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BERND OPPL

Background

opening: November 10, 7pm

duration: November 11, 2021 – January 15, 2022

We inhabit space. Bernd Oppl's objects highlight how human emotions are projected on to the architecture and interiors around us. His pieces are often absent of the actual human body. His practice sits between object and architecture, sculpture and installation. The environments he recreates – whether perfect detailed sculptures in miniature or animations and films - are seemingly neutral too, but their sterility makes them haunting. They resemble the future horror of Japanese and Korean horror films. The Ballardian fear of the suburban and corporate. The isolation and alienation of screen life.

*The artist plays with architectural modelling but this is not the utopic projection of a future urban landscape. Oppl creates scenes of the present. The laptop on a bare mattress on the floor. Oppl's works echo the atmosphere of Edward Hopper's paintings. There is a sense of noir in his figure-less interiors, a manifestation of the ideas in Olivia Laing's book *The Lonely City*. The horror here is muted. The haunted house is no longer a creaky 19th century mansion but an airport waiting room, or an office with black ink floating in space like a ghost. There is no sound in his work, except at times the whir of an analogue projector. Here the ghosts of cinematic or computer history emerge – such as his recreation of the *Black Maria*, a skeleton of a historic stage that would spin in front a static camera. Or a minimalist maze that resembles a pared down version of the iconic computer game *Wolfenstein 3d*.*

The screen is a central motif. Oppl embeds real screens into his work, using them in unusual ways. The artist plays with perception and perspective, choreographing how we view a scene like a director positions the camera in a shot. The angles of access and viewpoint are intentional. His black boxes and concrete cubes are placed on the wall at different heights, forcing the viewer to move and adjust. The screens in Oppl's work can form a window, or can be viewed at strange angles, through holes or reflections. Sometimes, his screens seem to breathe, their light pumping slowly on and off. Alternatively, the screens are blank and hazy with white noise.

There is a tactile quality to the work, even as he refers to the digital. The artist's take on media is both present and historic. White noise itself is something no longer experienced in contemporary life, but refers to an analogue past. It is now something fabricated to indicate emptiness. The phrase 'white noise' itself has connotations of ideology and bias. Oppl presents the ruins of media, given physical form. The materiality of modern concrete, and by extension Modernism, are echoed in the ruins of our televisual past.

Francesca Gavin

Bernd Oppl, born in 1980 in Innsbruck, studied Painting and Graphics at the Art University in Linz and Video and - Installation Art at the Academy of fine Arts in Vienna. He lives and works in Vienna.

His works were shown **in solo exhibitions** at the Georgia Museum of Art, USA (2014), at the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum Innsbruck, AUT (2021), at Wiels - Contemporary Center of Art Brussels, BLG (2019), Art Space Kuiper Projects in Brisbane, AUS (2018), at the Kunstraum Dornbirn, AUT (2019), at Lentos Kunstmuseum in Linz, AUT (2021), at the Galerie Krinzinger Vienna, AUT (2013, 2018) and in numerous international **group exhibitions** and festivals such as the Kassler Kunstverein, Fridericinaum, Kassel, GER (2021), Merano Arte, Meran, ITA (2021), Greater Taipei Biennial, Taipei, TW (2018), Mediamatic, Amsterdam, NL (2014), Depo, Istanbul, TR (2013), Vermilion Sands, Kopenhagen, DNK (2018), Künstlerhaus – Halle for art & media , Graz, AUT (2018), Kanderline Art Gallery, Saskatoon, CA (2016), City Gallery Bern, CH (2017), Kulturstiftung Schloss Agathenburg, GER (2017), National Gallery, Sofia, BG (2016), Musée Ziem, Martiques, FRA (2015), De Markten, Brussels, BEL (2015), Landesgalerie Linz, AUT (2014), University Museum and Art Gallery Hong Kong, CN (2015), Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, LI (2014), Optika Pavilion, Moscow, RUS (2014), NEST, Den Haag, NL (2014), OK Offenes Kulturhaus OÖ, Linz, AUT (2013), Tokyo Wonder Site, JP (2011).

Bernd Oppl was awarded the advancement award for contemporary art of the county of Tirol in 2008, the RLB art price in 2012, the art price of the city Innsbruck 2015, the residency grant 2018 in Wiels (Brussels), the Austrian State-Grand for Fine Arts in 2019 and the working-grand at the BANFF Center in Canada, 2021.

Background is after *Spatial Distortions*, 2013 and *Intermission*, 2016 Bernd Oppl's third solo exhibiton at Galerie Krinzinger.