

CRYSTAL OF RESISTANCE

Crystal of Resistance is the title of my work for the Swiss Pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennial. Through my work *Crystal of Resistance* I want to question. First: Can my work create a new term of art? Second: Can my work develop a 'Critical corpus'? Third: Can my work engage - beyond the art audience - a 'Non-exclusive Public'? I want to answer each of these questions, these goals and these self-demanding ambitions - with my work and in my work.

I believe that art is universal, I believe that art is autonomous, I believe that art can provoke a dialogue or a confrontation - one-to-one - and I believe that art can include every human being. When I write 'believe', I'm doing it not because I think or know it, not because I can prove it - but because - in art - it's a matter of believing.

With *Crystal of Resistance* I want to produce a work that is irresistible. This can only happen if I succeed in creating a work out of my innermost self, without confusing - as it is usually done - the inner self and 'the personal'. I can only reach the universal if I risk conflict with my inner self. 'The personal' doesn't interest me because it's not resistant in itself, it is always an explanation - if not an excuse. My work can only have effect if it has the capacity of transgressing the boundaries of the 'personal', of the academic, of the imaginary, of the circumstantial, of the context and of the contemplation. With *Crystal of Resistance* I want to cut a window, a door, an opening or simply a hole, into reality. That is the breakthrough that leads and carries everything along.

CHILDREN AT THE RHONE GLACIER

What prompted me to work with crystals was an experience I had 15 years ago. It was on the Furkapass-Road car park, below the Rhone glacier, I saw some children who had spread out some crystals on a piece of cardboard - most likely crystals they found themselves - and were selling them. It was a simple, wonderful and universal picture, which impressed me. The same thing could have been done by children in China, Russia, Mexico or anywhere in the world. Since then I've wanted to do something with crystals some day.

CRYSTAL AS A MOTIF

With my work *Crystal of Resistance* I want to give a form that creates the conditions for thinking something new. It must be a form that enables 'thinking'. That's how I see the mission of art: To give a form that can create the conditions for thinking something that has not yet existed. With this form I want to create a truth, a truth that resists facts, opinions and commentaries. It is not about 'my truth', but about truth in itself. In order to make contact with truth, to confront truth and to be in conflict with it - conflict in art means: Creating something - I need a motif. That motif is 'crystal' in *Crystal of Resistance*.

Crystal is the motif - but the motif 'only' - of the form of *Crystal of Resistance*. Crystal is not the theme, nor the concept nor the idea of *Crystal of Resistance*. The motif is an assertion, a 'setting' and the motif is love. As a motif, 'crystal' is the dynamic which links and which puts light - a new light - on everything. It sheds light on its own meaning, its own time and its own *raison d'être*. The 'crystal' motif helps me point out one or several facets, because it's only as facets - as a partial vision - that truth can be touched. 'Crystal' is the motif I decided upon, out of love for its beauty, for its rigor, for its power and for its openness. I, myself - must be open to its grace and its universality. I will consolidate and fix my form with the 'crystal' motif, I will strengthen and determine my form with the 'crystal' motif.

RESISTANCE

Art resists political, cultural, aesthetical habits. Art resists morality and topicality. Art - because it is art - is resistance. But art is not resistance to something, art is resistance as such. Art is resistant because it resists everything that has already existed and been known. Art, as a resistance, is assertion, movement, belief, intensity, art is 'positive'. Art resists tradition, morality and the factual world. Art resists every argumentation, every explanation and every discussion. I am not afraid of resistance, conflict, contradiction or complexity. Resistance is always connected with friction, confrontation, even destruction - but also, always with creativity. Resistance is conflict between creativity and destruction. I want to confront this conflict in *Crystal of Resistance*. I am myself, the 'conflict', and I want my work to stand in the conflict zone, I want my work to stand erect in the conflict and be resistant within it.

THE FOUR PARTS OF THE FORM AND FORCE FIELD: LOVE, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AESTHETICS

I decided - from the very beginning - to put my work in the form and force field consisting of the four parts: LOVE, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AESTHETICS. I decided that my work doesn't have to cover equally all four parts, but every part - LOVE, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AESTHETICS - will always be covered to some extent. LOVE, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AESTHETICS are the parts of the field in which my work asserts itself and is moving. When I decided about the two 'light-parts' - LOVE and PHILOSOPHY, I also decided to always include in my work the two 'shadow-parts' - POLITICS and AESTHETICS. I took this simultaneous decision for 'light-parts' and 'shadow-parts' because I live in a world that I understand as 'One', as an undivided and unique world, as a world with light and with shadow, with the negative and the positive but also with the 'not-only-positive' and the 'not-only-negative'. That's why there are 'light-parts' and 'shadow-parts' and why I set my work in the form and force field of LOVE, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AESTHETICS.

LOVE

In the work *Crystal of Resistance*, the crystal is the LOVE part of my form and force field. The crystal stands for the universal, the ultimate and for the absolute. The crystal stands for beauty itself. I am thinking of someone. I am thinking of a child, a girl who finds her 'own crystal' - perhaps her first - she finds it herself or receives it as a gift, and - for this girl - it's the most beautiful crystal, and to her, it will always remain the 'most beautiful'. That's why each crystal is for me the 'most beautiful'. This is the LOVE part in my form and force field. I know that there are different qualities and that these quality differences can be explained. I am interested in the 'beauty', not in the 'quality' of the crystal. 'Quality' has never interested me and to me it's an exclusive and empty word and I decided years ago to always follow the 'guideline' in my work: "Quality = No! Energy = Yes!". Because clearly, beauty is not subjective - beauty is absolute and universal.

PHILOSOPHY

The part PHILOSOPHY in *Crystal of Resistance* stands for the conviction that art is resistance, resistance as such. Other concepts for resistance are: Headlessness, Hope, Will, Madness, Courage, Risk, Fight. These terms belong to the PHILOSOPHY part of my form and force field and are what I want to give form to. A form that only I can give, a form that only I see in that

way and that only I understand, a form that only I know, and a form that only I can defend.

Crystal of Resistance wants to be a form that - in itself - is resistance.

The most important thing in art is the question of form. To recognize this, is the PHILOSOPHY part of my form and force field. Therefore, in *Crystal of Resistance* the question of form is the central concern. Form is the essence and the 'setting' of this work. *Crystal of Resistance* will - in itself - be form in itself, the truth in itself, the real. I want *Crystal of Resistance* to be 'the new' - something which has created its own body.

I ask myself: How can I give a form that resists historical facts? How can I give a form that goes beyond the here and the now? And how can I make a trans-historical work, in my time, in my history, today? My problem - as an artist - is: How can I take up a position and give that position a form? How can that form - beyond conventions - create a truth? How can that form, my form, create a universal truth?

POLITICS

In *Crystal of Resistance* the part POLITICS questions: How to act? How to work? With and under what conditions? I want to work in necessity, in urgency and in a panic. This should be understood as: Panic is the solution! That's the POLITICAL. Art reaches beyond solutions, art can confront problems, art is the problem and art can give form to the problem. There's no solution to figure out - on the contrary - the problem must be confronted. And this is only possible in a panic. Panic is what gives form and this form is art. Therefore panic is a necessity in art.

I want to work in over-haste, I want to work in headlessness and I want to work in panic.

I want to work with the precarious and in the precarious. This is to be understood as the POLITICAL. The POLITICAL is, to understand the precarious not as a concept, but to understand it as a condition. A condition that is a matter of accepting - frenetically and in awareness.

The precarious must be affirmed and it is necessary to enter the camp of the precarious. The change, the new and the revolutionary lie in this affirmation - this is the POLITICAL. The precarious is the dynamic, the path, the possibility and the movement that is offered to human beings. The future consists in the affirmation of this precarious. This precarious which is also the non-assured, the non-guaranteed, the non-stabilized and the non-established. It will be the future because the precarious is always creative, because the precarious is always inventive, because the precarious is in motion, because the precarious leads to new forms, because the precarious shapes a new geography, because the precarious starts with a new exchange between human beings and because the precarious creates new values.

Wouldn't it be possible, that instead of wanting to shield ourselves from the precarious, instead of wanting to deny the precarious and instead of wanting to turn away from the precarious, the opposite - its affirmation - be the universal? Wouldn't it be possible that justice, equality and the truth be constitutive of the precarious - shared by so many today?

AESTHETICS

The AESTHETICS part consists of the questions: How does the work look? What visual appearance does it have? What materials and what colors come out? I want my work *Crystal of Resistance* to be an indestructible and earthly dwelling of the gods - as the cave of the giant crystals of the Naica Mine in Mexico. I want to create a place that is so strange, so entirely from myself - only from myself - and so distinct that it becomes universal. I want to make a large, dense, highly charged, luminous and meaningful work. There will be many elements to see, there will be 'too much'. It has to be 'too much', not because it is important to get to see everything or

spend a lot of time looking, but 'too much' so that the things do not lie. I want to give form to the thought, that truth can be shaped out of facets and that truth can be touched only in a non-unified scale.

With the AESTHETICS part of my form and force field I can create a frontal and bi-dimensional work in the available space. A work that doesn't allow to 'step back'. With my AESTHETICS decision there is no possible overview, no distance and no illusion of detachment. This is what AESTHETICS can do. This is what I - in full blindness and full speed - want to assert and 'hold high'. It's with this AESTHETICS that I want to insist.

I want to produce a work that is reminiscent of the AESTHETICS of a 'science-fiction' B-movie film set, that derives from the AESTHETICS of a self-made rock-crystal museum, of the AESTHETICS of a 'crystal-meth' laboratory or that resembles the AESTHETICS of a cheaply decorated provincial disco.

SWISS PAVILION

I want the work *Crystal of Resistance* to be experienced as something autonomous. It therefore has to be inside a recipient or an envelope in order to make clear: This is a time-limited work. I'm thinking of a skin, a shell or a geode. I'm not thinking about altering the given exhibition space and I'm not interested in working 'against' or 'for' the existing architecture of the Swiss Pavilion. I work with the space that exists. It's not about 'negating' an exhibition space - it's always about how the work asserts itself in the space as something autonomous. What is important to me is to use the available exhibition space as a container for my work, I want to create the conditions, which make it clearly understandable, that the space is the shell which contains my work.

I want it to be explicit that the work *Crystal of Resistance* can also be shown at a different location, in a different city, in a different country or on a different continent. I am for universality and for autonomy - I am never concerned with context. The envelope or container that I will make is the assertion of my work's autonomy. I believe that art is autonomous and I love art for its autonomy - the autonomy which gives the work its beauty and the autonomy which gives the work its absolute.

REFERENCE BOOKS

My reference books are the books and texts that I have read while working on *Crystal of Resistance*. They are my references and constitute a reference-booklist. These books aren't the inspiration or the explanation for *Crystal of Resistance* and have no hierarchal order, all books and texts are equally important for me. All these books and texts can be significant to me, no book and no text is unimportant.

Reading these books was a pleasure. But it's not by reading them that my work can be understood, because I read these books by luck and grace - I can even say: By chance. These books and texts accompanied me as I worked. I bought some books myself, others were given to me or brought to me by friends who knew that I wanted to do the work *Crystal of Resistance*. These books and texts are my companions.

These books or texts are: Fernando Pessoa: "Message"; Edouard Glissant: "Poétique de la Relation" and "Le discours antillais"; Celia M. Britton: "Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory"; Michel Foucault: "Leçons sur la Volonté de Savoir"; James Graham Ballard: "The Crystal World"; George Sand: "Laura. Voyage dans le Cristal"; Elias Canetti: "Masse et puissance"; Gaston Bachelard: "Le droit de rêver"; Marcus Steinweg: "Aporien der Liebe"; Manuel Joseph: "La Restitution" and "La Sécurité des personnes et des biens"; Giorgio Agamben: "Profanations", "Moyens sans fins" and "La Puissance de la pensée"; Louis Ucciani:

"Distance Irréparable"; Alain Badiou: "La relation énigmatique entre philosophie et politique", "Rhapsodie pour le Théâtre", and "De l'idéologie" (with François Balmès); Comité invisible: "L'insurrection qui vient"; Tiqqun: "Théorie du Bloom"; Adalbert Stifter: "Bunte Steine" and "Bergkristall"; Stendhal: "De l'amour"; Stéphane Crussol: "Les Pouvoirs Magiques des Crânes de Cristal"; Philip Permutt: "Ces Pierres qui guérissent, Guide pratique de Lithothérapie"; Editions La Boétie: "Le Livre des Minéraux" and "Le guide familial des Roches et Minéraux"; Gründ: "Encyclopédie des minéraux"; Nature et Vie: "Les minéraux, une géométrie en couleurs"; "Les Minéraux, où les trouver, comment les collectionner"; Rüdiger Borchardt / Siegfried Turowski: "Kristallmodelle"; Clémence Lefèvre: "Guide d'utilisation des lampes en cristal de sel"; Judy Hall: "Nouveaux cristaux et pierres thérapeutiques".

Thomas Hirschhorn, Aubervilliers, 2011 (translated from German)

www.crystalofresistance.com