

Staging Matters: Mirrors and Memories

Mark Gisbourne

If to stage is to present, to creatively organize, or to cause a series of dramatic effects to take place, then creative forms of installation art and the commensurate design of staged scenarios have much in common. But it needs to be stated immediately that the artist Philipp Fürhofer is not primarily a designer of stage sets, though he has had some considerable recent success in this field. Like many established modern and contemporary artists before him, Fürhofer's imaginative developments derive from the creative mind and pluralities of a painter / sculptor, someone who uses a wide-ranging set of collage-based, assemblage, and / or bricolage approaches in his developmental artistic practice.¹ As a result, the artist has generated a rich and diverse practice that incorporates materials and light, substance and transparency, illusion and presence, the immediacy of one aesthetic experience immersed within the deferment of another. To a viewer, the essential characteristic of Fürhofer's art is a pictorial sense of multiplicity, different sensory points of engagement that go beyond the mere singularity of a determinate and fixed visual experience.

The use of a particularly diverse and materially expansive set of approaches suggests that a reconstituted form of contemporary Baroque aesthetics is pursued and practiced by the artist. This is to say, Fürhofer's painting / sculpture / light-box works and their larger extended installations evoke any number of immediately recognizable theatrical associations, and they do so while simultaneously expanding other pictorial fields of aesthetic assimilation, bringing these fields within the viewer's extended range of visual consciousness—characteristics fundamental to any understanding of the historical and contemporary uses of the Baroque.² Yet this regained sense of Baroque energy—ensuing upon the end of modernism and older teleological forms of grand narrative thinking—is embedded within a large number of tropes or points of historical reference. For Fürhofer, however, an engagement with the past, in themes and subject matter, is not an arbitrary diachronic or linear set of references that are simply raided and repeated; rather, he approaches the past in a palimpsest-like manner that lays the integrated nuances of different contemporary material presences on top of one another.³ Like human memory (recalled or involuntary), this artist's creative effects are synchronous and emotionally interwoven or embedded within one another:

an expressed layering that also echoes the Baroque and the inflected scope of theater and architecture, where collaborative ideas of art, music, design, orchestration, and vision are similarly interwoven by means of a monadological enfolding and juxtaposition.⁴ It is the desire for an intense collaborative approach to creativity that has seduced Fürhofer to participate in several theatrical stage design projects. In fact, as a practice within a practice it enriches and expands our understanding of the motivating force behind his work.

Both the internal dialectic of personal expression and the collaborative approaches of projects for the stage have created a powerful tension and synthesis of interactive energy within the artist's work. Fürhofer thrives on the challenge of individual personal aims and the necessary collaborative reconciliations that are seen in his opera designs. His painted light boxes, mirror foil, and bricolage approaches were first begun in 2005, and further developed through to 2007 while he was still at art school. Frustrated with finding a meaningful personal style—the artist had a particular distaste for forms of overt figurative realism—he initially developed a system of Anselm Kiefer-like layerings of pigments in his paintings. At that time, he painted semi-Expressionistic genre landscapes that in some way reflected his continued (though less urgent) fascination with late nineteenth-century pre-and-proto-Expressionist painters, such as Max Liebermann and Lovis Corinth.⁵ At the same time, the artist became interested in pictorial questions of illusion, with frangible issues of intangibility and transparency, and with those inevitable aesthetic tensions implied by trying to express what we know to be ultimately ungraspable—the psychological optics of pictorial illusion; in other words, what is central to theatricality and commonly called, in the context of the stage, a suspension of disbelief. It was also at this time that Fürhofer's experimental oil and acrylic method of painting on glass was developed, following, perhaps, from his earlier interest in stained glass. Yet, while it provided a valid visual means to achieve certain transparent ends for the artist, this method was nonetheless somewhat intractable in practice and Fürhofer soon adopted alternative plexiglass sheets as a surface more malleable to his expressive needs. To this, he added the use of a silver or bronze mirror foil, two-way mirrors (spy mirrors), and any number of extraneous materials, from electric leads to plastic tubes, from black wrap to various personal objects and random detritus from the studio, all to be incorporated directly into his finished light-box artworks. These painted light-box projects, usually associated with photography, emerged around

2007. The somewhat rough and untutored finish appeals to Fürhofer, as in his mind it intentionally represents a counter current to the slick and highly finished artworks of today. Through this intended material displacement and bricolage approach, painted light-box works and free-standing sculptures, the artist has also introduced an optical sense of viewer interactivity through the use of positive-negative (on-off light switches) using fluorescent strip lighting and / or conventional light bulb systems. Light remains a crucial aspect to consider throughout all of Fürhofer's works, whether in terms of his exhibition installations or stage designs. It is the mastery of and use of light that creates his unique sense of theatrical dramatization.⁶ This has been enriched and expanded upon over the last seven or so years, but still remains the fundamental elements of his art. From these resources, the artist not only creates his painted sculptural objects and installations, but, by extended use and creative variation, is able to generate unforeseen imaginary worlds in the mind's eye of the viewer. At the same time, there is also an internal and open-ended sense of interpretive pictorial interaction between the works themselves when they are installed.⁷

A further aspect needs to be stressed; namely, that throughout Philipp Fürhofer's aesthetic formation, and even earlier, there has been a constant love for the immediate experience of music and opera.⁸ His repeated visits to the Deutsche Staatsoper in Berlin—with a particular emphasis placed on Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi—became, as Fürhofer puts it, “a means of escape” when faced with the different anxieties brought about by his studies at the Universität der Künste Berlin (University of Arts). Starting from his earliest Catholic and Benedictine education in Augsburg, Germany, there has always been a continuous fascination with music and the workings of the theater: “I was not a rebellious child the whole time music and painting preoccupied me,” he says, speaking vividly of his childhood memories of the Augsburger Puppenkiste (marionette theater), which enacted Grimms' fairy tales and made TV appearances on Hessischer Rundfunk. It is also true to say that opera and nineteenth-century Romantic landscape painting has often immediately inspired the artist. But to inspire is not to imitate: “I am not interested in revealing a motif, but a world,” and if several painted light-box works, like the series he executed on the four dramas of Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* or Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*, suggest the woods and forests of German dramatic opera, myth, and fairy tales, their bewitchment and entanglement, they do so in a way that does not seek to directly narrate the story or the events of any given opera as such.⁹ Instead, they tend

to give the viewer an altered sense of personal consciousness in regard to what they actually present around the chosen theme—even, sometimes, involuntary or reimagined states of memory and recall. They offer another reality paradoxically derived from marginal source materials re-orchestrated through artifice and aesthetic displacement: allusions to the uncertain relations between nature and artifice, which are an important concern to the artist. That he often uses marginal aesthetic and non-adjacent source materials to achieve these ends is not denied by Fürhofer—rather they are celebrated—since the finished works are never pristine, but deliberately abraded, cracked, or fissured and somewhat shabby, and have a visual access to random (water pistols, stuffed animals, sometimes studio trash) objects or comical materials placed in the different interiors of the painted light boxes and free-standing works. These constitute the artist’s intended use of an ironic form of displacement: “My visual works are also ironic; for example, when I portray a sunrise using, however, an energy-saving lamp. To begin with, the sunrise is rather holy, it is a well-known subject in art history and religion, in which the mind frame of the Enlightenment or Romanticism resonates.”¹⁰ It follows for Fürhofer that unlike the conventions of Classical irony, which simply means to “to dissimulate” or “to feign,” Romantic irony is “a consistent alternation of affirmation and negation, of exuberant emergence from oneself and self-critical retreat into oneself, of enthusiasm and skepticism.”¹¹ A dichotomous use of irony and pictorial contradiction has become, by intention, ever more evident in Philipp Fürhofer’s recent works, operating and extending the open-ended avenues of interpretation and meaning that exist in his art.¹²

The mixed utilization of painting, mirrors and light, different foils and plexiglass, therefore, opens up the painted light boxes to greater theoretical concerns. The use and role played by mirroring engages with established theories of the *speculum*, and in purely psychological terms alone, is central to the creation of individual apperception as regards objectivity, subjectivity, and the development of human identity.¹³ Mirrors are commonly used by artists for the purposes of self-presentation and portraiture; mirror reflections both present and distort, they create a doubled sense of seeing, the seen and the imagined, a literal reflection and inferred inflection, a seeing as, and, at the same time, a seeing through and beyond. This was evident in early painted window installations by the artist, such as in the exhibition *Transference* (2008) at Galerie Lena Brüning in Berlin, which was an apparently violent street scene somewhat opaque in daylight, but intensely real when the gallery was lit at

night. Painted on the interior of the street-facing windows, it was a simultaneous “transference” of exteriorized street realities and an interiorized sense of imaginary projection—the space between street and theater. In the same year, the artist had just executed his first unique stage design installation at Aedes Pfefferberg in Berlin for Béla Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*. It was a wall with an endoscopic entry into a body, backlit with spotlighting, and gave a sort of behind-glass experience. This intimate intermingling of gallery exhibition installation and the use of set design represents the two sides of Fürhofer’s psyche: highly personal forms of immediate expressive inspiration and the collective synthesis of collaborative sublimation. Self-reflexive synthesis is therefore an appropriate term to describe the artist’s actual use of means and methods of working. Since, philosophically speaking, synthesis represents the mediation between idea and sensation, the conceptual and the sensory, between nature and artifice, it is best exemplified in the artist’s expressive window installations: *Ambiance Global* for the exhibition *Plastic Romanticism* (2010) at Grantpirrie in Sydney, as well as *Life Is Out There* (2009) at both NotFair and Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan. The former is an oil-on-acrylic glass, backlit landscape scene, which has been realized in the gallery window space by using suspended water pipes and wooden slats—an example of the artist’s fascination with the phenomena of illusionary perception, his particular concern (as stated) with looking at, looking in, and at the same time looking through pictorially conceived and / or actual material spaces.¹⁴ The use of light to alter temporal perceptions at different times of day is similarly evident in the oil-and-lacquer-painted window of the Milan installation, where flexed lightbulb units punctuate the interior of the two-sided window space.

When seen in retrospect, the years 2008 to 2010, in the wake of establishing his independent practice, were crucial to the development of the artist. Fürhofer, having found his own unique visual vocabulary, was able to extend its use and expressive means, creating a whole variety of different sensory environments and presences that used painting and a strange array of unpredictable source materials and desiderata. In the painted light boxes that were developed by the artist through these years, we find different landscape works or abstracted objects in new configurations, where the artist was able to create new forms in synthesis through bricolage, and by which he was able to extend the language of collage and assemblage into new areas of aesthetic perception and visual experience.¹⁵ In the subject matter of these numerous works, we find a twofold inflection: the studio-driven works of experimentation and the

collaborative world outside as an extension, a simultaneous sensory awareness of theater beyond the studio. In examples like *Künstlerische Existenz* (Artistic Existence, 2009), *Blue Life* (2010), or *Unbestimmte Art* (Indefinite Kind, 2010), there are the typical conventional concerns and anxieties reflecting the long hours that are spent by a painter in the studio. They represent an intense state of mind sometimes called the psychopathology of solitude, or, sometimes more vaguely, the creative life of a withdrawn artistic introspection.¹⁶ These studio-driven works indicate the different processes of experiment and material innovation pursued by Fürhofer, his increasing use of three dimensionality through free-standing sculptures like the paired columns called *Farbsäule* (Color Column, 2008) and *Hochhinaus* (High Above, 2008). There were also pyramid-like innovations such as *Drunt im Tal* (Down in the Valley, 2009) and *Muschel* (Mollusc, 2010), a strange floor-based and lozenge-like form executed in acrylic, oil, and lacquer, with metal barrel, first shown at Munich's Pinakothek der Moderne in 2010. Alongside these experiments were the painted light boxes, often with highly Romantic and sensory themes, such as *Wasserspiegel* (Water Mirror, 2009), or *6 x 36 W* (2009), revealing gesturally expressive and pictorially operatic landscapes of paint and mirror foil. In these cited instances, the works were backlit with florescent tubes, and in other related works with lightbulb units. That they are operatic in tone is vindicated shortly thereafter by *Grüße aus Bayreuth* (Greetings from Bayreuth, 2010), a free-standing rectangular sculpture encased in plexiglass, with a painted landscape and a kitsch floral armchair emerging from a coniferous forest. This Wagnerian reference was an intuitive creative response that was no doubt later magnified after Fürhofer's meeting with Stefan Herheim, the director of the most recent production of *Parsifal* at the Bayreuther Festspiele.¹⁷ From 2009 to 2010, an increased focus was placed by the artist on landscape and on nature and artifice, ideas that play with, yet substantialize (as image) and subvert (as material), the archetypal representations associated with the landscape of Romantic imagery.¹⁸ It is noticeable that from this time onward, the double psyche of the studio and the stage are increasingly harmonized into the ideas and working practices of Fürhofer. This was when he came to fully realize that creativity could be collaborative and emotionally rewarding, an idea which has come to shape and be reflected in the tensions currently found in the two sides of the artist's creative personality.

When he adapts the same variability of synthetically displaced materials and their extended use for the stage, they become writ large, and Fürhofer's creative mental life

turns markedly from the withdrawn private world of personal expression to what he sees as the thrilling world of shared aims and collaborative realizations. Whereas an individual artist may pursue self-expression, stage design requires a degree of synthesis and at times frustrated sublimation, since the point of departure (namely, the music and libretto) is preordained. His fascination with Wagnerian musical drama (the composer had a distaste for the term opera) and its dramatic staging of narrative themes is an admiration for the principle and aspirations of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* approach proclaimed by the great nineteenth-century master.¹⁹ While the quality of the singing is clearly of primary importance to an opera, it is not the first or most pressing interest to Philipp Fürhofer, when set against what he sees as the wider issues of a dramatic staging and the musical mastery of a given libretto. A pursuit of the visual and aural synthesis needed to bring the different elements together is the artist's primary motivation throughout—he is fascinated by the need to reconcile all the different parts of the drama in musical and visual terms. The artist's stage designs for the production of *Eugene Onegin* at De Nederlandse Opera in 2011 were much larger in scale than he had previously attempted. But again Fürhofer—as with his gallery exhibition works—used the principle of mirrors and mirroring, and an enormous rotatable stage cube was established,²⁰ which generated and continually sustained a dramatic underpinning of illusion (as disillusion) and allegorical yearning.²¹ This approach was made in part to engage with the restless disquietude of the character of Onegin, and expressed in the staging by the idea of emotional shadows and illusions, since behind and within the actual glass structure they were nothing more than emotionally-charged affective projections.²² The opera posed questions as regards traditional and historical attitudes to patriarchy and oligarchy—using both historical period and contemporary modes of dress—and ending up as a critique in some measure of the tasteless nouveau riche oligarchs of contemporary Russia. In another stage set commission for the Mieczysław Weinberg opera *The Passenger*, realized by the artist at Karlsruhe's Badisches Staatstheater in 2013, mirrors were again used to express issues of narrative reality and illusion.²³ In what was a split-level production that dealt in flashback with two time sequences (an ocean liner and a concentration camp), Fürhofer (who also designed the costumes) pursued questions of illusion in terms of space and locality, and here he adopted mirrors, a diaphanous curtain, and florescent strip lighting to create his unique staging effects. All the characters were clothed in the same non-descript pseudo-uniform outfits at the outset, but

progressively, and by adjusting different aspects of the garments (belts, and other accoutrement), the master-slave concentration camp mentality emerged on the stage. By the simple means of projection, with the chorus sometimes placed behind a back screen, as well as the creation of smoke effects (simultaneously inferring the Auschwitz gas chambers and the smoking funnel of the liner) and projected light, a complex interplay of pictorial elements frames the drama with contemporary aspects of the Baroque.

Just as *The Passenger* was frontal facing in terms of its immediate presentation, the large stage at Covent Garden's Royal Opera House in London posed questions of another magnitude. In his recent stage designs for Verdi's *Les vêpres siciliennes*, the artist faced a strange potpourri of unresolved ideas and a barely tenable libretto dealing with the famous historical massacre.²⁴ It was resolved in part by staging a performance within a performance, beginning in a ballet rehearsal room, and by further emphasizing familial and social aspects at work in the libretto narrative.²⁵ The work seemingly drew upon the nineteenth-century Italo-French movement of Carbonari (literally, "charcoal burners") revolutionaries and their history—a context that Verdi, as a young composer, would have known well—as opposed to the historically disjointed medieval events that purported to be the subject matter of the opera.²⁶ Fürhofer conceived the piece by continually turning and inverting the staging walls through numerous positions to progress the story line and reveal the two-sided narratives, while making great use of the mirror wall of the ballet rehearsal room—the opera had been conceived in the French convention though much against Verdi's personal wishes to include a ballet. There was more than a hint of Edgar Degas with the indirect reference to potentially adolescent ballerinas, whose status in nineteenth-century France was extremely sexually ambiguous. What emerged was a sense of theater within theater, and in a certain respect appeared extremely Baroque, since performance within performance as theater comes from the tradition of masque and ballet, from which early opera began.²⁷ The use of a cold gold industrial car paint as part of the staging, and the reference to Mount Etna, as well as continuous shifts and varieties of lighting, gave the work a strong sense of the negative-positive (on / off, hot / cold) tension and ironic polarities that we have now become familiar with in Philipp Fürhofer's practice.

I conclude my essay by referring to the first major museum show of the artist in 2012

at the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum. As already indicated, Fürhofer's use of installation has created a free interplay between exhibition presentation and his designs for the stage. The two have become closely interwoven, since they form the inside and outside of his creative mental make up. And this was certainly the case in the dramatically lit exhibition in Munich he called *Breakthrough*. The exhibition contained a variety of developments since 2010, where textual and transposed landscape image contents started to appear regularly in either drawn or stencil-like forms expressed in the artist's familiar acrylic, oil paint, spy mirrors, lighting, and painted light boxes. In works like *Im Schatten stehen* (Standing in Shadow, 2011), and two other works entitled *Der Morgen alias C. Lorrain* (The Morning alias C. Lorrain, 2011) and *Copyright C. Lorrain* (2011), respectively, the landscape references move from former Romantic inversions of irony to outright parody. The Baroque artist Claude Lorrain is seen by many art historians as the forefather of the proto-Romantic landscape painting tradition that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, with his pseudo-historical and allegorical painting disguised and immersed in the diurnal transitions of nature.²⁸ We can have little doubt that this was part of Fürhofer's vision: a painted light box entitled *Green Water alias J. A. Koch* (2011), incorporating details from the German Romantic painters Joseph Anton Koch, is also included as a work in the *Breakthrough* exhibition. Extracted details of selected Lorrain paintings are transposed to the interior plexiglass and mirror foils of the painted light boxes, but have now become all but completely cast into pictorial worlds of a light-on / light-off aesthetic alluding to a simulated presence. Similarly, *Blätterwald 45* (Forest of Leaves 45, 2011) is little more than a mock resume of an orchestrated sense of the natural, with synthetic flowers, and represents figures seated in the foreground apparently surveying what we might like to imagine as mock song sheets. It is only by these indirect and intentionally obtuse approaches that Fürhofer references history in his works—it is left to the viewer to fill out and deduce any possible meaning. The "45" reference of *Blätterwald 45* actually refers to the Potsdam Conference of 1945, as the work called *1848 mal x* (1848 times x, 2011) no doubt refers to the revolutionary failures of 1848. There is also an expanded emphasis of large-scale painted sculptural works in this exhibition, as in the wittily entitled *CERN—I Hope it Won't Hurt Much* (2011), that makes reference to the Large Hadron Collider and the scientific search for the Higgs-Boson particle (the so-called God particle that is believed to explain the Standard Model of the big bang, or "how the universe got started"). Its octagonal

format looks like a fissured Christmas cracker with mattress contents and extruding fluorescent tubes. This is perhaps less a critique on failed Romanticism as it is a parody of the utopian imaginings of delusional science. The aspiration of hope and failed utopianism is a constant theme throughout many of Fürhofer's works, just as triumph of synthesis as artifice is made instrumentally clear in *Osram Enlightenment* (2011), which uses paints, scraped drawing, colored pencils, and an energy-saving lamp. The interaction between the stage design themes and the installation of the Munich exhibition is immediately self-evident in a small cube box called *Plastic Iguazu* (2011), depicting the famous waterfall, with railing, on the border of Brazil and Argentina at Paraná, made either before, after, or perhaps at the same time as the *Eugene Onegin* stage design cube. In *Schwarzes Loch über Adidas* (Black Hole over Adidas, 2011), a pair of Adidas sneakers appears under a dome-like plexiglass hood, and is accompanied by a flat-screen video loop installation of the object in an active and inactive state.²⁹ The cosmological black hole theme no doubt came to mind in relation to cosmological thinking about the *CERN* sculpture. The profane and commonplace objects—a washing machine, bits of carpet, pullovers, cables—all appear and are assimilated within this unique and synthetic bricolage vocabulary that the artist has developed. The work *Wasserfall* (Waterfall, 2011) is a loose-hanging painted curtain made of PVC plastic that occupied a desultory doorway as one entered the dramatic installation in the Munich exhibition space.³⁰ At times, Fürhofer is clearly influenced by other artists, as his concern with looking through the surface into what is behind is reminiscent of earlier masters like Sigmar Polke, as well as artists and movements that have used mirrors and mirroring, such as Michelangelo Pistoletto and Mario Merz from the Arte Povera movement, or Robert Smithson from the Land Art movement.³¹ That said, the intensely expressive, almost German Expressionist, qualities mastered by Philipp Fürhofer bring to his creative endeavors a unique interdisciplinary situation. As a committed artist, he has become rapidly accomplished in his practices and procedures, bringing a personal stylistic clarity to the realizations of his creative aims and ambitions.

1 Quotes in text by Philipp Fürhofer are from extended taped conversations with the artist, and currently in possession of the author, unless otherwise stated.

One can immediately think of many similar and famous examples throughout the twentieth century: Pablo Picasso had a particularly prolific period from 1917 to 1924, designing stage sets with Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (Erik Satie and Jean Cocteau's *Parade*, 1917; Manuel de Falla's *Le tricorne*, 1919; Igor Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, 1920, among others). See Deborah Menaker Rothchild, *Picasso's Parade: From Street to Stage* (London, 1991); Olivier Berggruen and Max Hollein, eds., *Picasso and the Theater*, exh. cat. Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (Osfildern, 2006). Similarly, Georges Braque worked with Diaghilev (*Les Fâcheux*, Paris, 1924; *Zéphire et Flore*, 1925; *Les Sylphides*, 1926), as well as with Darius Milhaud (*Salade*, 1926). See Boris Kochno et al., *Les fâcheux: théâtre Serge de Diaghilew* (Paris, 1924). Also of interest are Salvador Dalí's provocative and famously erotic designs for Richard Strauss's *Salome* (directed by Peter Brook, 1949) and stage designs by David Hockney, as shown in the exhibition *Hockney Paints the Stage* in 1985. This collaboration has become an increasing phenomenon, as the artist can often bring something different to traditional scenography.

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See Kelly A. Wacker, ed., *Baroque Tendencies in Contemporary Art* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2007).

3 Jacques Derrida claimed that human lives are a multilayered collection of traces rather than simply linear existences, and in doing so he re-utilized the old word "palimpsest," which originally that referred to an old vellum (calf-skin parchment) manuscript. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1976) (Baltimore, 1997).

4

See Gilles Deleuze, "What Is Baroque," in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988), trans. Tom Conley (London, 1993), pp. 27–38.

5

For an insight into Liebermann's views on art, see Max Liebermann und Günter Busch, *Die Phantasie in der Malerei: Schriften und Reden* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978); for Corinth's, see Lovis Corinth et al., *Lovis Corinth* (London, 1996).

6

See Max Keller, *Light Fantastic: The Art and Design of Stage Lighting* (1999), 3rd edition (London, 2010).

7

Gudrun Szczepanek, “Philipp Fürhofer on the Series *Breakthrough*,” in *Breakthrough*, exh. cat. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, (Munich, 2012), pp. 73–78.

8

The artist speaks of having seen the same production of Giuseppe Verdi’s *Macbeth* some fifteen times, and similarly many repeated performances of a number of works by Richard Wagner. He suggests that on each occasion he understood and concentrated increasingly on the inner collaborative working processes that went into the making of the operas. This information is derived from an extended conversation with the artist.

9

Fürhofer’s free-standing painted light box entitled *Der Freischütz* (2013) ((Is this *Freischütz*, 224 W?)) is a case in point, and appeared in the exhibition *XIX. Rohkunstbau: Moral* (August 11–September 22, 2013, Kulturschloss Roskow, Brandenburg). See Mark Gisbourne, “Public Virtues and Private Desires,” pp. 12–25. ((In which book did this essay appear?))

10

Gudrun Szczepanek 2012 (see note 8), p. 77.

11

Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan, eds., *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 633–35. The theory of Romantic irony derives from an essay by Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel, who not only coined the term “Romantic” as it related to literature (circa the seventeen-nineties), but wrote an essay that reformulated an understanding of irony in 1797. See Kevin Newmark, *Irony on Occasion: From Schlegel and Kierkegaard to Derrida and de Man* (New York, 2012).

12

See Christine Lemke-Matwey, “Gefährliche Liebschaften / Dangerous Liaisons,” in *Philipp Fürhofer: Missing Links*, exh. cat. Galerie Lena Brüning (Berlin, 2010), pp. 41–43.

13

Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I,” in *Écrits: a Selection* (1966), trans. Alan Sheridan (London, 2001), p. 5ff.

14 Due to a serious heart-valve replacement operation in 2006, while aged only twenty-four, Philipp Fürhofer had to spend a considerable amount of time in hospital. He became fascinated by the X-ray machine located close to his bed, and one might be tempted to think that the artist's fascination with "looking at" and "looking through" derives in some measure from this immediate experience. This information is derived from an extended conversation with the artist.

15

The term "bricolage," originally from the French, means quite literally a "free manipulation or tinkering," and is the method by which artworks are created from commonplace materials. Creative artists and musicians that use this imaginative and spontaneous approach to life are also called *bricoleur*. See Dick Hebdige, "Subculture: The Meaning of Style," in Michael Ryan, ed., *Cultural Studies: An Anthropology* (Malden, Massachusetts, 2008), pp. 587–98.

16 See Robert J. Coplan and Julie C. Bowker, eds., *The Handbook of Solitude: Psychological Perspectives on Social Isolation, Social Withdrawal, and Being Alone* (Oxford, 2014).

17 After meeting the Norwegian opera director, Fürhofer subsequently undertook the recent stage designs for Giuseppe Verdi's *Les vêpres siciliennes* (Royal Opera House, London, 2013) and built upon his success in designing the sets for Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (De Nederlandse Opera, Amsterdam, 2011). That he received these commissions was related to the fact that Stefan Herheim liked the artist's painted light-box constructions. This information is derived from an extended conversation with the artist.

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See the essay by Susanne Prinz, "Schneewittchensärge . . . einige Beobachtungen zu den Bildkästen von Philipp Fürhofer / Snow White Sarcophagi . . . Some Observations on the Picture Boxes of Philipp Fürhofer," *Philipp Fürhofer: Missing Links*, exh. cat. Galerie Lena Brüning (Berlin, 2010), pp. 35–38.

19

See Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, (London, 1993). For a general overview of the history and contemporary theories of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, see Anke Finger and Danielle Follett, eds., *The Aesthetics of the Total Artwork: On Borders and Fragments* (London, 2011).

20 Tschaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* was directed by Stefan Herheim and conducted by Mariss Jansons at De Nederlandse Opera, Amsterdam. See **Pyotr Ilyich Tschaikovsky, *Eugene Onegin* (Richmond, 2011) ((can't locate, please confirm))**. This extensive publication is a complete guide to the opera, including accompanying essays dealing with its performance history.

21

For a discussion on the role of narrative and literary yearning, see Susan Stewart, "The Miniature," in idem., *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (London, 1993), pp. 37–69. The chapter devoted to the "Objects of Desire" may also be of interest to the reader, pp. 132–69.

22

The artist speaks of an essay by the art historian Horst Bredekamp, which he has read and which he sees in retrospect vindicates his approach to stage design. See Mischa Kuball, ed., *Platon's Mirror and the Actuality of the Cave Allegory* (Cologne, 2012).

23

The German production *Die Passagierin* began on March 21, 2013, and was directed by Holger Müller-Brandes and conducted by Christoph Gedschold. The opera is by the Soviet (Polish-Jewish) composer Mieczysław Weinberg, with Alexander Medvedev as the librettist. It was first staged as an opera at the Bregenzer Festspiele in 2010. The subject is a holocaust theme told in flashback from the perspective of a German female concentration commandant, who, on an ocean liner trip to Brazil in the late nineteen-fifties, sees a woman on board she recognizes but who she knows to be dead from her wartime past. The opera scenes move between the ocean liner of the present and the horrors of the prison camp, with the drama performed on a split stage. The subject is derived from a radio play *The Passenger from Cabin 45* by the Polish writer Zofia Posmysz, and based in part on her own life experiences in Auschwitz.

24 This particular production ran in October 2013 and was directed by Stefan Herheim and conducted by Antonio Pappano. First commissioned by the Paris Opera, the drama *Les vêpres siciliennes* (The Sicilian Vespers) owes little to the factual historical events it purports to engage with; namely, the Italo-French conflict (the papacy against the Holy Roman Emperor) at the end of the thirteenth century. For an understanding of the subject matter and contextual history, see Clifford R. Backman, *The Decline and Fall of Medieval Sicily: Politics, Religion, and Economy in*

the Reign of Frederick III, 1296–1337 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002).

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26

Giuseppe Verdi (Fortunio Francesco) was born in Le Roncole near Busseto in 1813, at that time part of the First French Empire of Napoleon, as the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza, and, following his baptism in Latin, registered with the Italian as well as French versions of his name. See George Martin, *Verdi: His Music, Life and Times* (New York, 1986): “So it happened that for the civil and temporal world Verdi was born a Frenchman . . . ,” p. 3.

27

Donald Jay Grout, Hermine Weigel Williams, “The Immediate Forerunners of Opera,” in idem., *A Short History of Opera* (1947), 4th revised edition (London, 2003), pp. 21–40.

28

See Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain* (London, 1990). This is an investigation from the seventeenth century into an “ideal” landscape as an imagined construction; today the postmodern and contemporary Baroque would similarly argue that theories of the natural and of nature are constructed cultural, philosophical, and sociological fictions.

29

The artist had previously executed videos, most notably the project *Contrast Medium*, part of a commission for NotFair Gallery and the Accademia di Brera in Milan in 2009.

30

Philipp Fürhofer and Gudrun Szczepanek, *Breakthrough*, exh. cat. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (Munich, 2012), n. p. ((other parts of this book are cited with page numbers? See endnote 8))

31 See Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Arte Povera* (London, 2005); Brian Wallis and Jeffrey Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art* (London, 2010).