

The conversation between Barbara Buchmaier and Suse Weber took place in Berlin in April 2017. Barbara Buchmaier is an performer with Suse Weber's Studio//Bühne (abbreviated version).

Text/Template/Activation – Black/Red/White

Barbara Buchmaier:

Your exhibition at the Kienzle Art Foundation is entitled Text/Template/Activation. This concept has been part of your artistic approach since 2012. You live and work in your studio which is located in Berlin-Wedding. There, you have repeatedly met with artists and producers of texts from your own surroundings to join you in a setting you prepared to discuss your own texts. They deal, for instance, with the triangular relationship of artistic work, artist, and public ...

Suse Weber

For quite some time now, I have addressed the triangular relationship of artistic work, artist, and public, especially since I began using the term Emblematic Sculpture. The experience I gained from my work Formula:Marionette – wherein I have been publicly active since 2010 – made me realize that this triangular relationship can get shifted into a type of rotation. In Formula:Marionette, the talking “about” the moment of the text production can be modified. The sculpture's physiognomy, its description or review by authors in the presence of the sculpture, lets the presenter assume a new relationship with regards to it – leading to completely different observations and texts. Whereas the sculpture turns into a template, it also gets reactivated again. This and other questions keep me busy. I began with a series of exercises I practiced with other artists.

BB: For the Kienzle Art Foundation setting you selected thematic figures that were already included as individual parts in your preceding Emblematic Sculptures. They are the „Tribune“, the „Time-Piece“, the „Individual“, and the „Template for Movement“. What is striking is that they all follow a set color combination: Black-red-white.

SW: After looking at the Kienzle Art Foundation space in Berlin, colors were wandering around my head like ghosts and I knew before too long that selecting them would be an important decision criterion. I opted for black-red-white because I have always been using the colors according to their symbolism – they are a kind of extension of the Berlin flag – and I intended to place especially this version of Text/Template/Activation in an emblematic space against the white cube. I selected the sculptures according to criteria pertaining to their ability to change in space, their own variance – including the movements they specify for the viewer – and how they are capable to exaggerate most effectively the mechanisms and conventions of activity within an exhibition context.

BB: Let us get back to the color combinations you chose for a moment. This is historically charged, if I may say so ... Which role do these colors play? And what or rather whom do you assign them to?

SW: The color combination turns into a color scheme. Hence black appears in different shapes and materials but the proportions differ as well. Thus, we encounter black as a bar, a triangle, and a column, striped and chequered. Each diffraction of black prepares associations. Something similar happens with red. White jumps between the object and the exhibition space. There is a little moment of overlap, wherein a reflection is fixed to the movement template.

BB: Concerning your preparatory interests: Could you address the “mechanisms” and “conventions” you have already mentioned vis-à-vis the exhibition context?

SW: To enter, to walk, and to sit in conjunction with an Emblematic Sculpture. These three movements constrict and extend the sculpture, they reverse it. Three movements that occur in an inflected color combination.

BB: Hence a sculpture-ensemble-choreography? An arrangement conceived for an exhibition space that constructs power relations and criticizes ritualized processes?

SW: This is a hybrid format. The Emblematic Sculpture*. In a way, my operation re-conceptualizes sculpture.

***Emblematic Sculpture** is made up of symbolic and formalized dimensions as well as social dysfunctions; mechanisms and conventions of an action, concrete material and its formative processes, historic meanings of materials. The transcription into acoustic components as well as translations into figures, individual objects, and the staging of materials are subject to a rotary process and exist as equal hybrids within the work corpus. **Emblematic Sculpture** is a multi-layered compositional procedure. Kin to the form symbol and a movement made up of image-immanent procedures, it consists of combinatory test series and iconic hybrids. Opting for materials in formally clearly identifiable scenarios leads to formally aesthetic perimeters of content that not only cite the consulted context. Instead, the context itself assumes a constitutive form within the artwork. **Emblematic Sculpture** stages abutments that make visible the most commonplace types of society and socialization in an aesthetic hyperbole. Thanks to integrating activation processes, **Emblematic Sculpture** exists prior to and after a movement, and in immobility. It is visually ambiguous. **Emblematic Sculpture** enables the exploration of the triangular relationship of viewer – work – artist, accelerating the shifting of their roles. **Emblematic Sculpture** increases the setting of conventional publication formats by expanding the process of their creation and the duration of their activation into a sphere of pre-publication and post-existence. The prepublication is dependent upon the artist's proper movement. The linear method lines up facts, truths, caricatures of statements, and self-portrayals of the transmitters, among other things. The dynamic method operates with the principle of a present without a beginning. Cornerstones are constructed around which a process is built up. The post-existence phase continues the principle of **Emblematic Sculpture** by preparing choreographed assembly sketches in such a way that the proper motion of the next person is ensured. Or else, building blocks of the Emblematic Sculpture are recycled into the ensemble, thereby experiencing a reuse in a future work.