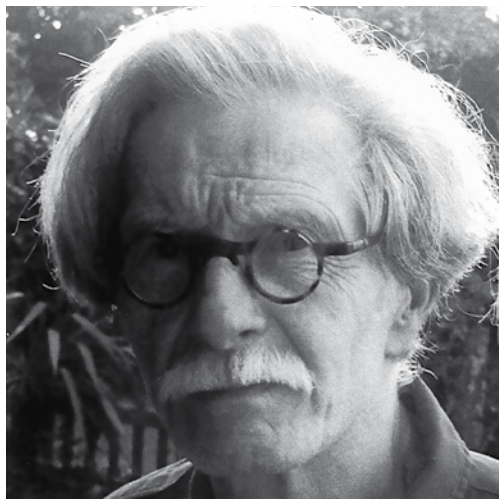


JÖRG SCHWARZENBERGER (1943 - 2013)

Tassilo Blittersdorff



In the sixties, when Jörg Schwarzenberger started his artistic activities, postwar Austria was an almost isolated "Insel der Seligen (island of the Blessed)". Classical tendencies determined the public taste, 'fantastic realism' was the decorative mainstream in visual arts, abstract and informal painting remained the playground for a few modernists.

Vienna actionism mixed ideas from abroad like Happening and Fluxus with their own fury against a repressive, narrow and consumer orientated society and performed, focusing on the body as object, violent breakings of taboos in public spaces.

From his beginnings Jörg Schwarzenberger had another alternative, a holistic and systematic approach to art and public space. He based his work on a complex, but immediate connection between art and life, which included critical and reformist positions towards society and universal openness for the national media to transport his messages. All different disciplines of his work, installations, objects, paintings, performances and films had multiple meanings and often multiple uses.

His manner of working corresponded to his alternative ideas however they changed in 1972 into a one man and one woman-art-team under the double meaning - label K.U.SCH. which is the abbreviation of his wife's and his name (Krätschmer und Schwarzenberger) and is also a popular command for being silent, mostly given to dogs: kusch!.

The performance work of K.U.SCH. started in 1977 with *Zirkus der Kurpfuscher (Circus the quack)* and developed later into the *Prozessionstheater (Procession-theatre)*, which expanded then to the *Laufstegtheater (Catwalk-theatre)*.

In all these kinds of object-theatre there happened multidimensional meaningful, often provocative group-actions in public spaces with changing collectives of actors. The objects used as the equipment for these performances were made by K.U.SCH., who also determined the choreography. All these objects are autonomous artworks and at the same time instruments of performances or elements of installations or components of other work-categories. These object-arrangements could be inside or outside. They included elements of daily-life composed into complex object-spaces, which could be room-installations or stages for performances.

The wide spectrum of works goes even further. Furniture-pieces designed by K.U.SCH. are functional objects and at the same time unusual and sometimes irritating artworks.

Still in the sixties Jörg Schwarzenberger made several interesting short experimental films. In 1977 he was one of the founders of *Falter* an alternative-underground Vienna-city-magazine and designed covers for it. In the early seventies he joined the international-mail-art-movement and in 1984 he organized the first big exhibition in Vienna, the *Mail-Art/Expanding Mail-Art* in the Secession.

The K.U.SCH.- website (www.kusch.ws/) shows with rich photographic material the different genres of their work and explains their artistic position: "Interdisciplinary work within the meaning of the expanded art-term "conceptual Dadaism". Object-art, space-installations, correspondences in free (natural) areas, interventions in public (urban) space. Films. Texts. Performance work in direction *Gesamtkunstwerk* (synthesis of arts) contacts to Fluxus, Arte Povera and to the international Mail-Art-Movement."

After a longer illness Jörg Schwarzenberger died in December 2013, but his ideas continue in the work of the K.U.SCH.-team. His wife Renate Krätschmer and since 2006 also his son Sito.

Until his death Jörg Schwarzenberger collaborated with the preparations for a big retrospective about the artist-duo K.U.SCH. which from 27th September 2014 until 22th February 2015 will take place in the context of *Zeit Kunst Niederösterreich* in the Landesmuseum of St.Pölten.

Tassilo Blittersdorff, Nowa Huta, February 2014