

*Nadine Olonetzky writing about works of the artist Edith Flückiger in the literaturmagazin <entwürfe>, Dezember 2007*



out of the fotoserie „leaving“, 2006

## **Exposed**

Man is born from dust, so a metaphor says. We emerge from the soil and in the end return to it. We will be burnt to ashes or slowly decay to become dust again, soil, earth. From this earth, trees will grow, into a wonderful sky where the sun shines during the day and the stars twinkle at night. They don't really do this for us, the dust-borns, no – even if we enjoy it. At any rate, in view of the vastness above the trees, we rarely realise just how dizzyingly small we are, how infinitely vast the space around us and the spaces of time behind and ahead of us are. Because, down where we are, we hardly have a spare minute, we are incredibly busy trying to have dominion over the earth, the dust. We extract everything from it, whatever we need and desire – and drop and litter everything once we no longer need or want it. Mankind is a pig – no,

worse. We are rubbish, scrap, dust. – earth? Not everything that rots will rot so nicely back to dust as we who are born from dust do (although, strictly speaking, our skeleton doesn't decompose so quickly either), or as the fruit that falls from the trees. This will show less in a tidy organised country like Switzerland, and more so in adjoining countries like France and Italy, where many a thing rots and rots along the streets, under bushes, at the beach or in the forest, but never quite vanishes completely. For a long time, these things just slowly collapse, change their appearance, and gradually sink into the ground without decomposing. Cigarette butts, plastic bags, fridges, computer mice, car tyres.

The strange yellow object at the centre of artist Edith Flückiger's work „Leaving“ that she created expressly for „Entwürfe“ (“Layouts”), seems to have fallen directly from the skies, from the NOWHERE into the NOW HERE, the here and now. Strangely lost under the trees, this sculpture stubbornly resists total decay, it vegetates in utter melancholy and is a purposeless pure shape in the course of time. It is the remains of a Renault Dauphine, a once legendary *objet du désir*, after the elements have been trying to turn it into dust. This design object was abandoned in the woods at some point by someone. It is exposed to the natural decomposing process just as any other object or being is. So, left there in the woods, it is faced with the way all things go, at a slow-motion pace from a human point of view. The fact that the vast space above the trees and the expansion of time evokes fear and horror, emptiness and dizziness in us humans, and certainly raises questions as to where we belong, this all fascinates Edith Flückiger in a number of her videos and texts. For example, she created „... und vergesse an guten Tagen, dass wir kopfüber ins Leere hängen“ (...and on a good day I forget that we are actually upside down in space)(1996), and „Here and Now“ (2005), where we become aware of the size and the edges of the universe. Or the word/video projection „Inside and Outside“ exploring existential exposure, with which she won the jury award of the „Zentralschweizer Kunstschaffen“ 2006 exhibition. Edith Flückiger conjures up a scene at a height of 10,000 metres, using phrases, single words and a sphere to remind us that while we are so busy subduing the dust of the world to our whims, we are on this world, and flying through an unimaginable space. The wind blows our hair from our heads. But we don't notice, or only very occasionally.