Resonating Spaces: Oleg Yushko's Acoustic Intervention at Witten/Herdecke

by Renate Buschmann

In 2023, Witten/Herdecke University launched a new artist-in-residence programme, inviting artist Oleg Yushko for an extended stay. This innovative initiative aims to encourage artists to become involved in academic research and teaching and, conversely, scientists to incorporate artistic practice in their future research.

During his residency, Yushko was intrigued by an unusual sound emanating from a slide near the university. In his imagination, the slide became an oversized resonating body reminiscent of the alpine musical instrument alphorn. Inspired, Yushko conceived an ambitious project: to transmit the university orchestra's end-of-semester concert through the giant tube, turning the playground into a unique acoustic space. For those who missed the June 2024 performance, Yushko created a small-scale model of the slide using digital measurements and 3D printing, complete with sound. This model was displayed for public viewing. Like several of his earlier works, the "Wittenhorn" performance was characterised by the use of state-of-the-art media technology and the endeavour to create an artistic intervention in a public space. Should we take Yushko's work as an opportunity to reflect on the university's self-image and public impact?

Oleg Yushko, born in Belarus, lives and works in Düsseldorf.
For more information on his work, visit → olegyushko.com

The artist-in-residence programme "Open Studio—more than Close Study" is run by the Chair of Digital Arts and Culture Communication and funded by the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung.

Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung

TAKE OVER

It is becoming easier to create illusions than to recognise them as such...

An Artist Takeover by Roland Schappert

by Renate Buschmann

"IN FREEDOM ONE THINKS (FREEDOM) DIFFERENTLY." This is the translation of the inscription of the work by the artist Roland Schappert, who has been working for years with typographical images that challenge the juxtaposition of visuals and text and break with what we take for granted when we see and read. Schappert's art intricately weaves letters into complex ciphers, demanding a detective-like effort to decipher their meaning. The non-linear, cryptic writing emphasises the ambiguity as to how the text content is to be created. The powerful word "FREEDOM", which can be identified in the centre of the image, can only be superficially applied to the principle of reading, as it primarily triggers a reflection on what freedom—in individual and socio-political terms—means for each and every one of us through the variants of the subsequent text.

Writing within pictures introduces risk; it reduces an image's inherent ambiguity as written words stipulate a specific interpretation. It is tempting to interpret the image according to the words. If you have the words in your head, your approach to perceiving the image is predetermined, and your interpretation of the content is no longer unbiased. In advertising, the guided perception through the synthesis of image and text is intended; in art, on the other hand, the complexity of interpretation is a value in itself.

Amidst today's technological upheavals, where people increasingly outsource the production and circulation of images and texts to AI systems trained for efficiency and adherence to standards, the question inevitably arises as to whether this will result in homogenisation. At the same time, AI systems surprise us with results that are rich in variation and could not have been predicted. How would a chatbot decode this text? Will AI be able to see through the signs in the intermediate area of image and text and recognise the ambivalence of the statement? How will AI categorise and evaluate this image, and which prompts will establish a connection to the content?

When, in a further step, Roland Schappert virtually carves the statement in stone, so to speak, and erects a monument to it in artificial mountain landscapes, the plaque appears as both admonishing and obsolete. The illusion of vastness and freedom finds its perfect, albeit artificial, counterpart in the romanticised, deserted landscape, while the plaque, with its intended impenetrability, appears like a relic. It is becoming easier to create illusions than to recognise them as such.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dr Roland Schappert, a Cologne-based freelance artist, musician, and author, blends analogue and digital media to conceive a unique visualisation of writing that promotes a diversity of dialogue. As an author, he regularly publishes hybrid text forms, poetry and essays in the journal "Kunstforum International", among others. Musically, Schappert pursues an organic digitality oscillating between melos, sound and rhythm.

From 2007 to 2010, he was a visiting professor for painting at the Braunschweig University of Art. He has since continued to teach and engage in numerous projects addressing AI, digital transformation, and socio-political issues in art. His most recent publications are: Coronasehnsucht (DCV Contemporary, Berlin 2021), AKTUALITÄTSJETZT, 14 dialogues with Wolfgang Ullrich about typefaces by Roland Schappert (DCV Contemporary, Berlin 2022), the artist book WAITING FOR NOTHING (Salon Verlag & Edition, Cologne 2022), and the LPs ROUTE 1 and ROUTE 2 (R-ecords.com, Distro at a-musik.com).

For more information, visit → roland-schappert.com

Page 94-95: IN FREIHEIT DENKT MAN (FREIHEIT) ANDERS, 2020, digital printing on aluminium, 102,9 x 183 cm, © R. Schappert and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024

Page 96-97: IN FREIHEIT DENKT MAN (FREIHEIT) ANDERS, 2017, Project of a concrete relief, picture montages based on designs by Roland Schappert: Sebastian Krauss, Nuromedia GmbH, © R. Schappert and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024

IN FRA CC ENK
MAN FREACHEt ADERs