos, Bratislava/SK: Slovak National Gallery, 2016
Lucia Gregorová Stach, Stano Filko. Reality of Cosmos, London/UK: Birch Print, 2017
Lucia Gregorová Stach, Aurel Hrabušicky, Stano Filko 1., Bratislava/SK: Slovak National Gallery, 2018
Kathrin Rhomberg (ed), White Space In White Space / Biely Priestor V Bielom Priestore, Vienna/AT: Schlebrügge.Editor, 2021

