

Hilar Stadler in <Inverse Probability>, published by Susann Wintsch, Kunsthalle Palazzo, 2001

### About Edith Flückiger's work

Edith Flückiger's projections and monitor installations are always structured in a simple yet multi-faceted way. The pivotal elements in her work are moments of perception and of personal or common memory. At the same time, Edith Flückiger avoids the illusionary, which is being celebrated so much as the decisive element of perceived reality in many contemporary works. All her work is a tale of her trust in what can be experienced with our senses. Through our perception, we gain access to the medium and the fundament of her work.

For example, „gedankenverloren 1“ („lost in thought 1“) 1999, a three-dimensional installation in the centre of the room, is a simple composition at first glance. It shows a boy enjoying a ride on a chair-o-plane. He is flying through the air on his little seat. The camera follows him round, blurring the world around him. The boy is in a floating state, a state of complete happiness. We all know this kind of feeling. So this installation, just like all of Flückiger's other work, has a fascination about it that is hard to resist. Calling on our wealth of experience or our memories may help when immersing ourselves in this piece. The pull of the movement reminds us of our need to put time and place into perspective, to take off, and of the feeling of weightlessness. Playing with gravitational forces is also a metaphor for our searching for a place in the world. Edith Flückiger picks up an element that she already put into practice in a multi-sequence composition called „und vergesse an guten Tagen, dass wir kopfüber ins Leere hängen“ („and on a good day i forget that we are actually hanging upside down in space“), 1996.

The works described above reflect our place and belonging in the cosmos. Flückiger's raw material is the existing, the available. She will draw her ideas from what is perceptible, and for her work seek out moments that tell a story about our situation and our states and emotions. So, the world of Edith Flückiger's works can be experienced with our senses. Through our perception, we are connected and rooted with this world. The trust gained from this forms the basis of Edith's art. At the same time, it is the object of her reflections.

Flückiger also places great importance on the positioning of her installations in a particular space. All her works are actually conceived as spatial arrangements, and draw a major part of their content and meaning from that very aspect.

Using the example of „gedankenverloren 1“ once again, this aspect can be further explored. The image sequence of the boy is projected onto a transparent, double-panelled projection area that is suspended from the ceiling. Projection onto the screen results in a spatialisation of the image. Due to the double panel, we also see into the gap between the projected images, we see the image and its duplication. In this, an apparent front is mirrored in an equivalent back. This spatialisation of the image leads to an interlocking of two different semantical spaces, that of the image depicted and that of the image projection. Flückiger sees her installation as a kind of engagement in existing conditions, as part of the world, and wants people to understand that. Where possible, her image will have a connection with the surroundings. The arrangement of „gedankenverloren 1“, for example, is put into a context; the space around it remains present in the installation, there is no black box negating any surroundings. The screen object is part of the room. The duplication of the image, this splitting of the image by two transparent projection areas, may seem slightly didactic at first. However, the arrangement must be viewed as a convincing strategy for capturing different processes and concepts under the aspect of the media with which they are conveyed, and for making complex contexts experienceable. Edith Flückiger's installations – as can be seen in the above-mentioned installation, although this is valid for all her work – are based on arrangements that reveal how they were created, they do not want to obscure anything. Flückiger dispenses with complex technical equipment and uses images that were created from common situations. She consolidates her raw material into memorable image sequences by repeating them or editing them in a way that sets them into a seemingly on-going movement process. The manipulations of the images are openly disclosed. Edith Flückiger explores how moving images can be decelerated in various ways.

She changes the tonal value of colours, fine-tunes their hue. Then she furnishes the image with a sound track that she develops with various sound artists. This approach reflects Edith's wish for transparency and clarity.

The self-reflective moments made visible in her videos form an important aspect of her work.

„swim“ 1997 is an installation with a projector and a projection area. It shows people floating in a river with a strong current. The image is projected across the floor and rises up into the room at two angles.

So, the swimmers first travel down on the vertical area, and then drift towards the projector on the horizontal surface, strongly contorted and accelerated. In this arrangement, the projector is the main actor; it is the source of light that spits the images of the swimmers out onto the projection area, and at the same time it is the black hole that sucks them back in. This installation draws its effect from the feedback aspect, the cycle of image production and image destruction.

Edith Flückiger takes a strong interest in the condition of the means she uses. Her work reflects the apparatus that records or sends the images.

So, the composition of her images depends on the medium she uses, and her choice of images is determined by technical limitations. At times, the structures, movements, materialities and textures in her imagery are echoed in the video technique which, after all, is the motor of the images. Movements of water or spaces of air have their equivalent in the video-technical flow of signals and characters.

Flückiger's point of view is not necessarily critical in the way video art was in its early days. Her work with the medium of video is affirmative, she is actively seeking strategies and limitations of video image generation in order to translate and incorporate them into her imagery. The tape entitled „first bright, then light, then sky-high“ 1999 is an ironic example. Two girls are lying on their backs on gravel, basking in the summer sun. Then it starts to rain, the gravel turns dark and the girls get wet. They get up, and long after they have left the image, we still see their silhouettes on the ground as a kind of after-image. Then these, too, disappear, dissolving into the darkening grey as the rain continues to fall. Raindrops and gravel pretend to be flickering like the pixels of a video – an analogy to the technical medium preparing and displaying the images in much the same way. So, the silhouettes merge into this flickering grey that seems to be full of all sorts of images. The wet ground becomes a kind of matrix that could be the sum of all images. These analogies offer Edith Flückiger the possibility to avoid the illusionary that is so closely tied to today's conventional video imagery. Instead, she creates new ways of perception that are largely free of the set cultural implications of our media-based world. This way, she addresses one of her central interests, that of being able to create tangible experiences that do not flirt with illusion.

Hilar Stadler