

Exhibitions

An extraordinary general piece of art equipped with a magical- surreal inner life, which within the scope of the Upper Austrian Regional Exhibition 2010 was erected.

Astronomical knowledge implemented with artistic intellect and technical equipment

The "Kometor": A multimedia History of Creation

Billa and Manfred Hebenstreit's walkable sculpture in Peuerbach

View into the star dome of the "Kometor": the mirrors on the floor and on the flanking walls result in a fascinating room-kaleidoscope

© Manfred Hebenstreit

Works of art are often then most impressive when they communicate haptic experiences. A sensitive enhancement of the artistic impression is therefore possible, when art of works reach up to a size, which clearly exceed the own proportion, respectively put across a completely different perspective. That is when art of works can be both, looked at and experienced from the outside as well as from the inside – the "Kometor" is such a work of art.

The name "Kometor" is composed from the words "Komet" (comet) and "Tor" (door), also the emblem of the city of Peuerbach shows a wide open door with a view into the sky. The town itself is known as "City of the Stars". Therefore an ideal frame of reference was given for the artist couple Manfred and Billa Hebenstreit for this place and for the work of Georg von Peuerbach.

The "Kometor" is a pentagon-body, also named Dodekaeder. In the ancient world this form was considered the embodiment of the universe and with the rediscovery of the ancient knowledge in the Renaissance also artists like Leonardo Da Vinci or Albrecht Dürer seized the petagonal forms and even from Johannes Kepler is known, that he was fascinated by the "Platonic solids" which were said to have special qualities. The inclined plane where the sculpture is seated is an allusion to the "obliquity of the ecliptic".

And also the 36 m high needle, which points like a forefinger against the sky and to the North, is a reminiscence to Peuerbach's studies of the deviation of the compass needle and absolutely intended, because the artists of the Renaissance were "jacks of all trades", who worked in different fields at the same time. Analog to that the celestial body is conceptualized as artistic synthesis.

Inspired from the most famous son of the city, the astronomer and mathematician Georg von Peuerbach (1423 – 1461) the artist couple conceived and constructed the sculpture.

Through a tunnel one reaches the inside of the 20 m high and walkable pentagon-body, passes the floating crystal and mounts to the two levels of experience "the water world" and the "star dome". There Nasa photographs melt with picture material from wells, lakes and oceans at micro and macro levels with the expressive transparencies of the painter Manfred Hebenstreit.

The first level is exclusively dedicated to water: volcanos, comets and water appear as a panorama of transparent image protections moving across the sloped wall areas. Everything is in a permanent movement, the murmuring of a real waterfall and specially for that purpose composed sounds intensify the atmosphere. Mysteriously the blue shades of the water world shine. Every detail is designed by both of the artists: the structures and colors of the walls, the four meter high glass surface of the waterfall, the covering of the ceiling with the water patterns and the big triangular transparency.

The artist brought along a vast number of pictures from former diving courses, using individual motives out of this fund for his glass transparencies, serving as basis for the water films.

Those who want to experience the at least 8 m high star dome, should be prepared to completely devote themselves to the influence of the room: mirrors cover the whole floor and parts of the walls. By this complex arrangement, star glass paintings seem to coincide with photographs from the universe and therefore, reflected by this enormous kaleidoscope, visitors become part of it and are taken away into an embracing space of stars, sounds, light and colors. The room itself becomes unlimited. A world of sound patterns and large sized projections make the dome to an experience for the senses. Particularly the mirrored floor there will probably undergo a certain fading not least because of the large number of visitors, which the artist however has taken into account, so that in the course of time the room gets its specific "signatures". So the mirrored surfaces reveal "a piece of the past" next to up-to-date reflections.

Linked with the star dome there are various tailor made masterpieces, too. The transparency "Cosmic Flash" is such integrated in the world of mirrors that almost automatically one is repeatedly dragged in into the scene in order to be able to plunge into a world of imagination. And the "star-gate", a pentagonal back-lit wall-covering with an edge length of 4,5 meter can already be seen in the mirror when entering the room, as well as the five-piece object on the ceiling, made of oval aluminum plates.

These forms refer to the elliptic orbit of the celestial bodies and – seen from all angles- appear multiplied in the mirrors.

Picture above:

The star dome of the "Kometor" – The individual enters a unique atmosphere

© Manfred Hebenstreit

Picture below:

Manfred Hebenstreit; glass transparency from the series "Kuranda, Australian Water Images" 2010; 80 x 100 cm, mixed media on acrylic glass

© Manfred Hebenstreit

Manfred Hebenstreit

is an international acting painter and artist with exhibitions around the globe. His last big retrospective took place in the State Russian Museum St. Petersburg and was curated by the Museum Ludwig in Aachen. The artist uses different kinds of basic material for his paintings like glass, paper, canvas, wood, metal, glass and acrylic plates.

Since 25 years the works of Manfred Hebenstreit are purchased by collectors and public institutions at the international art market and are acknowledged by awards and grants for the artist.

Born in 1957 in Altheim/Upper Austria, the artist on detours – an education as precision engineer, a two-year's journey through Asia and Australia - achieved his goal of studying painting and graphic at the University of Artistic and Industrial Design in Linz. His painting and drawing stands in the tradition of an abstract, expressionistic art movement.