

# Tropicália, the L.A. River-bed, electric billboards, and ... pastel colours

Madeleine Boschan in conversation with Peter Ibsen, August 2015

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*Can you tell me a little about yourself? What was the first artwork you ever made?*

Funny, you're asking. Just the other day I was browsing an old family album and, to all appearances, I was seven and loved to cut out paper-furniture. And as I remember now, my playroom was utterly crammed with it.

*What's more important to you – the material, the process, the final outcome, or something else?*

The individual sculpture is one thing but at its basis as well as at the basis of all my exhibitions so far there's another question. More elementary, a question for possible alliances, somewhat similar, I'd like to wish, to Roland Barthes' final enquiry: How to live together? I conceive my sculptures site-specifically of the total contextual or conceptual structure available to me. The whole space in all its dimensions is the place of composition. And all pieces and ensembles are proposals for new forms of being together, of acting together, and cooperating with each other. Thus, the material, the process, the final outcome, and even something else mutually take part in it. But in the end, it's a quite immediate affair, pretty physical, too. A precise space, a particular sculpture, you, myself, or anybody and whatever occurs in between ...

*Some of your earlier works prominently consist of blinds. How come?*

It's definitely not that Duchamp-thingly! The fragile balance of cracking-up and reassembling orderly systems of classification or any given functionality is far too pleasurable. Still, found objects are important to me, you can't just make them up. They give you something to think about, you've got to deal with 'em.

But how come the blinds? Pretty pathetic, in fact! It was an early Saturday morning, although already beautifully sunny, shortly after I had relocated to Berlin and I was heading home from Paris Bar when I found my first blinds. I was instantly ravished by the wonderful simultaneity of lineatures and planes in its delicate shadow play, by the spatial variability of the filaments ... each strip can be bended, cut, tilted, shuffled or contracted into any form. Plain and easy love at first sight, I'd say. And back then, maybe Bowie's »pale blinds drawn all day / nothing to do, nothing to say / blue, blue, electric blue / that's the colour

of my room / where I will live«, too, a tiny bit.

*And your new sculptures? What is the difference compared to the earlier ones? Why did you change?*

Do you experience them differently?

The earlier sculptures were linear, for sure, intrinsic and averted, withdrawn from us. And after some years, I simply longed to make them more planar, to give them more surface, realign them towards the surrounding space and relate them closer to us. If you like as a broadside at the beholder.

And honestly, to me they are still all the same. Not visually, of course, but they all pose the same existential question of spatial corporality, of how a body gains its own stand, finds its appropriate place and holds up this position.

*What is the toughest part of being an artist?*

I couldn't care less for any avant-garde-concepts, especially for the most recent, seasonal ones. That's just as silly as all blimpish retro-gardes. If you gave me the choice of agonising myself over what to accomplish next or afore, I'd prefer not to and, being a petty dabbler instead, factually recognise my situation and merrily endure it.

That's a little like asking, in which country I would rather like to live? To which I would courteously respond that I want to live nowhere else than here in Belle-Alliance-Straße. Anything else seemed almost delusive. Even choosing another age took more sympathies, fancy imagination and complacency than I could possibly want to spare for this topic.

*Can you let us in on some of your future works?*

I'm working on them ...

Nah, at the moment, together with Andy Hope 1930, I am preparing an exhibition at Neue Galerie Gladbeck (»Escapement«, September 11 – October 23, 2015) for which I am about to finish three extensive pieces dwelling on the concepts of spaces within space and, at the same time, of passage or transition. Possibly something sculptural without the sculpture? Anyhow, I'm fairly excited about it! Alongside, there's a group show at Kunstverein Reutlingen coming up (»Wo ist hier? #2: Raum und Gegenwart«, September 20 – November 22, 2015) to which I am very much looking forward, too.

Meantime in the studio, while cutting out paper models for an exhibition in late 2016, I find myself drinking peppered vegetable juice and lingering either on Tropicália, Jorge Ben, Astrud Gilberto, and Oscar Niemeyer or on the L.A. River-bed and James Cameron, »Blade Runner«'s electric billboards, a ruinous antiquity, and pastel colours. You see, obviously seven again, all is well this very August in the Southwest of Berlin.