

Interview with

Professor Dr. h.c. mult. Peter Weibel,

Artistic Director of lichtsicht 5 – Projection Biennial,

The interview was conducted by Sabine Weichel

Bad Rothenfelde, September 2015

Mr. Weibel, what made you choose these particular pieces of work for lichtsicht 5 – Projection Biennial?

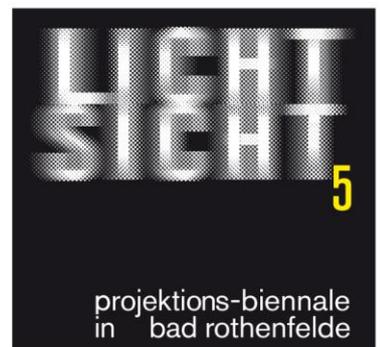
The aim of lichtsicht 5 – Projection Biennial is to re-establish projection art as an autonomous artistic genre and, above all, to showcase the new spectrum of projection art at the cutting edge of artistic and technology advances. The pieces of work were selected based on this objective.

Is there a thematic link between the works? What is the curatorial connecting link of this year's biennial? How does your curatorial approach differ to that of the previous Artistic Director, Manfred Schneckenburger?

World-famous artists employ the latest technical methods such as projection mapping, user-generated content, 3D simulation, water sculpture and interactive laser and shadow projection to present themes from the contemporary world, from celebrity culture to the extinction of species; from post-colonial migration to voluntary total surveillance through selfies; from macro universes to microorganisms, using sensational images and sounds that cannot fail to impress. These digital visions are a surprising, convincing continuation of the classical topoi, which we are familiar with from painted portraiture, the history of film and video art. The approach is the same as that taken by Manfred Schneckenburger, only updated: in addition to "traditional" video projections, *lichtsicht 5* contains a larger number of interactive and participatory works (Random International, *LASACT*, Holger Förterer) than in the previous biennials. There are also two pieces involving 3D images – Eyal Gever projects a 3D simulation onto the fountains in the park and Tim Otto Roth deploys 3D anaglyph glasses. The topic of virtual spaces is broached, such as in the piece *LASACT* and the work by Random International, where the visitor acts in both real and digital spaces, whereas Daniel Crooks and Eyal Gever create virtual spaces

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that appear in that form only there. Holger Förterer casts a critical eye on how personal data is handled. Rosalie and Ryoji Ikeda work with scientific digital data.

How do you classify the significance of projection art in the overall context of contemporary art? Do new tendencies exist in this artistic discipline that are reflected in this year's lichtsicht, and where do you think the future of projection art lies?

A new focal area could also be the invitation of artists who work in the field of art and science and their synthesis, such as Ryoji Ikeda, who enables us to experience scientific data from the universe, gained using scientific devices, audio-visually; Random International, which addresses the relationship between man and machine; or Rosalie, who uses scientific x-ray video images. This signifies a transition from language-based to tool-based culture. In this respect, the development of digital media art is reflected in the selection more than ever before.

How did you manage to persuade such famous artists as William Kentridge and Robert Wilson to showcase their work in Bad Rothenfelde, i.e. on the fringes of the leading art metropolises?

I worked with most of the artists back in the 1990s before they became famous. I discovered them, as it were, at least for the European area. Thanks to my exhibitions, such as in Graz, the international art world – from documenta to the biennials – then became aware of them. You could say I was a kind of career developer. This led to work-based amical relationships and a form of attachment.

What is the particular challenge of presenting projections on the organic material of the graduation towers, i.e. in a gigantic open air museum?

Finding the right form for an audience that does not consist of professional art house and museum visitors.

Not only are you involved in curatorial activities – you're also an artist yourself. Would it be a challenge for you to showcase one of your own works of art in Bad Rothenfelde?

I'm happy with my curatorial work. There are so many great artists in the world, so you can give or take a few. It goes without saying that my own works, which I called *Expanded Cinema*, would be ideal for the conception of projection art that Manfred Schneckengerber called *Expanded Projections*.

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Media contact:

Sabine Weichel, lichtsicht@sabineweichel.de
+49 171 823 6874

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