

different disciplines like lighting, texture, animation. Having lost support in the early stages and given the complexity, I decided to make it as simple as possible by using the minimal tools and the basic items, no mapping, no texture. The most amazing thing in this program is the potential of form, which melds together. I was like a child playing this huge game until the computer couldn't take more vector files any more. Not only I was on the edge, so was the computer; it couldn't take any more information and I could see it slowing down in the finishing process. A huge cube developed with multi-layers that became cities. The surface was like that of a hedgehog, full of architecture, which itself becomes texture. You could go into the merest detail and zoom out and achieve this tremendous sense of scale. I was sculpting in digital space and ultimately I did find someone who helped me with the animation in Weimar University. Without any interpretation the material was quite dead. A friend and I came up with using our own voices to humanise and interpret the material. That provides the quality, to which I was blind

for a long time. I became detached from this work. Now I see the work differently.

KB: Is spontaneity a focus in your work?

TMcC: There was an insightful comment from someone in the audience— that not only are you looking at the potential in space of a provocation but there's also an idea of slowness. It's assumed that provocation demands a fast reaction; it's decisive, like a verbal and visual slap. In your work the provocation seems to come from the slow pace.

OZ: Spontaneity could be seen in the playfulness in which I engage with materials. Here you can see play, accident, and spontaneity.

Sheffield - 16/02/2011



Transmission *Provocation*

Guest: Oliver Zwink

Host: TC McCormack

Interviewer: Keith Barley

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KB: How do you both feel the event went?

TMcC: There were positive comments and I was pleased to see works I hadn't seen before. There were some great questions.

OZ: This is the third time that I have spoken to an English audience. I was nervous but I was impressed by the reaction. It was interesting to see how I would get my work and provocation to work together. There were some reactions that did make a connection although I thought it might be too complicated. Me being provoked was the idea, not to say what is

provocation for me.

KB: Both of your practices are concerned with space. Oliver, you work with urban issues and mental and architectural space. Col, for you it's the phenomenal resistance of space. Could you open up on this?

TMcC: Henri Lefebvre's work on space work threw me somewhere else – the idea of space being able to instigate action, the multiple possibilities of space, and how we are agents. Without place or context it is an immutable, unknown, unquantifiable thing and I wanted to understand the idea of abstract space and I couldn't. I realised that to work in space I had to work with people, not just collaboratively but to instigate action and gesture in space. Some of the abstract concepts about space have stayed with me. Oliver talked about it when he showed the reflective, repetitious, and slightly reductive way he has of pairing things again and again. That reminded me of my early interests in the spatial. It opened me up to another sense of culture and then to something other than a human

perspective. I encountered the animistic concept and I found there were other ways of talking about this ...

OZ: Since you talked about it, I am finding these things in my work. The car as a kind of being ...

TMcC: ... the mysticism of animism comes from very old beliefs from all over the world: our pre-Western, and pre-religious ideas declare that everything around us has equality, and therefore it has an aura and even potential for soul. We can see possibilities for consciousness too. That opens up new possibilities of engagement.

KB: *Animals are sentient beings but is a car?*

TMcC: The sentient argument comes from the Enlightenment, but I'm getting at is a lower stratum, another stratum of objects and entities. We also have to be careful not to mix that up with magical qualities and imbue objects with that.

OZ: This idea of things being animated is something I can't completely follow. But Col is

going to that extent where we can talk with a wallet and the wallet (an object) is able to talk back to us in some way. I began by introducing the notion that when the city is photographed, the city looks back to us and there is communication. A friend of mine says this is metaphorical, all projection, that as human beings we are activating it.

TMcC: That is the classical humanist enlightened position.

OZ: I am interested in the theory of animism. For me, it's fascinating because it goes even further, beyond the idea of the humanist centre activating sense into the world. If you think that we might not be alone in the universe it may make sense. It is a tempting idea and at least it is provocative.

TMcC: I wouldn't go so far as to say that you talk to your wallet. What I am saying is let's see how far we can go with the potential of this as an abstract construct. The Enlightenment presented the humanist view that we are the centre of the universe. But there are billions of planets where there are no humans. There are probably many ecosystems

and systems of life that get on very well without us. There is co-existence and a balance, and I am deliberately not talking about ecology or nature. I am more interested in co-presence.

KB: *Oliver, what made you come to study at Goldsmiths in London?*

OZ: The main attraction was to live in a big city. It was the logical place to continue my art education, to learn to speak English, and an opportunity to see my country from another perspective. There was the sensibility in London in the mid-nineties that there was this new art movement starting to happen with the YBAs. At Goldsmiths I found a great energy and tension such as I had not experienced before, even living in Berlin or Kassel.

KB: *You are now an artist who enjoys an international reputation and practice. Was returning to Berlin a natural development for you?*

OZ: I left London for Berlin for private reasons. The first two years in Berlin were hard. I had

a gallery in London. I had more shows in England and I missed London. At the same time there was something building up in Berlin. London was very intense for my development. Now it's in a Berlin perspective – it's taken ten years.

KB: *You showed a very impressive revolving cube, digitally rendered. How did you approach this work?*

OZ: Actually I hadn't planned to show this piece. But it's an entertaining work ...

KB: *It's more than entertaining – it's compelling.*

OZ: I took the opportunity of the screen to see the big image, which I had never seen before. I now have a new relation with this work because it was such an effort. My work is usually based on materials working in real space and there was shift in dealing only with digital space. I was promised someone who would work with me for four weeks, introducing the software. That didn't happen so I had to learn the program – 3D MAX – which is massive and includes