

Particle Accelerator

Matthias Deumlich's installation consists of a number of interlocking elements, a principle common to many of his works. In this Bingen installation, this principle finds expression in a network of visual impressions, sounds, and movements.

During the 90s Deumlich studied under Rebecca Horn at The University of the Arts, Berlin. Rhythms and vibrations are recurrent themes in his work, dating back to his performance work as a drummer. In contrast to so many digital devices, Deumlich's work references an analogue world that remains comprehensible to us.

Following Deumlich's training as a printer, the letters of the alphabet have remained of significant in his work, whether represented in colour, sound, or as sculptures. In "particle accelerator", the letter "A" can be seen from afar, discernable on account of red apples partly filling the lower part of a transparent A-shaped container; we also see through the "A" and are thus brought back to its harbour setting.

As graphically expressed letters and words are given voice, writing transmutes into an acoustic experience. In the same way that we process sounds into articulate meanings and language, so the quiet sounds issuing from a gigantic loudspeaker allude to the sound of language.

Framed by the "A" and an enormous loudspeaker is a glass showcase displaying Japanese crab-apples. The sound of the apples forced to jump up and down on the base of the showcase produce a further sound effect.

The final part of this installation, some fifteen meters away in the harbour, is a large red-coloured floating "Z". Responsive to the gently undulating swell of passing boat traffic, this "Z" ceases being just the last letter of the alphabet: It has become a sculpture brought into contact – along with the other parts of this installation – with its public harbour setting.

It is worth noting that this installation, created especially for its environment in Bingen, reminds us of an earlier work by Deumlich called "Mendels Rache" (Mandel's Revenge). This work was created for The Max Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine, Berlin. Composed of three showcases containing green peas, the peas are propelled in the direction of suspended water-filled laboratory flasks. The muffled sounds of the jumping peas are counterpointed by the high notes of the peas hitting the sides of the showcases and flasks. While the flasks gently swing, in response to being pounded by the peas, the water in them reflects kaleidoscopic images of the peas which have returned to rest.

The fact that Deumlich developed "Mendels Rache" for a science research centre is linked to how this installation is conceptualized. His work is often constructed in a way which puts the viewer in mind of a scientific, rather than an artistic, context. As soon as the viewer fully engages with this work, we realize that the artist and the scientist may follow a common goal; just that for the artist this goal is not understood in a literal way.

With his installations Deumlich seeks artistic expression for the complexity of how we think and imagine.

He wants to audio-visualize the categories of time and space, of repetition and the material world. With the “particle accelerator” he alludes to the what for lay viewers’ minds is the almost unbelievable development of a machine which “collides protons”. Think, for example, of the Large Hadron Collider built for the European Centre for Nuclear research in Switzerland (CERN). In a circular subterranean tunnel (circumference of 26 kilometres) protons are accelerated to almost the speed of light and then collided with one another. Whereas the CERN protons are accelerated, in Deumlich’s showcase it’s the apples. With the spoken sounds of the loudspeaker the artist reminds us of a hectic journey through the alphabet; ending with the floating “Z” in the harbour. In artworks it isn’t a goal-oriented process as in science, but rather the mental association of ideas. The mental content evoked in our minds by Deumling’s installations sets further thought processes in motion.

Teilchenbeschleuniger, 2014
Dreiteiliges Installations
-objekt mit Bodentraverse
(Länge 6m) und einem
15m entfernten schwim
-menden Großbuchstabe

Particle Accelerator, 2014
Three part installation
on frame (6 metres long)
and a floating capital letter
15 metres away.