

With his artworks Matt Mullican aims at understand the order of the world. The starting point of his artistic concept is the examination of the relationships between reality and how it is perceived. In his objective to determine the meaning of things Matt Mullican relies on the encyclopaedic method; using it he is able to categorize what he sees and finds.

His artistic activities concentrate on two areas: On the one hand there are the artworks which include a variety of display formats, such as drawings, banners, sculptures, videos, photography, installations and graphic works; on the other there are the performance projects in which Matt Mullican usually employs the consciousness-expanding technique of hypnosis.

Form, reality, perception

With the more visual part of his *œuvre* Matt Mullican creates his personal "model of acosmology," the basis of which is a cartographic structure consisting of a colour and sign system. In this system green represents the subject; blue our daily world, which is full of countless images of certain objects; yellow stands for things that are detached from the individual object, for abstract conceptions or ideas per se; black and white represent language and red the level of subjectivity. Matt Mullican combines this colour symbolism with a system of found or created pictograms which offers - in addition to symbols for ordinary things - symbols for Heaven, God, Before Birth, Life, Fate, Demon and Angel, Death and Hell. In so doing Matt Mullican - like an encyclopaedist - lives the illusion that literally every human state and activity can be integrated into and represented in his model.

The nature of this undertaking makes it impossible for Matt Mullican to conclude his attempt to explain the world. He nonetheless persists in his attempt and continues to pursue his goal. His visual *œuvre* can, therefore, be regarded as a utopia of eternity, where the mysteries of human life could be solved, the universe could be totally comprehensible and where humans could vanquish death thanks to their all encompassing knowledge.

Hypnosis, trance, performance

Matt Mullican executes performances under hypnosis. Before undergoing hypnosis, he speaks with his hypnotist about what he wishes or should do under hypnosis - for instance having breakfast, sing, read the paper, draw or paint the wall - and then does these things following the hypnotist's directives.

Hypnosis is described as an altered state of consciousness that differs significantly from 'normal' daytime consciousness. Usually daytime consciousness censors many unconscious capacities, thereby making them inaccessible. In the trance of hypnosis it is possible to have contact with these normally dismissed elements. Matt Mullican claims that he achieves a deeper understanding of self through hypnosis. He leaves in limbo, however, the exact nature of this gradual progression. About his hypnosis-alter ego he speaks with reserve. He literally says: "that person", "mentally disturbed", "Pinocchio", "he wants to live so badly", "he doesn't exist." The integration and the acceptance of the hidden personality elements seems a long way from being complete.

The drawings he creates under hypnosis are characterized by spontaneous gestures. They are in part representational, in part abstract, and consist of few lines; freely drawn curves, loops and almost calligraphic characters are dominant. In this manner, in which round letters are connected seamlessly, Matt Mullican draws menus, numerical series, charts and lyrics.

Selection of works

Works of fundamental significance for Mullican's development since the 1970s have been selected for the exhibition, including

- Key works such as 'Untitled (Doll and Dead Man)', 'Birth to Death List' and 'Sleeping Child', all from 1973;
- Pictograms and banners;- A black-and-white version of the large-scale Dallas Project;
- Found objects, such as pantograph and generator;
- The Mullican Posters with the basic terms Heaven, God, Before Birth, Life, Fate, Demon and Angel, Death and Hell as the important components of cosmology (Untitled [Mullican Posters], 1984);
- Drawings of a human figure executing various activities ñ cutting his forearm off, drinking a glass of water or thinking (Untitled [Fictional Reality, Physical Body], 1974-75);
- Drawings of the stick figure, Glen, in which the encyclopaedic compilation of activities is complemented by internal states, such as "feeling socially inferior", "meditating" or "being curious" (Untitled [Stick Figure], 1974);

- Found comic book images, which have been removed from their original context and all of which depict a dead figure, thereby picking up on one of the basic themes of cosmology (Untitled [Dead Comic Book Characters], 1974);
- Additional work series that focus on the theme of mortality (such as Untitled [Xeroxes of Death, Heaven, and Hell], 1974);
- An installation generated out of an encounter with his hypnosis-alter ego (Learning from that Person's Work, 2005);
- 449 magnesium plates with images of an encyclopaedia from Edinburgh (Untitled [New Edinburgh Encyclopedia], 1991);
- The MIT computer project and accompanying light boxes (from 1989).

A large number of boxes with archaeological finds are integrated in the presentation. This material, in part not yet processed, comes from the depot in the State Archaeological Collection, situated adjacent to Haus der Kunst.

Matt Mullican is planning to embellish Haus der Kunst's facade with a colour tunnel that is made of monochromatic banners, and permeable to light and air. The colour palette is typical: green, blue, yellow, black and red. A banner is to hang between each pair of columns, bathing the section of the traverse behind it in the according colour.

Matt Mullican will conduct a performance under hypnosis in Haus der Kunst (Sunday, July 10, 2011 at 7 pm).

After the exhibition opens a companion book will be published by DuMont and will include images of the exhibition in addition to interviews conducted by Koen Brams and Dirk Pultau with the artist

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