

GEHEN UND SEHEN (WALKING AND WATCHING)

Exposition Verena Thürkauf in Kunsthalle Wil SG 1998

Text in Basler Zeitung/Feuilleton, 8. Mai 1998

by Samuel Herzog

"Die kleine Verschiebung des Fusses bestimmt al" (The slight displacement of the foot determines ev-), this is what we read when entering into Verena Thürkauf's installation in Kunsthalle Wil. The words are made up of large white letters in relief which are laid out on the floor in a rectangular pattern. "G E H E N & S E H E N" (Walking and Watching) is the title of this work by the Swiss artist born in Basel in 1955. With great care, the visitor stops over the capital letters, reading a sentence here, a single word there: it seems to be about a man and a woman, or maybe about men and women: "Sie geht auf ihn zu" (She's walking toward him), "Er wendet sich ab" (He turns away). But also: "Sie wahrt Distanz" (She keeps her distance). Everything depends from where we direct our eyes and from the exact course that we choose through the labyrinth of letters, because with every motion of our body we are determining the sequence of the images evoked by them and thus the precise turn of the tale. "Neugierig folgt sie seiner Bewegung" (Made curious, she follows his movements) or "Die Distanz vergrößert sich" (The distance is increasing), "So oder so" (One way or the other), this installation makes us realize the absolutely individual character of our experience, as it is hard to imagine two visitors walking & watching in this room in exactly the same way. A lot of the sentences and even words are cut off and can be imagined as continuing beyond the space of presentation: like an archeologist in a huge digging site working on a claim marked out very precisely, Verena Thürkauf has exposed all but a few square meters of a network of words that encompasses the whole world and tells about the to and fro between humans. Just as our walking & watching within this room determines the course of the stories, it is in real life that with every body movement, with every "Augen-Blick" (look of our eyes) but also with every word we say, we are defining, in every day life, our position with regard to our own biography, our current status in the world.



GEHEN UND SEHEN 1998

Partial view

Plaster letters laid out on the floor

Letter size: 20 x 2 cm

Room size: 290 m²