

Eric Hattan: BETON LIQUIDE

Five years ago, after a residence in Berlin, Eric Hattan, a sculptor, installation and conceptual artist, began to use the video camera for his artistic work. Beforehand he had utilized the medium for documentation, recording several of his process oriented projects and actions, but since then he has turned the camera towards scenes and events that he has been constantly coming across in urban space. Even more distinctive than in his earlier works, Eric Hattan renounces enriching the world with new images and placing more sculptures in public space. Instead, he discovers - almost incidentally - a rich potential of vivid and basic forms in ordinary and inconsiderable situations on his trips around. An awake and receptive eye for fundamental and vivid procedures meets with the often fairly unspectacular moments of an unintentional movement, an incidental encounter or an unconscious or mechanical action, perceiving them like particular sculptural events. Thus, a prolific and rich cinematic notebook has originated across the years. Eric Hattan has taken single sequences from this pool and developed his own independent works out of them which he then represents alone or in larger groups. For the first time, in this exhibition in the Aargau Kunsthaus, Aarau, a survey of these video works that have been done since 1995 is on view. The accompanying catalogue offers an enfolding documentation consisting at the time of about 50 tapes.

It is Eric Hattan's aim to assign a new lightness to artistic work. He wants to relieve it from any material ballast and also from a ponderous production of sense that ties the realization of a work to preconceived ideas. His video works show the consistent advancement of an artistic concept that - besides his production of sculptural constructions - has in the past already drawn on that which already exists, moving and rearranging it in order to form a new "terrain vague" within normality. It becomes a field for discoveries and new experiences, both for him and his visitors. Art can thus emerge everywhere provided that one is prepared to perceive both the familiar and that which is acquainted through a different perspective. In his video works, Eric Hattan radicalizes this gesture and sets out as a stroller drifting and opening up for a phenomenological study of small and also the smallest things that are surrounding him. His cinematic snapshots show ephemeral sculptures that come into existence any time and anywhere: when nobody has art in mind; where nobody expects it. Quickly, one carelessly passes by so that the magic is over almost immediately. Eric Hattan retains this very small moment giving him constancy through endless repetition, opening up the empty, insignificant gesture to a new meaning. This growth of meaning or this threshold between unconsciousness and the conscious is always a pivotal point in his oeuvre: Be it drawing attention to things that are unintentional or at least made without special ambition but of interest to the artist; or be it that he himself makes constructions or plans interventions in the public square that stay irritatingly in the space between autonomous art and everyday life. This should make clear that Eric Hattan permanently produces this moment of toppling from one to another: Everything is always under question, nothing is taken for granted. - It is a border crossing of a permanently shifting border.

The presently shown video works are not only an advancement but can also be viewed as a synthesis in which the basic ideas of Eric Hattan are culminating, even though, or maybe exactly because the artist pursues a radical reduction. The videos are in themselves an expression of a sharpened attention for everyday things, which Eric Hattan has always been calling for throughout the whole of his oeuvre: he understands artistic work in the sense of an act of sensitization which will never be concluded but which will develop itself further and further. Every single videotape is an expression of this openness by which the artist encounters the world. The multitude of tapes document his permanent

search - a venture that is pursued deliberately but not systematically in awareness not to lose the lightness and openness that is necessary for an impromptu procedure that rather matches drifting. The artists finds his motives in transit and he himself is sending us on a journey. Fascinated by the possibilities of the sketchy and the temporary, he has chosen the form of presentation for the exhibition wherein we constantly discover new situations, get involved with little scenes in which fixed shapes volatilize, determined notions dissolve and tangible observations suddenly turn into daydreams.

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