

MATTHIAS RODACH

Bildhauerei ist
zweifellos wahnsinnig!

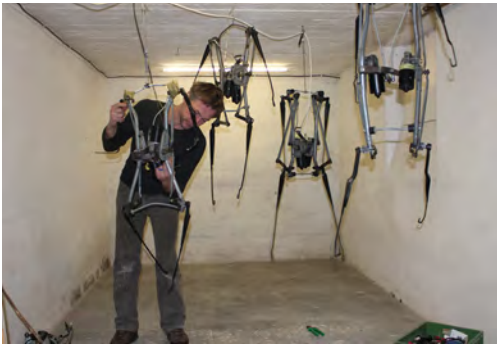


ART DOES NOT REPRODUCE THE VISIBLE, IT RATHER IS MAKING VISIBLE.

PAUL KLEE

LEARNING TO PLAY AGAIN

When I first got into sculpture it was rather some sort of DIY'ing. I bought a welder from the hardware store, searched the scrap yards for any old dumped pieces of metal on my old Vespa, and hoarded the ones that inspired me afterwards at home. I then got into the habit of pushing my father's car out of the garage, plug the tape recorder in and play around with my welder...somehow trying to make a pile of junk look great. The pieces became



bigger and bigger in the course of time. Less and less welds broke, and that really started me off and got me into creating my first three-dimensional objects. And then, one day, I discovered that an angle grinder would cut stone. From that day I was absolutely keen on finding out more about stone and experimenting with all kinds of ways of working in stone.



I had taken my A-levels in Art amongst other subjects and that, of course, gave rise to one question in my family: 'Oh my god, what's going to become of the boy?' They all worried and tried to 'safe' me from death by starvation – it really had an impact on me. And so, instead of studying Art straight away, I became apprenticed to a stonemason and sculptor: a (literally!) 'rock-solid training that might even provide for future family planning'. Just family...we've all been there! Yet apprenticed rather willy-nilly to the stone-craft I was nurturing my desire of acquiring 'measurable skills' for my artistic pursuit at the same time.

I followed the footsteps of my father's take on art. His priestly view on man as the crown of creation became an unchallenged and paramount guiding principle for me as a developing artist. He scorned that rampant modern 'amateurishness' of artists singing their own praise only, 'glorifying' their selves only in their arbitrary artistic ways. – So, I stuck to my craft and came first in the examinations at the regional Chamber of Industry and Commerce at the end of my apprenticeship. And then – almost obsessively in keeping with the views of my father, the parson – I devoted my time completely to the study of the human figure in sculpture at university.



Quite a few years have passed since and yet the human figure stands its ground at the centre of my creative work, or more precisely: life and its ungovernable situations and conditions for all of us stir and affect me. The human presence is simply pivotal in my idea of art. I do not cling to the classic canon of figurative depiction any longer, standards of style and material in particular, I am carefully shaking it off. And so, thinking about new projects has become an adventure, an expedition tugged by my ever recurring leitmotif: human beings in all their abstract versatility.



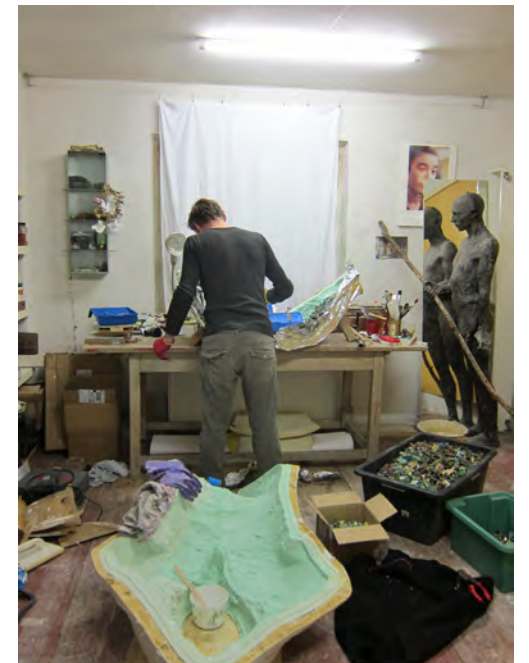
Art has become a process and a wonderful 'key', opening doors of perception. People, entangled in their modern lives, have gained centre stage in my work. Who are we? How do we treat one another? What happens to us while the achievements of humankind, the 'high-speed society', the ever progressing industrialisation, 'machinification', automation, dehumanisation are getting the better of us... ..and how do we do with all that?

These questions and thoughts become poetically condensed in my work. I believe that I've worked off my debts to representational art over the years. Now, image and form have become independent and they make me reach out, try new ideas, demand new materials, and come up with questions that I wouldn't know how to respond to if not by asking questions myself, by trying to stir and animate a process of perception, by attempting to 'unrationalize' and getting down to what I think I really mean.



My new projects have 'paved' a way of unimagined artistic freedom and independence for me. The pressure of having to prove my 'measurable skills' has given in to the joy that I'm no longer performing a canonised task but suddenly feel and perceive what I do. It all takes me back to those days

when I was fifteen, when I knew every nut and bolt of my old scooter. There's a passion in being nitty-gritty and trying to find out about 'the wheels within wheels' of something. This passion has flared up again and now fires my work. I've become an explorer. Concepts, illusions, difficulties, experiments, connections, contradictions, traditions, oppositions have all merged into one: uncharted territory. Life is art, and art is a journey. It keeps me alive and alert, inspires, enthrals, fascinates me, and 'simply' makes me happy. There's clearly a certain madness in



being a sculptor. It's hard, physically demanding work. It can be a real grind and failures lurk always just 'round the corner' and yet, I'm looking forward to all the next exciting steps because I've learned to play again!