

Michael Bielicky: Perpetuum mobile

12.10.2019 to 08.03.2020, ZKM Atrium 1+2, 1st floor

For almost forty years now Michael Bielicky has been creating innovative art in photography, video, and net-based installations. The exhibition *Perpetuum mobile* is the first overview of this versatile artist's diverse oeuvre.

Michael Bielicky's works are in constant dialogue with the latest technological developments and at the same time they lead back into the deep time of the media and the magical mathematical practices of the medieval Kabbalists. Individual and unconventional hybrids result that belong both to the analog and the digital world, and differentiate the border zone between the real and the virtual realm. Michael Bielicky's inventive works, which engage with technological change and its social, philosophical, and political implications, enable this Czech-German media artist to examine critically the nature of technology, its material and immaterial meanings, and their influence on our perceptions and actions.

His critical and ironic reflections on our media-saturated present day are strongly indebted to his studies at the Düsseldorf Arts Academy in the 1980s. The influence of his teacher Nam June Paik, father of video art, is obvious, as well as that of Joseph Beuys and the entire Fluxus movement. His encounters and life-long friendships with central figures of media philosophy and media art, such as Mel Alexenberg, Vilém Flusser, Norman M. Klein, Peter Sloterdijk, Woody Vasulka, Peter Weibel, and Siegfried Zielinski, have also impacted his art. Bielicky's quest always to transcend and interrogate technical conditions and their profound meaning for people and society also has other roots: his childhood in 1960s Prague where an avant-garde film and media culture developed that radically expanded the traditional concept of film and awakened the artist's fascination with film and with transposing it to other media; Jewish spirituality and cultural history; and the importance of Czechia in media history.

Since 2005 Michael Bielicky has been working with the artist Kamila B. Richter. Together they create expansive net artworks based on a dynamic pictogram language, which function by integrating real-time data like Twitter or Google News; for these they have coined the name "data-driven narratives". In an aesthetic that is at once playful and uncanny the artists raise questions in a forceful way about the influence of informational media ecology steered by algorithms on individuals and society — increasingly being at the mercy of the opaque power structures of the digital realm.

Since its foundation Michael Bielicky has had close connections with the ZKM. His video sculpture Menorah (1989) was the first work to enter the ZKM's collection, and he has participated in a great number of ZKM exhibi-

October 2019

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Duration of the Exhibition
13.10.2019–08.03.2020

Location
ZKM Atrium 1+2, 1st floor

Opening
Fri, 12.10.2019, 6 pm, ZKM Foyer

Press Contact

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tions. Since 2017 his extensive media archive is being processed at the ZKM in close collaboration with the artist.

Curator: Bettina Korintenberg

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