

Space and Time Loops

Various reflections on the sculptural Space-Video Installations of Karina Nimmerfall

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I. Immanuel Kant, the philosopher from Königsberg knew in 1781 already «that two pure forms of sensual contemplation existed as the principle of cognition a priori, namely Space and Time.»

II. In her artistic work, Karina Nimmerfall juxtaposes real sites (the rooms of the installation designed especially for an exhibition space) with those spaces represented by intelligent «new media» more precisely: The artist digitally edits and collages images of spaces that are then projected as animated computer loops into the built rooms with the help of video technology. This way, several opposites meet in these accessible installations: for example, matter and light, statics and movement, the concrete «being» and the visual «image» absence and abundance.

III. With metaphysical sensibility, the cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer wrote in his philosophical treatise "Der Detektiv-Roman" (the detective novel), 1925: «Consequently and of its own accord, the human 'inbetween state [Zwischenstand] also demands that all life in the existential community plays out in two realms: in the realm in which the law reigns, and the realm in which the law is conditionally recognized.» But Siegfried Kracauer knew about «spheres» [Sphärenorte] as well, those in which those two moments could merge. Which does not only concern the so-called «houses of god» [Kirchenorte], but for example also the hotel lobby.

IV. «Space is in the smallest hut.» [«Raum ist in der kleinsten Hütte..» German proverb.]

V. But it is not that Karina Nimmerfall's constructed spaces, as described by me above, enter a dialectic game, from which a third element would arise. Because this form of dialectics require that an in-between and differences exist, in whose tension field, following the collision of thesis and antithesis, a new quality of synthesis eventually arises. In contrast, Karina Nimmerfall's pieces are testimony to a sensational perception of space that is mainly defined by the non-existence of an in-between or an outside. Instead the «real» and the «simulated» spaces merge into each other almost seamlessly, and a fundamental difference between the two can no longer be determined.

VI. «Is there anybody out there?» [Pink Floyd]. The later response of the rock-n-roll legends: «is there anybody in there?»

VII. It is precisely this artistic realization of the «outside-less» being that, in my analysis, defines the intelligent force of Karina Nimmerfalls' installations. It is a force that arises from the parallel structure of her spatial works and the actual "extra-artistic reality". In their legendary 2000 (anti)globalization primer «Empire», didn't Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri already write that political action is «connected to a new world, a world that no longer knows an outside». In it, everybody is always positioned right in the middle, and alternative action continuously has to work itself off the «mistaken whole». Niches, for example, no longer exist.

VIII. It is obvious that the content of this preposition of a non-existing outside can in many respects be justified - for example with the power of the Global Player and with the communications technology of the internet and cellular phones – as it is successfully done by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in «Empire». Karina Nimmerfall choses an explanation that is nourished by the leadership potential of the global cultural and entertainment industry: The artist writes: «I use Hollywood's picture economy in my installations and video films to create spatially oriented images.» And with the help of this economy in picture production, pars-pro-toto in her 2002 video «Paradise Road», she formulates longings and desires that follow the rules of Hollywood, while simultaneous the reflection of these spatial sensations effortlessly transcends the rule of Hollywood's «dream factory». And exactly at this moment in the process lies a moment of freedom in the middle of the inside.