

G E O R G K A R G L

FROM ABOVE.

Group exhibition, Georg Kargl, Vienna from September, 8th – October, 30th 2004

A standpoint outside usual structures of perception raises the curtain on a sort of mental clash. The view from above gives the impetus, aiming – even from an absurd perspective – at the visual and mental paradigms of basic human experience.

Laconic, ironic, metaphoric and even allegoric, the view from “above” looks “upon” the limitations of the mind – much like visiting the visual memory of a distant control center, uncovering image sequences ranging from ecological parameters (biological, geological, geographic, climactic, etc.) and their transformation and regeneration, to imaginings of the weightlessness experienced in free flight.

“From above” reveals the construct of a hierarchic repertoire of symbols, a back-and-forth between power and powerlessness, ultimately governed by concrete, body-centered perception from above/below.

The upright human posture gives cause for the hierarchy of “HEIGHT = SIZE = OVERSIGHT = POWER”. The visualization of verticality through constructed mass – architectural structures that quietly persist, connoting an annexation of time and place – produces ascetic symbols representing the mental projection of power (WTC).

“From above” means power over others, the advantage of obvious superiority, while the fragmentary strength of powerlessness, an invisible quantity which determines the constant redistribution of power, proceeds to coalesce “below”.

A major factor in the great dream of FLYING is the idea of watching as the dimensions of such vertical power claims shrink. The metaphoric idea of freedom renders existing values systems relative, and the network of power and powerlessness seems an abstract image where size and verticality become random visual aspects of the perceptible world.

Modern technology and science have raised the threshold of uncertainty and made the heavens attainable and usable; humankind’s tools (aircraft, jets, missiles, etc.) have not satisfied the longing to disprove, with a few flaps of one’s wings, the platonic definition of humans as “two-legged, featherless animals.”

It is the idea of the liberated body in space, the imagination of a non-place, a utopian state of being – the uncertainty and also the danger that looms from above. In the “unknown” above, where fear comes into play, the hierarchic system is determined by laws of faith and religion. The sacred order invests the vertical with symbolic moral content, identifies the “above” as a protecting power which transforms uncertainty and danger into security and spiritual well-being.

In the mental here-and-now, the long since secularized view from above “looks” down on the world of vertical-hierarchic determination. Ways of behaving, perceptions, physical sensations and ecological imperatives are determined by spatial structures.

“From Above” provides a view of these limits and opens up a mental “everywhere,” in which the conditions and appearances of perception are questioned and exposed.

Text: Ilse Lafer

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