

## **A terrific further ride**

***Perhaps one gets to understand Bernhard Jordi's art, which leads the material to a game with itself, through a mutual exchange – to be more specific: a conversation with the artist.***

*Instead of the usual sign 'Please do not touch' your objects would have to be labelled with: 'Touching essential'...*

Bernhard Jordi: Yes, my sculptures don't only need the passive eye of the beholder, but his active hand, his energy! This has to be provided for my work. I appoint the spectator to be the engine of my machines. For example a crank has to be used for the weight to be lifted, as it were, to activate the gravitational force, so that the sculpture shows its real nature, namely the movement. Only when the viewer has intervened can the sculpture be understood as a whole.

*Your 'ironworks' are, therefore, put into words pointedly, at the mercy of the viewer? In that case they would be dependent on his goodwill. Without him, they could not make themselves understood at all.*

Jordi: Right. But it is a mutual dependency, an 'interdependency', to express it more nobly. Give me your energy so I can give you mine. And we already have a fair relationship. It is an exciting giving and taking. Both are interwoven, just as in the real world everything is networked with everything. My power, the invigorating impulse, I get back in the form of movement and sound. And the show that is triggered, in turn, consists of a game of interdependence. By releasing the sculpture from its solidification, a part of its secrets is betrayed. Collaboration can be so beautiful.

*An effect is particularly fascinating: the ever threatening lingering standstill...*

Jordi: ... which is averted at the last moment! This is not just to generate tension. I am also concerned with fundamental knowledge: in the dependence nothing is self-evident. And the pure act of force is often counterproductive. This leads, for example, to the balancing of the iron ball, in which it has to first lose energy before it progresses. It has to be able to let go to be granted a terrific further ride. The astonishment that it suddenly goes on is intended, similar to the film by Fischli / Weiss 'The Way Things Go'. However, they strive for perfection - it has to succeed! My 'machines' rather reveal: it could work...

*How do you interpret the fact that not only iron is being forged in your works, but also, to a certain extent, a philosophy of life?*

Jordi: Movement is philosophical per se, and movement fascinates me. Without it, there is neither progress nor change. Whether it has a positive or negative effect, we will only know later. Movement is risky. Stagnation is also dangerous. So what shall we do? Dare the new, even if it does not get better? What is certain is that we cannot preserve vital moments. Basically, we long for a balance between preservation and breaking up.

*Sometimes sudden events, such as an emergency, force us to act. Or we are even dependent on help. Nobody lives self-sufficiently. In some of your works, the one ball unexpectedly comes to the aid of others.*

Jordi: Mutual dependency is both danger and opportunity. It becomes particularly delicate when the power conditions are unequal - large against small. This is exactly what the interplay of big and small iron balls tells us. And I show that both are

dependent on each other. So sometimes the small, weak ball frees the big, strong one from a blockade. The mighty is therefore urged to take the weak one seriously ...

*Your 'iron works' are highly complex and inscrutable - one wonders how you can make them work.*

Jordi: I experience the process of development as a very exciting one. I love it but can also curse it. Doubt and discord can take over. Whether or not the sculpture will ultimately be kinetic, there is no guarantee. But then ... Eureka! Precisely because the tremendous tension between failure and success has accompanied me for such a long time, the joy, if I succeed, is intoxicating. I hope I can give this moment of happiness onto my works as a good spirit...

*You are Swiss - from the nation of watchmakers. It is no coincidence that you are working out such complicated mechanisms.*

Jordi: You mean I'm damned because of the passport...? The wind-up mechanism and the slow-sinking weight of clock movements are, for instance, more reminiscent. But it is really Swiss, which means that my works celebrate democratic coexistence. It's fantastic when it works and if not: Never give up. Continue to try, welding and bending...