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Parts from the Interview for ANTENNAE

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"I am not a gardener, and my field has to be seen as an analysis and counterproposal to the prevailing consumerism.

The garden for me was my mother's vegetable garden, I use the term garden more as a disturbance, as something that could not take place this way or elsewhere. I called my plantings areas from the very beginning; they are poetic locations that have reached a point where it's possible neither to speak of beginning nor of ending or stopping, a realm of possibilities that marks a point of intersection.

Nature has nothing to do with general notions of purity, which is why I see art as constructions of everyday life, as suitable engines of life. Wherever the materials might come from: from a great-great-aunt on my mother's side, from a carver of tupilaq figurines, from the abolition of slavery . . ."

"A society's approach to plants is also a mirror image of itself. For me, a focus in the art realm on the wasteland, the periphery was necessary in the late 1980s. The botanical term "ruderal" (rudis = wild and artless)—I don't want to distort the world with art—seemed to me a promising metaphor in a debate that has recurred over and over around the subject of "art and nature." Now twenty years later, I can see that "ruderal" has lost nothing of its contemporary relevance, and still retains the unsuspected power that I had wanted to dock into. Ultimately, I described my approach to nature around 1990 using the term "precise carelessness."

"My work should be seen as a conglomerate with gaps and extensions. Fundamentally, I am interested in every kind of examination of plants or engagement with them. In 1988, I began to plant a ruderal area on the outskirts of Vienna that served as seed storage and distributor for unwanted plants, so-called weeds, underdogs."

"Taking recourse to the unripe, the unfinished allows forces to shine forth that are otherwise devoured by the finished. The "perfectly provisional realm" is a term I developed in the early 1990s for my work. A perfectly provisional solution is a framework that just keeps from falling apart, but still works wonderfully, and doesn't cost anything, or something like that."

"Fallow grounds / peripheral fields / gaps in the urban are places where boundaries show themselves as something in motion / something uncertain, gardens left to their own devices in all their variety correspond to today's necessity / the noticing of caesurae / connections and their repercussions / the garden as a symbol of voluntary renunciation / of tranquility of nonintervention. Space / created as a consequence of precise carelessness towards what we generally call nature / further and essential a work about the emerging and ceasing—towards our invisible nature / the nature of our brains."

"In the late 1980s, the wastelands / the ruderal societies seemed to me an adequate metaphor of a way for engaging with the subject of nature and art that was fitting for the time. The increasing planning of our surroundings, as well as economic development, have not and do not allow for any free spaces."

"I studied open dumps, city wastelands, and the like, brought the plants to my area / had them multiply / to then in turn bring them to other places that were not marked as mine, where they disappeared. Plant transfers in the landscape realm as well as in urban space, in urban centers like Berlin, where I spent 1994–95 on a fellowship at Künstlerhaus Bethanien. There, on my research walks through the city my cartographic works emerged, maps of the city in which the streets, mostly named after heroic fighter names, were renamed after so-called weeds. The city puts aside the wastelands / just as they take over urban space."

"The more we are able to "make" nature, the less we get part of it. The discourse about cultural concepts targets humanity's self-conception, as opposed the rest of the world: stones, chickens, ghosts, cars, or dragons.

As long as nature allows us to die, it's impossible to just see it as just metaphorical."

"We still know extremely little about the life of animals and plants. I record their motion, their movements, let myself go, observe, discover, intervene, leave things alone and take other paths, branching out, in fact / curiosity as something that casts out / drives / branching out this way and no other / with no IFS or BUTS / beyond reason. Plants spoke in this (poetic) fashion. In some ancient cultures, it was said that in the beginning the stones spoke, all things wooden spoke, all plants spoke, all animals spoke—in the beginning, the soil spoke. But is it not the case that the more agency we grant to animals and plants the more we find ourselves in a state of cannibalism?

In the years to come, there will certainly be parameters that will expand and extend the being and life of plants. In addition, it could be beneficial for our situation of sharing the planet if we granted the plants a soul."

"At documenta 1997, I planted a disused train track of 100 meters with neophytes from southern and southeastern Europe, which was intended as a metaphor for the migration processes of our time, with its poetic political references, was to point beyond it, and in this sense is still very present, as I notice in the unbroken interest in my own work.

Dealing with the foreign, the notion of territory, and nationalism is implicit in my work."

"Art makes the space / the immigrant bags (portable gardens) of WILD CUBE or the ripped out asphalt are possible in all sorts of surroundings / in the urban space (large city, small town, village) as well as in the open space of a rural area. The change in meaning is an inherent part of the work. When the planted bags are placed at the entry to the exhibition hall at the Gyumri Biennale in Armenia, the fields of association that result are quite different than those that emerge before Toyota Museum in Toyota City, Japan or at the Liverpool Biennial."

"Using the associative flow, provisional text constructions emerge. I see these interweavings and transports as a poetic, political act—why not poetic politics / when poetry is understood as branching out between many layers, as condensing, that it is still possible to drive out."

"On top of that, I think that in the paradox the values can be found beneath the surface. Being involved with nature and not being a garden artist: for me that's a good state of affairs. Maybe the actual garden can be found beneath / in the soil / one descends into it / only in so doing is it perceived—and above, partial results and remains. Fine that way, down and out."

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mercredi à vendredi | 14h - 19h
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