

**Felix Kiessling***Echtzeit*

Mar 3, 2023 - Apr 8, 2023

Opening: Mar 3, 6-9pm

Dizziness is a way of orienting oneself in the world, recognising it while teetering towards the limits of one's bodily perception. In dizziness, one transcends the linearity of space, proportions disappear, and an intoxicating dissolution of the self sets in. What is happening here, now, with me, us, and the world?

In the exhibition *Echtzeit* (Real-Time), Felix Kiessling creates a space in which things do not make complete sense – a space that we do not understand, that exceeds our imagination. Only in loss of control, is there the possibility to access a more objective reality.

In the moment of dizziness, the apocalyptic excesses of urbanised consumerism reveal themselves. Capitalist rationalisation measures, assesses, calculates and controls the exploitation of nature and resources, ways of relating and sensory experiences. The artificial dichotomy between nature and culture, the supposed superiority of society over the forces of nature, time and space disintegrates in the moment of anarchic rapture. We recognise the random, unpredictable, loss, the insignificance of being in the world. Kiessling playfully experiments with human perception by connecting artefacts and relics of urbanised reality to the elemental powers of nature. The overall structure of the artist's works questions the connectedness of elements and interrelationships in the world. In dimness, the hierarchies between object and viewer disappear; behind the deconstruction of the known, the connected elements of reality come to light.

In his phenomenological works, Kiessling translates into kinetic sculptures the physical and cosmological powers that we are unable to experience and yet are, nevertheless, an intrinsic condition of life. Moving elements provide an especially visual or acoustic allure. *Seismisches Schlagzeug* (Seismic Drums) drums real-time seismic data onto the wall with drumsticks carved from oak branches. Driven by a multiphase motor and linked to a seismic map of the Earth's interior, the drumsticks reproduce the world's rhythm. Kiessling restores nature, exploited by our consumer society, back to its original form by merging the humanly created with the natural pattern.

A self-playing contrabass becomes an echo box of the world in *Schumann KB*. In real time, the strings murmur and fine-tune the Schumann low frequency as if played by a ghostly hand. The phenomenon refers to the electromagnetic wave of the Earth's surface that lies beyond the spectrum of human perception. Kiessling translates the sounds into our auditory frequency and makes them accessible to our imaginative power in real time. Thus, we come into contact with the physical laws that determine our existence. The murmuring is us; we hear ourselves.

The headlights of a motorbike lying on the ground flicker, the glinting lights seem broken, and the quiet turning of a wheel conveys the impression of an abrupt departure in the face of a catastrophe. The reverberations are still audible. *Schmetterling (Kraftrad)* (Butterfly (Motorbike)) translates the electrostatic tension of global lightning strikes in real-time: each time lightning hits the earth somewhere in the world, the lights flicker. The absence of subjects in these three works drives the objects' functionality into the absurd – a dystopian world of things inextricably combined with natural phenomena and natural laws. As a sequence, the three works push through the layers of Earth to the surface and beyond, simultaneously tracing the civilising arc of technical advancement and the estrangement of civilisation and nature.

The whispering, flickering and knocking of the world fades, and a bar appears in the darkness. We have arrived at the objectivity of the everyday sphere, yet the bar is abandoned. Again, there is the feeling of an abrupt departure, a post-apocalyptic witnessing without knowing or being able to recognise what has happened in this place. We understand, but in fact we cannot. A social moment without sociality. The bar invites the viewers in, to approach and come momentarily into contact.

Kiessling makes the actual substance of the world visible through defamiliarisation, the deformation of social and physical molecules. In *Die Liebenden* (The Lovers), two schnapps bottles deformed by heat interact; their contact is a snapshot of haphazardness. Their embrace is surprisingly tender; they support each other in their dizziness. The drinkers become the drunks, and we recognise ourselves in the urban remnants. The overall structure of the exhibition is augmented by a sound work of intermittent, incoherent words and fragments. They are reminiscent of station announcements and evoke associations of an abandoned suburban train station. Extended pauses fragment the acoustic connection – where are we? How did we get here?

Felix Kiessling creates real-time encounters with a fleeting present that belongs to the past in the next moment. The alienation between urbanity and natural forces and the rationality of consumption dissipate for a moment in his works. The spatial and temporal dimensions of the installation exceed our imagination, momentarily causing us to lose our cognitive balance. The artist has also committed himself to losing control. A gut feeling remains, but the solution is open.

Text by Almut Poppinga