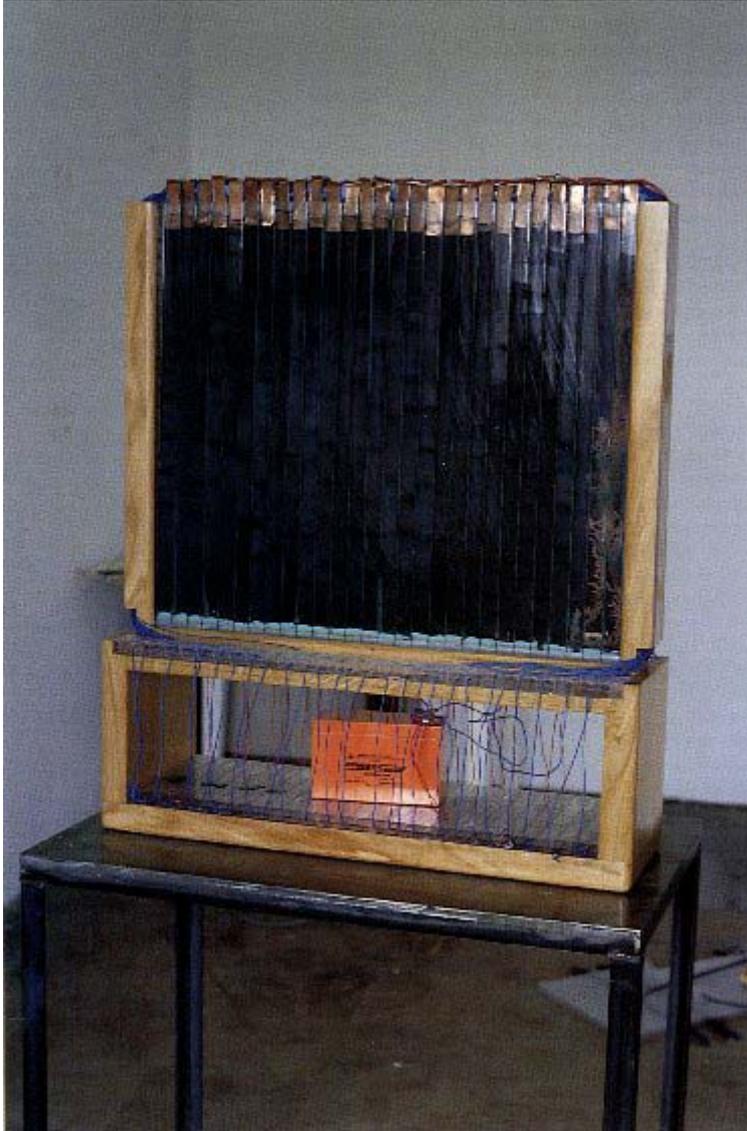


TIME PLANTS TASSILO BLITTERSDORFF

"No two leaves are alike, yet all leaves of the same genus have certain characteristics which identify them as belonging to this genus. The latitude for possible variation in the forming of galvanic metal deposits is much larger"
(Tassilo Blittersdorff)



For years Tassilo Blittersdorff has been working with the artistic "latitude" of galvanic metal deposits: He installs image creation processes as self-enclosed installation systems which produce creation every moment. Once started, the metal depositing process can only be controlled in a very limited way. The emergent image product makes reference to previously known knowledge of "image" as well as to chaos.¹

"As has already been said repeatedly, there is nothing in our universe that is not located somewhere between order and chaos".

The at first striking similarity with the appearance of growth processes of plant structures lets an optical loop from the — very functionally designed — chemical-technological-scientific (inorganic) basic conditions of the process become a biological (and therefore organic)

reality: this organic reference to a visual classification level is however in stark contrast to the exclusively inorganic ingredients of the installation structure.

"Art, another nature, also mysterious but more comprehensible, for it springs from human consciousness".² Tassilo Blittersdorff's installation in its reduction of a technical exactness is clearly removed from instructive equations expressed in this manner. Here art is not the "compliment to nature" (Novalis) but an approach to an outward view in an area of processes distanced from humanity. With all the relativity of this viewpoint clouded over by human subjectivity, a previously not consciously recognized capacity for linkage — even if it is only in a very small extract beyond the "generally humane" with its claim to define the appearance of growth in all its forms.

"Freedom lies here, as so often, in the detail; where it is easier to deviate from the standardizing norms: the ramifications, the variations in shape and colour are the 'self-representations' of the galvanic 'plantlets', which grow in their 'hollow chamber plate greenhouse', in the guaranteed absence of gene manipulated material." (T. Blittersdorff)

The artist's galvanic installation makes reference, in this sense as well as from an analytical position beyond limitation, to a search for counterparts.

"Art is not nature, as idealism would have us believe, but it wants to redeem the promises of nature."³

Blittersdorff's installation denies itself this approach too. It does not want to redeem any promise, whether with regard to human associative habits, for example the conciseness of the purely optical equation of plant growth — galvanic growth, or the traditional scientific technique of measurement. Through the growth processes initiated by the artist, the ironic quoting function of both of these areas is becoming clearly recognizable, because in any case they reveal a tautological situation, whether in scientific measurement or the "stylistically critical" equating of pictures.

The redundancy of this information indicates an end point, which however in turn draws more attention to the individual factors. Here too, as with the installation of the galvanic growth conditions, the artist functions as a catalyst who sets a process in motion without actually taking part in it. The growth in his galvanic works presents itself as an energetic exchange, as a transformation and construction of a dialogue of shape and colour. They build on three decisive parameters, each of which requires serial execution. Time as the duration of the growth processes, distance as the interval between the electrodes determines the speed of growth and design variants, and the amount of available energy.

The installation "Time Plants" formulates a special relationship between parameters, and at the same time introduces a calendar for fictitious botany: not as a virtual parallel creation but rather as a sceptical ironic design of a locally defined model growth situation, moving towards a role where it is as independent of the model as possible and deals with a real, extant outside world.

"Mr ... would like to play fiddlesticks with spaghetti, but it won't work" (Oswald Wiener)⁴

Peter Assmann

NOTES

- 1 Binnig, Gerd: Aus dem Nichts. Über die Kreativität von Natur und Mensch, München 1989, p. 172
- 2 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: Berliner Ausgabe. Firs. S. Seidel. Berlin—Weimar 1972, Bd. XVIII, p. 637
- 3 Adorno, Theodor W.: Gesammelte Schriften. Bd. VII, Frankfurt/Main 1970, p. 103
- 4 Schmatz, Ferdinand: Sinn und Sinne, Wien 1992, p. 74