

van den Berg, Karen:

The unconditional museum and the fragile logic of the ensemble,

in: Silke von Berswordt Wallrabe and Friederike Wappler (Eds.): Situation
Kunst – for Max Imdahl. The Extension 2006, Düsseldorf, Richter, 2008:
S. 9-29.

Translated by Isabel Feder.

The Unconditional Museum and the Fragile Logic of the Ensemble

1. *Inventing a museum*

"What is your function on this planet?" was a question the supposedly extra-terrestrial Coneheads used to ask their guests on "Saturday Night Live" in the 1970s.¹ Today museums are facing a similarly fundamental question. Despite the public recognition they enjoy, their function in society is extremely controversial.

The previously close links between museums, the state, and bourgeois society are breaking down. Public collections once helped to mold the cultural identity of young nation-states² and countries, but in pluralistic societies aware of contingency, the museum's aspiration to determine cultural interpretation is coming under increasing fire.³ More and more, the museum is regarded as an institution that derives from specifically European, bourgeois educational ideas, as a model associated with a specific approach to the transmission of knowledge – a remarkable hybrid situated between representation and the construction of meaning that seems inextricably

bound up with colonialist forms of appropriating the world.⁴ One of the paradoxes of our era is that the growing "storage problem(s) of historically accelerated societies"⁵ should have triggered such a huge boom in museum building at the very time when the concept of the museum as a time-resistant archive and material memory of the historically valid, authentic, and culturally valuable is being viewed ever more critically.⁶

Strategies of arrangement and labeling that claim to be universally valid and through which museums present themselves as time-resistant guarantors of advanced "civilization" have become particularly suspect. When the Museum of Modern Art's new building, which cost \$858 million, was inaugurated in New York in November 2004, the hegemonic American art historiography underlying its presentational rhetoric was harshly criticized; the message that the new MoMA would present "modern art's definitive history" was felt to have been communicated far too loudly.⁷ Today's information societies have, above all, learned to cope with an unprecedented dynamization of knowledge. Increasing attention is being focused on how fleeting images of history and the world, as well as their narrative structures, can be.⁸ Yet this very trend seems at the same time to be generating a need for endorsement that a historical "reputation machine"⁹ like the Museum of Modern Art promises to satisfy through its artificial canonizations.¹⁰

The legitimization of museums as temples for "viewing, enjoying, and admiring" described by Goethe in his *Italian Journey*¹¹ or as institutions for bourgeois self-ascertainment¹² is no longer possible, however. Their audience has changed as fundamentally as their relationship to the public.¹³ In media-

driven societies significantly characterized by reduced attention spans, the public must constantly be redefined.¹⁴ Yet how? Is it now one of the key tasks of a museum to create presence and validity or to provide entertainment? The much-lamented “eventization” and “Disneyfication”¹⁵ of museums and the compulsion to expand that seems to have been the inevitable result of a kind of pressure to increase market share in any case justifiably raises the question of why the general public should support entertainment masquerading as museum programs at a time when the status of museums as institutions for public education is being undermined by the accelerating trend toward entertainment. Yet what form could the specifically educational function of museums – once the basis for state support and public recognition – take today?

When I was invited to write a text about the concept of the extension to Situation Kunst in Bochum-Weitmar, I immediately found it plausible to see that museum as an unexpectedly uncompromising answer to that very question about museums’ educational function, for – as I shall seek to show in what follows – Situation Kunst can be seen as one of the most unusual models for a museum created in recent years. Its extension, in particular, represents a decisive, unconventional setting that prefigures a very specific kind of visual experience. Based on a response schooled by Western contemporary art, the museum, with daring firmness, places historic pictorial objects from Asia and Africa in an unusual perspective – and combines them with contemporary artworks.

Situation Kunst’s first buildings were constructed in the 1980s, on the initiative of the collector and gallerist Alexander von

Berswordt-Wallrabe and under the influence of the art historian and first Professor of Art History at the Ruhr-University Bochum, Max Imdahl.¹⁶ Even then, a new kind of museum was envisaged: a place that would stimulate its visitors’ senses in a very special manner.¹⁷

For Imdahl, the project’s theorist, art history was a discipline for exploring the way in which art is experienced, rather than a historical reconstruction of the conditions of its creation. More than any other art historian of the postwar period, Imdahl stood for the development of an analytical approach to works of art founded primarily on how viewers look at them and their structure. With the theoretical approach he called “iconics,” which, as he put it, “[seeks] to focus on an insight belonging solely to the medium of the image and that can essentially be gained only there,”¹⁸ Imdahl emphasized the “language of the image that nothing else can replace.”¹⁹

Inspired by the principles of iconics, Alexander von Berswordt-Wallrabe, the Bochum gallerist who founded Situation Kunst and was a friend of Max Imdahl, set out to formulate an approach to the exhibition of artworks that would encourage a special kind of sensual perception through the atmosphere it created. At the same time, however, the museum’s university links and its activities relating to the transmission of knowledge meant that this model would acknowledge the concept of the museum as an educational institution, for Situation Kunst describes itself as a “teaching collection” simultaneously open to the public. In 1990 ownership of the museum and its collection was therefore transferred to the Ruhr University.

In the pages that follow I should like to explore the basic features of Situation Kunst’s

concept, with particular reference to the extension inaugurated in 2006.²⁰ Through an analysis of individual objects' settings and, above all, of the interrelationships, the choreography of the rooms, and the method of presentation, I shall attempt to define the inner logic of the new type of museum created here, which focuses in a surprisingly unconditional manner on looking, slow motion, and smallness of scale, and which, through the range and juxtaposition of its exhibits, asks us to put our senses to work in a very special way.

2. *The semantics of the site*

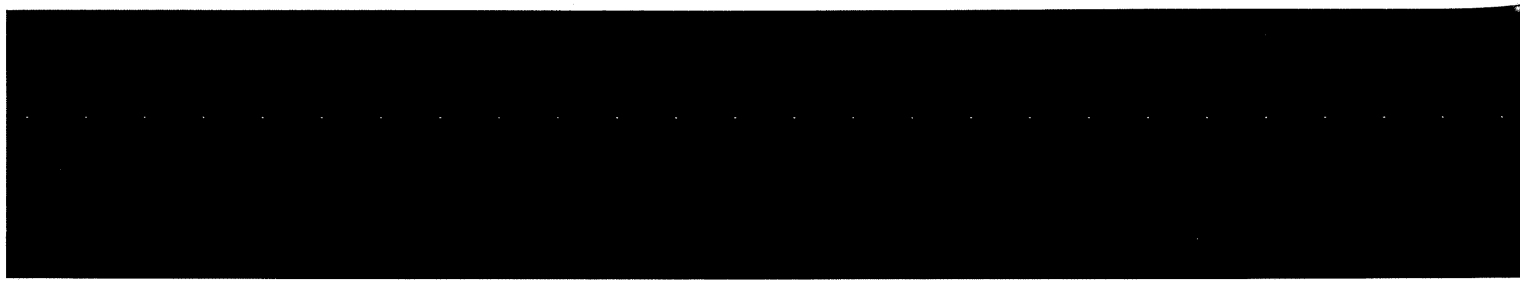
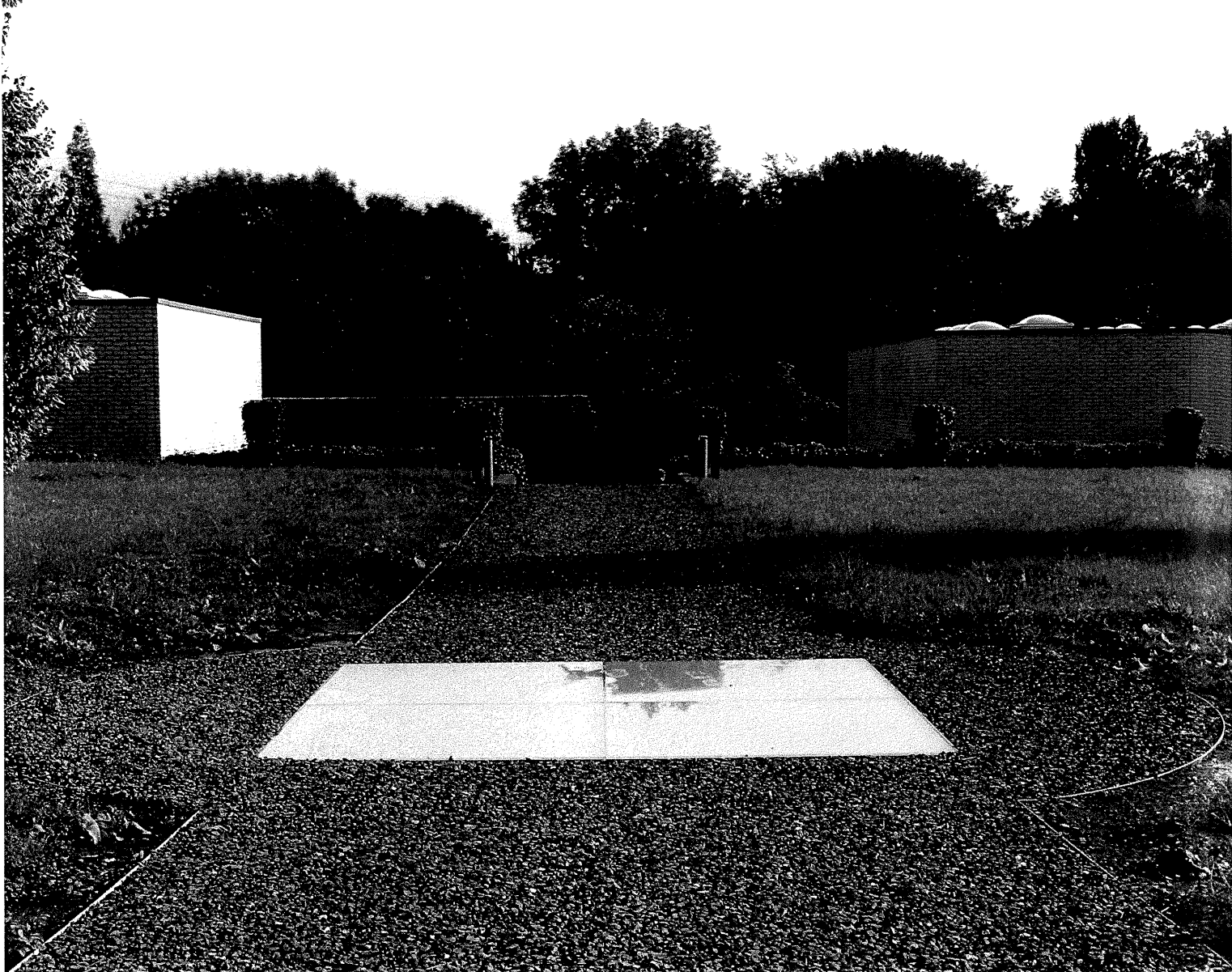
Prosaic as it may seem to dwell explicitly on a museum's geographical location, the decision to site Situation Kunst on the grounds of Haus Weitmar, an estate on the outskirts of Bochum, was a remarkable one. It reflected historical coincidence, the land having belonged to the von Berswordt-Wallrabe family since 1780, but there was nothing to have precluded building the new museum in a more central location in the town or closer to the university. The decision to use the grounds of Haus Weitmar had clear consequences: one has to go there intentionally and allow ample time for a visit.

The museum's location on the outskirts of the industrial town of Bochum is far from prestigious. Arriving from the busy main road, you can easily overlook the gatehouse and the entrance to the grounds. In these surroundings, it is therefore all the more surprising to find yourself in a park designed in the style of an English landscape garden and graced with mature stands of trees.²¹ The ruins of a manor house and a chapel, some architectural elements of which date back as far as the thirteenth century, stand on the edge of the park.²² Strolling through the grounds, one

comes across several sculptures: for example, those by the German sculptor Ulrich Rückriem and the Korean artist Lee Ufan.

Locating Situation Kunst in this context can be seen less as an accident than as a tribute to the tradition of the English landscape garden, which developed in the eighteenth century when a number of aristocratic reformers rejected the rigid order of the previously popular French garden in favor of a park that reproduced and idealized natural landscape formations. Founded on the idea of a freely accessible landscape painting, the English landscape garden – in deference to the Enlightenment's educational ideal – was also conceived as a publicly accessible place for self-reflection and contemplation.²³

Situation Kunst's location on the edge of such a park has a determining impact on our visual response, being a kind of prearranged setting. The museum complex does not, however, merge seamlessly with its surroundings, for Situation Kunst's architectural ensemble is neither close to nature nor picturesque. Enclosed by an uninviting fence, it is composed of cubic building blocks made of gray cement stone occupying hard, rectangular areas. Yet the surrounding park prepares us for a certain visual semantics: Situation Kunst offers us a space for aesthetic experience, not an encyclopedic classification with didactic labels, explanations, and accompanying texts, as is customary in many museums, especially teaching collections. Labels are kept to a minimum, while those that exist are discreetly placed, almost hidden, and none are to be found in the rooms with environments, so that information about the works can be obtained only from a catalogue of the collection that is made available or by talking to custodians.²⁴



The first building in the complex – with the contemplative work *Room with Two Doors*, by the U.S.-based artist Maria Nordman – has to be accessed from the park.²⁵ Slightly further along, on the fence, there is only a bell and details of the opening times. There is no portal or main entrance, and at first it is not obvious which building should be entered first.²⁶ The overall impact is not pleasant or inviting; the architectural landscape seems to offer resistance, resembling one of Foucault's "counter-spaces."²⁷

The site is on two levels. Lower down there is a 1980s complex consisting of buildings specifically designed to house selected works. Higher up, on a plateau separated from the first set of buildings by a wall but linked to it by a ramp, there is a meadow, at the far end of which stands another, slightly larger, cross-shaped building: it is this construction, the museum's extension, that I should now like to examine more closely.

3. *Death even before the beginning*

Only a narrow path leads across the wildflower meadow to the extension to Situation Kunst. Its flanking pillars, the course followed by the path leading to it, and the strong emphasis on its median axis make it seem imposing compared with the extremely understated lower architectural complex. The fact that the path leads to a central door and the extension's triptych-like structure lend it an almost sacred quality. To both the right and left of the entrance, the pillars demarcate a small courtyard. The courtyard on the left-hand side contains an impressively large, twisted branch from a rare kind of tree: the dwarf beech found only in the Süntelgebirge. A photograph indicates that the branch is not an artifact but the relic of a three- to four-

hundred-year-old natural monument from the surrounding park.²⁸ Like a tombstone for a dead tree, this place with its ivy-covered columns establishes a strangely melancholic link to its surroundings.

Relatum – Response, a sculpture created by Lee Ufan in 2004, is located on the other side of the entrance, in the second outdoor courtyard. It consists of two identically sized rectangular steel plates lying on the ground, the longitudinal sides of which are contiguous and slightly overlap. A large boulder rests on one of the two steel plates, which is embedded in the ground as if pressed down by the boulder's weight. In surprising contrast to what we see, however, the label refers to two steel plates and two boulders. "A second rock," writes Silke von Berswordt-Wallrabe in her text about Lee Ufan, "is in fact buried beneath the sheet of steel."²⁹ The reference to a hidden "extra" emphasizes the reality of the boulder that is visible on the steel plate; it acquires an accentuated presence through our knowledge of its invisible companion, achieving a kind of pathos by virtue of its existence. It is, on the other hand, tempting to think of the boulder buried beneath the other steel plate as being safe and sound.

The Egyptologist and memory theorist Jan Assmann has suggested that compensation for man's knowledge of his own mortality lies at the heart of every form of cultural practice.³⁰ In a related sense, art theorists have also noted that sculpture, in particular, has deep anthropological roots in the desire to overcome human transience.³¹ Along much the same lines, the outdoor part of Situation Kunst's extension seems to link the creation of images and their exhibition in museums with responses to human mortality and man's desire to leave lasting memorials, for – not

only symbolically but also in a surprisingly real way³² – it emphasizes how closely burial and lifting up are connected with death. Inside the extension, this first impression crystallizes into something more definite. With Richard Serra's sculpture *TOT* in the inner courtyard, the motif of vanitas moves literally to center stage. The museum becomes a place that defies mortality in two respects: first, its construction was inspired by the idea of creating a lasting home specifically designed to house a particular group of objects; and, second, many of the works explicitly illustrate the theme of transience.

4. *Revising our gaze*

The entrance hall of Situation Kunst's extension, which is named after the Dutch museum director Piet van Daalen,³³ has a pivotal function. To the right a staircase leads downstairs, where there is a multipurpose room for temporary exhibitions, seminars, and reading in a small open library. Straight ahead there is a doorway between the entrance hall and the area where the permanent collection is displayed. To both the left and the right of the entrance door there is a bench that invites us to sit down. Two paintings by U.S. artists placed very high on the walls, one by Robert Ryman and the other by Ad Reinhardt, and two reliefs by the Dutchman Jan J. Schonhooven, one to the right and one to the left of the entrance door, are positioned like omens that direct our gaze. The works are all apparently monochrome – either black or white – and look extremely reductive at first sight. Ryman's and Schonhooven's works are disconcertingly laconic, seeming to refer solely to their own structure and manufacture.³⁴

The Black Paintings that Reinhardt created from countless strata of colored pigment

layered one upon the other are, on the other hand, paintings of negation. *Abstract Painting* #20, the work exhibited here, dates from 1956, the year in which Reinhardt decided he would henceforth create only the black paintings he called "imageless icons."³⁵ Only when we look more closely and for some time does a geometric form become apparent on the black expanse, emerging only because of slight color nuances. Yet the form repeatedly merges into the blackness again, remaining scarcely perceptible to the eye. Our gaze, prevented by the infinitesimally changing color values from gaining a foothold as it penetrates the painting, is directed back to us. Our role as beholders unable to identify anything definitively valid becomes important. Pushed to the limits of the visible, the nuances in Reinhardt's Black Paintings turn them into works about the repudiation of painting, while at the same time drawing us into them as if they were a surface for reflection.³⁶

Through the uncontrollable alternation between appearance and disappearance and the consequent denial of an ascertaining gaze, Reinhardt's paintings achieve an exceptional form of negative presence: the presence of what is absent. The remarkable aspect of this is that the absence and negation refer to the "possibility of a presence-based relationship to the world," a relationship that the literary scholar Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has termed "presence effects," as opposed to interpretative, meaning-based "meaning effects."³⁷ The relationship about which Gumbrecht writes is based on effects appealing "exclusively to the senses"³⁸ that evince "materialities of communication."³⁹ Reinhardt makes such a presence culture perceivable through its highly evocative counterpole.

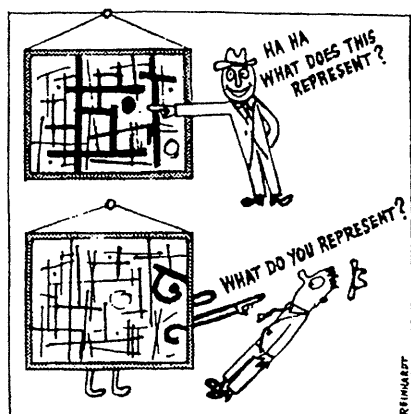
Reinhardt can be considered one of the most interesting figures in New York's postwar art world because he led art's "anti-representative" régime, as the French philosopher Jacques Rancière puts it,⁴⁰ to a radical point.⁴¹ Reinhardt not only strove to liberate paintings from their referential nature and their as-if status but also painted canvases that are clearly no longer prepared to show anything – not even abstract structures. "I exclude the visual image because of its weakness. I also would exclude sensations and impulses, and lines and colors," he said in a panel discussion in 1960.⁴² "Art is art-as-art and everything is else is everything else,"⁴³ he noted in his writings, thereby demanding the rejection of every referential connection between meaning lying outside art and the experiences art can inspire. If Reinhardt's "imageless icons" evoke anything conceptual at all, then it is perhaps highly abstract forms of appropriation of the world such as Martin Heidegger's interpretation of *Dasein*, in which the philosopher tries "to recall Being by way of the Nothing."⁴⁴

In 1946, in *How to Look at a Cubist Painting*, one of his famous cartoons, Reinhardt

ironically illustrated the decisive turning point in contemporary attitudes to art. Asking what the picture shows us or represents no longer matters; the key thing is what happens to us as we behold it. The irreverent picture in Reinhardt's cartoon asks sardonically about its beholder, thus proving itself to be anything but harmless. *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* (What we see, what looks at us) is the title of a book in which the French art critic Georges Didi-Huberman illustrates his theoretical remarks regarding art on the basis of postwar painting, including the work of Ad Reinhardt.⁴⁵ Although the main achievement of Reinhardt's Black Paintings is to enable us to experience the denial of looking, the reversal described by Didi-Huberman's title nonetheless characterizes Reinhardt's pictorial idea.

Reinhardt's canvas, von Schoonhoven's reliefs, and Ryman's white expanses of paint on a blue ground that shimmers beneath are like paradigms prefacing the museum's next rooms, particularly because the entrance hall is also the room of paratexts:⁴⁶ placed on the door's jamb we find a quotation from the journalist Thomas Assheuer, in which art is described as "lonely, often stateless or delinquent," as something that, when it is successful, bestows "the experience of existence [...] but in the form of a crisis." On the opposite door jamb, we find a statement that Piet van Daalen displayed in the Zeeuws Museum he directed for many years: "If people were to speak only of what they understand, a great silence would descend upon the earth."⁴⁷

Above the doorway to the first exhibition room, which contains Asian sculptures and artifacts, hangs an example of contemporary Taiwanese calligraphy with a quotation from Confucius. Translated into English, it reads:



Ad Reinhardt, *How to Look at a Cubist Painting*, 1946

"Liking something is better than merely knowing it; enjoying something is better than merely liking it." Such a bold combination of objects and texts creates a setting in which art's character seems neither comfortable nor affirmative. It becomes clear that we cannot expect any easily established certainties or straightforward methods for appropriating the world here; what is offered us are fragile experiences and possibly also Gumbrecht's blissful "presence effects."

5. *Getting used to alien things*

From the brightly lit entrance hall a doorway leads into a dark room in which historic Asian sculptures and artifacts are displayed. The room is peopled by stone, wooden, and bronze heads and seated figures of Buddha from China, India, and Cambodia, standing deities and the painted wooden sculpture of a seated monk from Japan. Small artifacts such as pendants, vases, jewelry, and small sculptures are exhibited on shelves reaching up to the ceiling, most of which are enclosed by glass. The objects, dating from very different periods and some of which are as much as six thousand years old, are lit by spotlights, giving them a kind of aura. The floor is paved with dark stone slabs and the walls are gray, which emphasizes the light's impact as an external element. The concrete pedestals used to display the heads and figures of Buddha, some of which are larger than life, provide fixed, almost immovable places for the objects, while the shelving is evocative of archives.

Three things seem to predominate in this room: first, the impact of the Buddhas' gazes, which appear to be directed inward in a very distinctive way (this is particularly striking because the entrance hall sensitizes us to the

theme of the gaze); second, the glass showcase's function as a piece of furniture accommodating collected objects, in which those objects seem to be an index of a cultural space of whose inexhaustibility we are simultaneously advised; and third, the figure of a monk placed in the center of the room.

This sculpture, which dates from the fourteenth century,⁴⁸ is displayed in front of a concrete wall. A bench stands opposite the seated monk, whose hands are missing. The arrangement of the space explicitly invites us to sit down. Unlike the eyelids of the Buddhas, which are generally lowered in contemplation, this monk's eyes create an unusual, magical focus. The intense, lively eyes made of crystal glass that shine out of the smooth, painted wood seem to be fixed on us and to see through us at the same time. The closed mouth's severe, narrow lips, the pronounced cheekbones, the ribs visible in the area of the chest, the upright seated position, and the closely shaven skull all give the figure an impressively ascetic appearance. In its orderliness, severity, and clarity, in its sublime posture, the figure requires us to interact with it, almost to follow it. The bench creates a relationship, a face-to-face situation, a mode for aesthetic experience in which the moment of identification with the work of art and the uneventfulness are both fundamental to the relation with the world. Much like Christian devotional images from the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, what is created here is obviously an aesthetic experience aimed both at contemplation and at *imitatio* (imitation) and *aemulatio* (emulation). This was, by the way, an aesthetic direction emphasized by Im Dahl with regard to medieval paintings of the crucifixion, which he described as evoking "norm or identity-creating experience[s]."⁴⁹



View of the Asian room

The monk was originally displayed in a monastery of the Kamakura era, where it presumably served the purpose of a model, assigning everyone who saw it to the place of a pupil before his master. Interestingly, this statue was once in the collection of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who highlighted the illusoriness of the self-recognition and certainty of European philosophy of mind while at the same time insisting on an ethos of understanding and championing linguistic precision.⁵⁰

Overall, the room possesses a very strong aura; its calculated appeal to our senses conveys a very specific form of presence that is neither overwhelming nor importunate. The feeling of the here and now we experience derives from a distinctive, highly lucid spirituality, devoid of mysteries and of the Western idea of hidden depths but with no hint of heaviness or melancholy either.

6. "Art is something you look at"⁵¹

There are two exits from the Asian room. One leads into another room, also without a natural light source, that houses *Zoom Squares* (1967/68), a light installation by the Italian artist Gianni Colombo (1937–1992). The other leads into a brightly lit, corridor-like L-shaped room with two neon objects by the American artist Dan Flavin (1933–1996). On the left-hand side of that room there is a glass façade through which visitors can see an interior courtyard in which Richard Serra's 1977 sculpture *TOT* is exhibited.

In Gianni Colombo's light and space installation, which consists of five slide projectors, the constant zooming of the square fields of light projected on the walls and the ceiling creates an extremely unsettling atmosphere. The alternation of the squares' rapid

waxing and waning enables us to experience becoming and vanishing in an accelerated, multiple way, requiring us constantly to redirect our gaze. This room devoted to an Italian kinetic artist no longer so well known today seems the antithesis of the atmosphere in the Asian room. Colombo's light installation can be seen as an abstract, merciless dynamization of a dark room in a museum, where seeing is disrupted through the simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous. At the same time, the clattering of the projectors presents us with an unsentimental view of mortality. Colombo gives the following description of his role as an artist: "It is our task [...] to give concrete expression to ideas that can only be communicated optically and not, for example, verbally – and which would otherwise not be articulated."⁵² We perceive his installation as a clearly experimental setup that disrupts the topology of space and time.

By contrast, timelessness and a light-hearted, nonmetaphysical temporality are conveyed by Flavin's white and colored neons, which are reached from the other side of the Asian room. With Flavin, light no longer serves its usual purpose of illuminating objects but itself becomes an object, albeit one we cannot look at directly without straining our eyes to the limit. Flavin's works are, on the one hand, simply arranged constellations of neon tubes, but they also shine out into the room, coloring their surroundings and casting shimmering reflections on the walls. Their dazzling effect precludes contemplative viewing, however.

From the 1960s onward, Flavin, one of Minimal Art's main proponents, advocated the elimination of illusion from art, in much the same way Ad Reinhardt did. Minimalism's famous tautological postulate was "What you

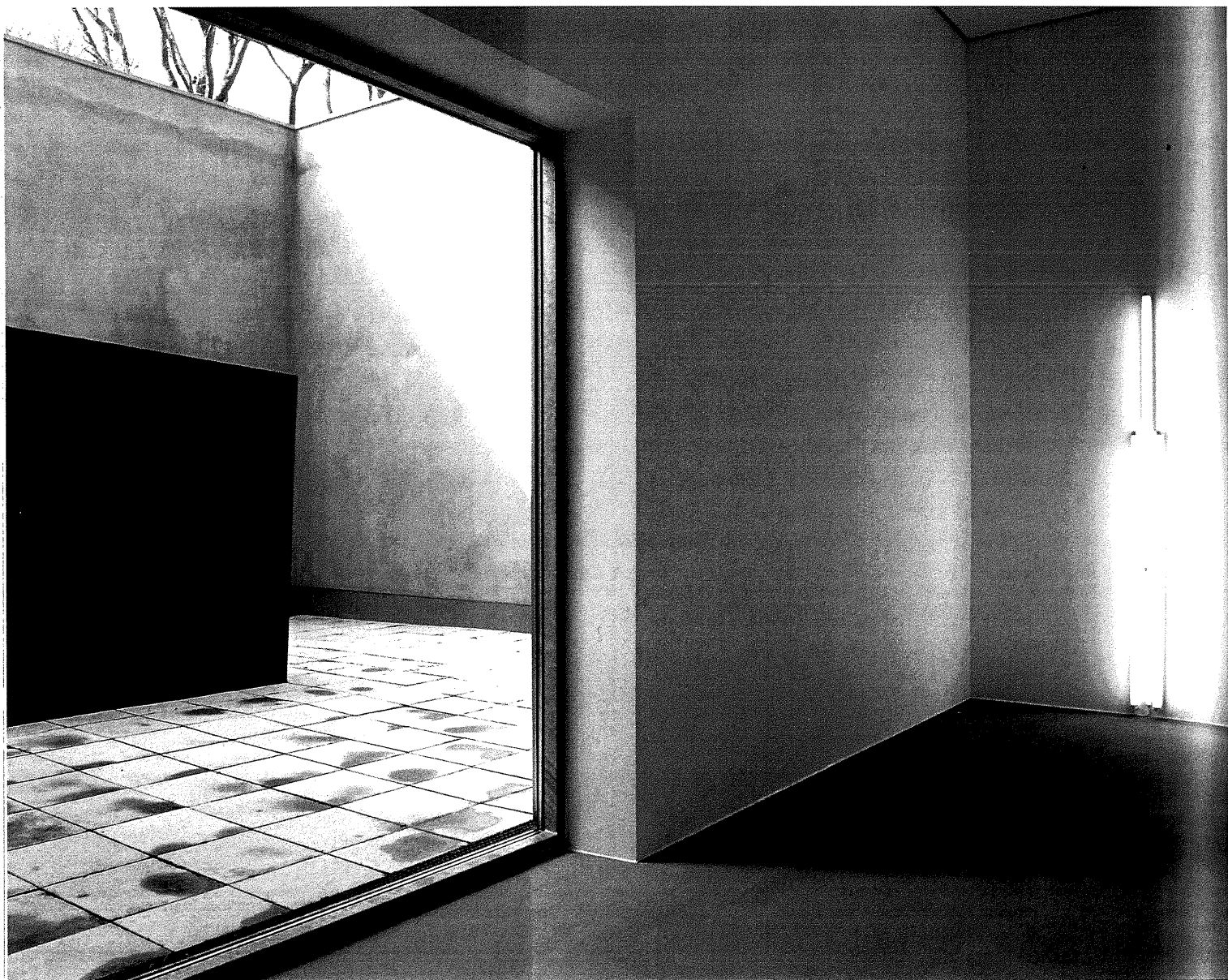
see is what you see.”⁵³ In this sense, there is literally nothing behind Flavin’s neons because – as, for instance, with the yellow, blue, green, and pink-colored object *Untitled* (to Eric Zetterquist) – we look through everything and see the wall. With their systematically arranged neon tubes, Flavin’s works are the opposite of mysterious and dark; as Didi-Huberman characterizes this artistic strategy, they are “an art that resolutely develops as anti-Expressionism, anti-psychologism, as a critique of Wittgenstein-style spirituality [...]. No latency. No more of the ‘concealment,’ ‘withdrawal’ or ‘refusal’ of which Heidegger spoke when he examined the meaning of a work of art.”⁵⁴

The anti-representative régime “rejects the separation between a world of facts belonging to art and a world of ordinary facts,” writes Jacques Rancière.⁵⁵ Yet this does not imply that art, as long as it is seen from art’s horizon, can be absorbed without traces of daily life; rather, Rancière designates a paradigm applicable to both Concrete Art and Minimal Art – forms of artistic practice in which the sensations experienced become the “real case” mentioned by Max Imdahl. For Flavin’s work, this means the way the lights interfere with optics, the uncontrollable phenomenon of the complementary colors projected on the walls, the loss of our eyes’ ability to focus, and the denial of visual depth.

The key importance of the experiential “real case” was demonstrated by Imdahl with particular reference to Richard Serra’s works, and more especially *TOT*, the sculpture that can be seen from the Flavin room.⁵⁶ The rusty steel slab stands like an omphalos⁵⁷ in the middle of the courtyard. According to Imdahl, the decisive experiences to be gained here involve the “horizon of gravity” and the mater-

ial’s characteristics, which viewers experience with their bodies, but above all the way the sculpture actually sinks down into the ground, as well as our perception of “still” and “no longer.”⁵⁸ The sculpture’s sinking down turns the “no longer” into an “actually valid basic orientation,”⁵⁹ he says. Yet such elementary perceptions – the force of gravity, for instance – acquire their meaning only when we relate them to ourselves and are stimulated by them “to seek our ego solely in ourselves,” as Imdahl puts it in another context.⁶⁰ Emphatic experiences such as being cast back onto our own bodies and finiteness do not necessarily occur, however. Since Serra’s sculptures and Flavin’s neons represent nothing, and since we have to make an effort to see and perceive them, they can also be viewed as mere objects: as a rusty steel slab and a construct made from differently colored neon tubes.

In order for such objects to inspire us to an intense sensual experience, we require not prior knowledge but rather a certain attitude toward our own perception, a cooperative way of looking.⁶¹ We would make things too easy for ourselves if we were to reproach artistic practice for this, particularly as understanding is always equally based on a cooperative attitude and culturalization processes. To that extent there is, by the reverse token, little sense in denying the dependency of our experience of art on cooperative viewing. The art shown at Situation Kunst therefore clearly realizes its potential only when we open ourselves up to it in a particular way or when we think of it as a contribution to a visually founded discourse and the result of an exploratory process that stimulates our senses.⁶² It is just such a gaze that Situation Kunst seeks to encourage and foster through its



*Richard Serra, TOT, 1977 [217] and Dan Flavin, Untitled
(to Rainer) 3, 1987 [202]*

atmosphere. Its goal is achieved through a carefully conceived succession of rooms and the juxtaposition of works on the basis of their visual impact, thereby creating interrelationships rather than relying on the narrative (art) historical approach customary elsewhere.

7. *Defying randomness*

From the Flavin room there is just one entrance into another monographic exhibition room, containing a sculpture and paintings by the Korean artist Lee Ufan. His 2006 work *Correspondance* shows nothing but a broad gray brushstroke placed more or less in the middle of a white canvas. The paint's gradient immediately tells us that the artist worked with a broad brush he applied only once to the canvas. As with Zen or the tradition of Far Eastern calligraphy, what we encounter here is eminent placement, a moment in time that must be captured and that simultaneously excludes all others, making what is essentially random or arbitrary seem inevitable. Compared with Flavin's neon objects, this approach to painting contains an element of pathos, for this work, unlike all the others exhibited in the building, makes us aware of the artist's creative intervention.

This awareness is heightened when we pass through the adjacent African room and see the installation by François Morellet that lies behind it. Morellet's environment, consisting of sixteen circular neon segments, recalls Flavin's use of neon material, but the Frenchman's installation displays a disconcerting entropy that contrasts with the orderliness of Flavin's works. Scattered throughout the room, Morellet's segments of a broken circle cannot be reconstructed or ordered in the mind's eye. We cannot even establish whether the parts make up a whole. The glowing red

elements' positioning on the walls and the floor makes us aware of opposing movements, vectors, and forces; the idea of Euclidian space seems to have come to an end, dissolving into incommensurable directions and uncontrollable events. The artist is clearly no longer an ordering force but is exposed to contingency, from which the viewer, too, is not spared.

Lee Ufan, on the other hand, enjoys the privilege of making an obvious mark. In such a context, his paintings appear to offer heuristic resistance to the world's randomness and uncontrollability.

8. *Post-colonial perspectives*

"Museology belongs to the phenomenology of cultural strategies for contact with the Other," writes Peter Sloterdijk.⁶³ His theoretical design for a museum as "a school for creating otherness" examines the encounter with the "beautiful Other" and "defensive mechanisms against the non-ego." At the same time, however, he states that the institution of the museum and its rhetoric are, in fact, rooted in a colonialist attitude. In the nineteenth century, museums were certainly still "compilations, storehouses for cultural booty looted in war, splendid guesthouses for the trophies of plundering disguised as science, archives, treasure-houses, depositories for the objects of bourgeois esteem."⁶⁴ The great challenge today is to ensure that museums' colonial origins and their involvement in the creation of hegemonic cultural ideas are also reflected. This is particularly imperative when objects from outside Europe are presented and the Eurocentric epistemology of displaying art seeks to become global.

Creating an appropriate setting was therefore a particularly delicate task in the case of Situation Kunst's African room, which shows

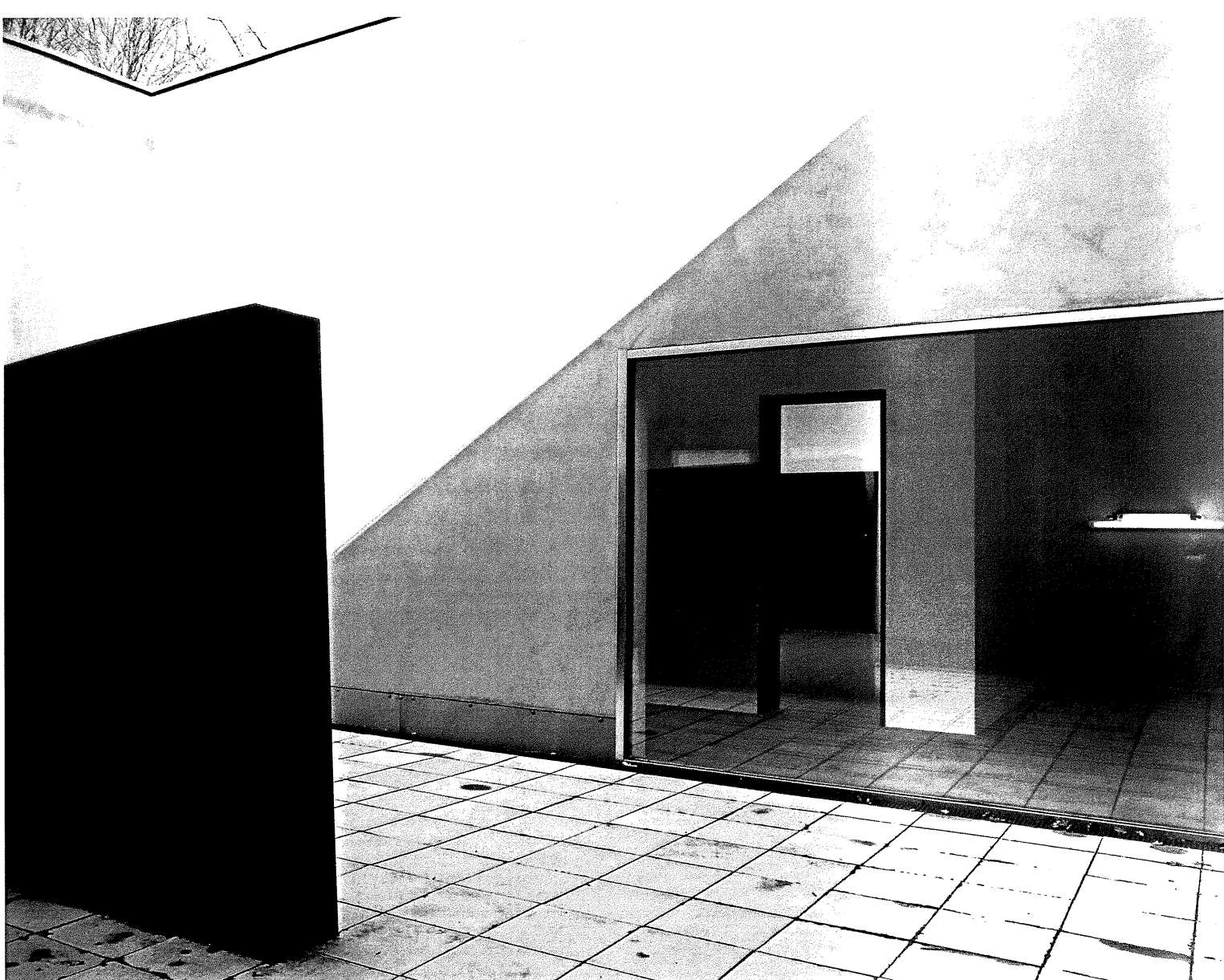
historic objects up to two thousand years old that originate from the Benin Empire and other cultures in the area now comprising Nigeria. Once again, we enter a dark room illuminated solely by spotlights. Here we find on stone pedestals, protected by glass cases, more than twenty sculptures of very different ages and provenance.

Before writing this text, I discussed the museum with colleagues. One of their criticisms was that these objects, removed from their original environment, are no longer comprehensible. In ethnological and anthropological museums African art is customarily exhibited in reconstructed ensembles accompanied by detailed texts, in order to explain their previous function as cult objects. Yet even that type of presentation cannot escape the fact that every museumization, to quote the art theorist Bazon Brock, involves a fetching-in of "objects from the world."⁶⁵ Situation Kunst has clearly opted for a typical art museum setting, thereby exposing itself to criticism that it views the exhibits with a culturalized European eye conditioned by a system of artistic knowledge to which these ancient figures never belonged – namely by contemporary art's visually and sensually organized discourse about objects. Yet that reproach is not difficult to counter: why should this be less appropriate than the ethnological reconstruction of context based on specific, likewise socioculturally determined, views of history? That "intrinsic meaning"⁶⁶ can be captured by reconstructing historical context was the very illusion Imdahl sought to dispel. To that extent, Situation Kunst's provocation lies in the way it places these objects in the context of contemporary artistic practice. The question that then arises is what insight into the objects can be obtained through such

contextualization. It is certainly different from that assured by the traditional approach of showing non-European sculpture in natural history museums (the famous Museum of Natural History in New York, for example), while taking it for granted that the figures of Greek deities removed from altars and temples should be displayed as artworks (as in the Metropolitan Museum of Art across the park) rather than classifying them as "nature."

To better understand the thinking behind Situation Kunst's presentational concept, it is instructive to consider its approach to labeling. As far as dating is concerned, almost all the labels say "according to expert opinion" or "according to a thermoluminescence test," thereby suggesting a certain distance between the exhibitor(s) and the information provided, for the exhibiting institution is clearly not the authority that supplies historical information about the exhibits.⁶⁷ This by no means trifling circumstance provides an important pointer: although expert opinions regarding the origins of individual works are quoted, the main priority is clearly not to present these exhibits as documenting a particular historic and exotic cultural practice. Rather, the works seem to have been collected principally as objects to look at that are evaluated and viewed in a manner similar to other art objects from the so-called "Western world."

Age and provenance remain important all the same. The original's aura still determines our experience of it. Even the epistemology of the visual advocated at Situation Kunst cannot dispense with the criterion of rarity and originality. The museum's presentational approach is, in fact, very much founded on the concept of originality and on the eminence of the rare, authentic objects displayed.⁶⁸



View of the Flavin room from the inner courtyard

It is therefore by no means immaterial that the thirty-centimeter-tall bronze sculpture on display is the *Head of a Queen* from Ife, thought to date from the sixteenth century. This information stimulates our imagination in a very specific way. If we are to respond appropriately to the sculpture, we also need to know that the parallel ridges on the face represent decorative scars. Yet such information does not insert the exhibits into a major narrative, and so we view them as isolated art objects. As we emerge from the room containing Lee Ufan's works, we should therefore look at the exhibits to see what their sculptural strategies are.

Such an approach to African art is anchored in art history, for even in the early twentieth century Expressionists like Emil Nolde and the art historian Carl Einstein were deeply fascinated by the art of "primitive peoples," seeing in such exotic objects the originality of emotional expression. Einstein even spoke of the "power of cubic seeing" perceptible in them. For the Expressionists, with their critical attitude to civilization, African sculpture was, above all, an embodiment of anti-academic, anti-bourgeois characteristics. Yet this view is not mirrored by the selection of objects at Situation Kunst, not least because the sculptures cover too wide a spectrum to be reduced to a common denominator.

The extreme expressiveness of the couple in an eighteen-century-old clay sculpture from the Sokoto culture cannot be equated with the plasticity of the kings' heads or the young woman's head on exhibit. The most striking aspects of the couple are their precarious equilibrium and the strangely animated, impenetrable expression of their gazes and mouths. While this couple seems to corre-

spond totally to the magic of the emotionally filled space so prized by Einstein, the kings' heads next to them, executed almost fifteen hundred years later, hardly illustrate an expressionistic-naturalistic image of Africa. Their majestic gazes and clear frontality suggest an idea of lastingness that is in no way alien to the European academic tradition.

The dwarf's diagonal pose, angularly positioned arms, and proportions clearly correspond to the typically African aesthetic of a dynamically determined sculptural sense that Einstein termed "space transferred into movement," but even he once belonged to a courtly culture, having been a combination of court magician, sage, and jester who provided entertainment. Small illustrations showing Portuguese costumes have been incised in the garment of the horn-blower beside him, indicating early trade links and European influences.

This room does not, therefore, present the romantic view of an Africa close to nature. Rather, the aura created by its presentational rhetoric emphasizes the exhibits' position within a museological art canon, stimulating, to quote Imdahl, a "way of looking that relates to what can actually be seen"⁶⁹ and being only very defensively accompanied by references to iconographic traditions and interpretational aids. The emphasis on visual access and the idea that Situation Kunst should be a place for visual experiences are particularly strong forces in this room.⁷⁰

The sequence of the rooms largely thwarts a historicizing perspective, preferring a specific diffuseness. It is above all the hiatuses we experience here, not a didactic of causalities. With Morellet's broken circle carrying on from historic sculptures from Africa, the questions that arise tend to be basic anthro-

pological ones relating to different traditional mentalities and related processes of subjectivization. Drawn from highly diverse styles, places, and eras, the exhibits defy the usual encyclopedic classifications and certainties. Thus the ensemble's logic is not imposed as a narrative but emerges as a nexus of relationships that might in some respects be uncomfortably open to different interpretations. Yet it is this very uncertainty that provokes us to address fundamental issues. To that extent, the essentially authoritarian principle of the exhibition strategy of museums is not actually negated but is significantly offset by breaks in the logic of the rooms' sequence.

That Situation Kunst is clearly also about crisis-like moments in the experience of art is specifically mentioned in the written text in the entrance hall and is even more emphatically highlighted by the exhibits shown in the multipurpose room downstairs. Arnulf Rainer's Hiroshima work and Dirk Reinartz's concentration camp photographs demonstrate the discrediting of a historical teleology of progress, showing clearly that art not only addresses the evident, the true, and the consistent but also – and possibly above all – offers a response to the horrors of human life. That response is probably one of the key functions of artistic activity. Situation Kunst certainly suggests that this is the case. Much will therefore have been achieved if visitors perceive its extension as a "school for creating Otherness" such as Sloterdijk discusses, as a place where they can oscillate between their egos and the non-ego. *Translated by Isabel Feder*

- 1 In April 1979 the rock star Frank Zappa gave the laconic, legendary answer: "I am a musician and I'm giving a concert" (<http://www.arf.ru/Notes/Yawyi/conhd.html>; as accessed on 1 October 2007).
- 2 Regarding the museum's justification in a nation-state, see Boris Groys: *Logik der Sammlung*, Munich, Vienna 1997; and Rainer Ganahl: "Museums and Public/Counter-public Space in the Global-capitalist Era of Digital Convertibility," in: *The Museum as Arena: Artists on Institutional Critique*, ed. Christian Kravagna, Cologne 2001, pp. 135–37. On page 135 Ganahl writes: "Museums, art halls, and art houses of all kinds can hardly any longer base their legitimization on their physical presence and a rarely questioned self-assessment. Historically speaking, they are the by-product of the formation of nation-states and their critical public who required legitimization. The museums, their products, their ideologies as well as their public played an important role in the bourgeois era of the nineteenth century. This is hardly any longer comprehensible, as in Europe today the nation-states in particular, which they were meant to justify, are breaking up."
- 3 See "On Show: Inside the Ethnographic Museum," in: Mieke Bal: *Looking In: The Art of Viewing*, New York 2001, pp. 117–60.
- 4 See Irene Below and Beatrice von Bismarck, eds.: *Globalisierung, Hierarchisierung: Kulturelle Dominanzen in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte*, Marburg 2005.
- 5 Peter Sloterdijk: "Museum – Schule des Befremdens," in: *Der ästhetische Imperativ*, ed. Peter Weibel, Hamburg 2007, pp. 354–70, here 358.
- 6 An exemplary critique of museums' hegemonic interpretations of history is given by Mieke Bal in her precise descriptions of ethnological collections. See "On Show: Inside the Ethnographic Museum" (note 3, above), pp. 117–60.
- 7 Peter Richter: "Zehntausend Tänzer vor Seerosen," in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, no. 47, 21 November 2004, p. 27. Richter calls MoMA a "canonization machine" and speaks of the "genre apartheid" that seems to exist. For another critical voice, see also Jordan Mejias, who somewhat ironically describes MoMA as "Modernism's corporate headquarters" in "Licht und Luft hinter Klostermauern. Die Architektur des neuen Museum of Modern Art," in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 271, 19 November 2004, p. 37.
- 8 For a theoretical approach that formulates history in terms of interpretation practices, see, for example, Jörn Rüsen: *Zeit und Sinn: Strategien historischen Denkens*, Frankfurt/M. 1990.
- 9 See Karen van den Berg and Birger Priddat: "Branding Museums: Marketing als Kulturproduktion, Kulturproduktion als Marketing," in: *Das Museum als Marke, Branding als strategisches Managementinstrument für Museen*, ed. Hartmut John, proceedings of the 2003 conference held at the further training center at Brauweiler Abbey/Landschaftsverband of the Rhineland, Rhenish Archives and Museums Office, Bielefeld 2007.
- 10 See also Jordan Mejias: "Licht und Luft hinter Klostermauern. Die Architektur des neuen Museum of Modern Art" (note 7, above), p. 37: "Modern man has learned to live without certainty. Everywhere he looks, whether into himself or out into the world, abysses open up and foundations collapse. Art is no exception: the earthquake affecting all areas of life is putting it under pressure, too, and with it the museum, the institution that collects its seismographic recordings. There is, of course, one place that likes to seem earthquake-proof: the New York Museum of Modern Art celebrates existential uncertainty by creating artistic certainty."
- 11 Johann W. von Goethe, *Italian Journey*, Princeton 1994, p. 440.
- 12 See the two compendium volumes by Christian Kravagna, ed.: *The Museum as Arena: Artists on Institutional Critique* (note 2, above), and Paul Noever, ed.: *The Discursive Museum*, Vienna 2001.
- 13 In the debate about the situation of museums, there is widespread talk of the "compulsion to go public" and of how "museums (along with other exhibitor institutions) feel increasing pressure, partly external and partly self-imposed, to exert an ever stronger public impact." See Ulrich Weisner: "Museen unter dem Zwang zur Öffentlichkeit," in: *Das Museum. Die Entwicklung in den 80er Jahren*, a commemorative volume for Hugo Borger on his 65th birthday, ed. Achim Preiß, et al., Munich 1990, pp. 175–90, here 176.

- 14 In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas describes the social upheavals that have caused art institutions to have less and less to do with the bourgeoisie and the clear structures of its framework for the production of culture, while subjecting them to more and more pressure to cater to the far vaguer demands of the so-called "general public" (Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge 1989, particularly p. 174ff.). Habermas speaks of the divide between "minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly" on the one hand and "the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical" on the other (ibid., p. 175).
- 15 See Arthur C. Danto: *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*, New York 1992, p. 201.
- 16 Max Imdahl (b. 1925) held the first chair at the Art History Institute of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, founded in 1962, and was among the first group of professors who started teaching there in 1965. Imdahl was involved in the design phase of Situation Kunst's original premises but died in 1988 before it opened.
- 17 Much of the factual information about Situation Kunst on which this text is based was obtained in the course of thought-provoking conversations and discussions with Silke and Alexander von Berswordt-Wallrabe, whom I should like to thank most sincerely here.
- 18 Max Imdahl: *Giotto Arefresken: Ikonographie, Ikonologie, Ikonik*, 2nd, enlarged ed., Munich 1988, p. 97.
- 19 Ibid., p. 14. In Imdahl's theory of iconics "seeing sight" and "recognitory sight" combine to create "understanding sight" (ibid., pp. 43 and 45). On the concept of iconics see also Max Imdahl: "Ikonik. Bilder und ihre Anschauung," in: *Was ist ein Bild?*, ed. Gottfried Boehm, Munich 1994, pp. 300–24, in which Imdahl stresses that iconics, unlike Panofsky's version of iconography, focuses on "viewing directed at the image's structure" (p. 314).
- 20 The extension was designed by Alexander von Berswordt-Wallrabe and his wife, Silke, in close dialogue with the artists involved.
- 21 The trees include a number of natural monuments, among them a 250-year-old copper beech and a yew tree that is 600–800 years old.
- 22 Rüdiger Jordan: *Von Kapitellen, Kanzeln und Taufsteinen. Ein spannender Führer zu 67 Kirchen und Klöstern im Ruhrtal*, Essen 2006, p. 34. The St. Sylvester chapel, long disused, collapsed in the nineteenth century. The late sixteenth-century manor house, once the seat of the von Berswordt-Wallrabe family, was razed virtually to the ground in an air raid in May 1943.
- 23 See August Rode, Hartmut Ross, and Ludwig Trauzettel: *Der Englische Garten zu Wörlitz*, Berlin 1994.
- 24 The custodians and guides are all students at the Ruhr University.
- 25 Maria Nordman's work is a later version of the work *Room with Two Doors* she created for Documenta in 1977. For more details of this work and the others exhibited in Situation Kunst's first premises, see Jörg van den Berg, Karen Schübeler, Stefan Gronert, Thomas Jansen, and Carina Plath, eds.: *Situation Kunst (für Max Imdahl)*, Düsseldorf 1993.
- 26 One of the buildings contains an environment by the American sculptor Richard Serra, while a second contains works by the Europeans Norbert Kricke, Gotthard Graubner, Arnulf Rainer, and Jan J. Schoonhoven; a third building, linked to the Europeans' building by a corridor, houses a work by the Canadian sculptor David Rabinowitch.
- 27 Michel Foucault and Daniel Defert: *Les hétérotopies. Zwei Radiovorträge*, Frankfurt/M. 2005, pp. 37–52. Foucault uses the term *heterotopia* to describe a certain type of space. Museums and libraries are also counter-spaces or heterotopias: "completely closed to the outside world, but completely open too. Everyone has access, but once you are inside you realize it is an illusion. A heterotopia is an open space that nonetheless only ever leaves us outside" (p. 48). And this happens because "they create an illusion that unmasks the rest of reality as an illusion or by actually creating another real space, which is totally ordered compared with the confused disorder of our space" (p. 40).
- 28 Regarding the significance of this tree, see also Franz Gruber, "Über Wachstum und Alter der drei bedeutsamsten Süntelbuchen (*Fagus sylvatica* L. var. *suentelensis* SCHELLE) Deutschlands (Gremheim/Raden/Lauenau)," in: *Allgemeine Forst- u. Jagdzeitung* 174 (2002), pp. 8–14.
- 29 See p. 100 in this volume.

30 Diverse as cultural responses to death may be, Assmann argues that human beings' basic problem is to be mortal, unlike gods, and to be aware of it, unlike animals: "Yet man, this eccentric being [...] combines knowledge and mortality" (Jan Assmann: *Der Tod als Thema der Kulturtheorie. Todesbilder und Todesriten im Alten Ägypten*, Frankfurt/M. 2000, p. 11). He goes on to say (p. 16): "All cultures resolve this fundamental problem of human existence in their own way, and there is certainly no culture that does not view itself as the solution to this key question and that cannot be analyzed in that light. Yet the different solutions adopted are highly diverse. There is no universality. Uniform as death may be from a biological perspective, its cultural transposition and assimilation take a thousand forms."

31 "Raising up stones (single ones or steeply layered powers), erecting menhirs or groups of monoliths (such as Stonehenge), putting up toppling-out trees, hewn pillars, or obelisks belong to the most ancient stratum of cultural activity, which continues to make its impact felt today. The purpose of this activity was, in particular [...] to act as a memorial or cult object, and to create a sense of permanence. The inherent power of what is raised up is one of man's primary cultural experiences and, as such, deeply rooted physically, psychologically, and anthropologically. Figurative statues and monuments mounted on pedestals carry on from this, if only because their fall prostrates the vertical and all its power – a significant, awe-inspiring implication. The work of art's fall also signifies the decline and death of what it represents." See Gottfried Boehm: "Within the Field of Gravity: The Experiencing of Richard Serra's Sculptures," in: *Richard Serra: Intersection*, ed. M. Schwander, Basel/Düsseldorf 1996, pp. 46–71, here 54.

32 The integration of the dead tree, for example, is something real.

33 On Piet van Daalen's impressive biography and his original curatorial approach, see Alexander von Berswordt-Wallrabe: *Etwas zu Piet van Daalen*, Bochum 2005, in which van Daalen's presentational ideas emerge as a model for alternative museum concepts that are simultaneously simple, unpretentious, and effective.

34 "The basic problem is what to do with paint" was the slogan of Robert Ryman, the purist born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1930.

35 Ad Reinhardt, *Art as Art*, ed. Barbara Rose, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1991, p. 108.

36 According to Imdahl, such a concept of art "extinguishes part of our world's heritage, irrespective of whether one considers this loss to reduce or enhance self-awareness." See Max Imdahl: "Überlegungen zur Identität des Bildes," in: *Max Imdahl. Reflexion – Theorie – Methode*, ed. Gottfried Boehm, Frankfurt/M. 1979/1996, pp. 381–423, here 410.

37 Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, Stanford 2004, p. 2.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., p. 7.

40 Jacques Rancière: *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, London 2004. According to Rancière (p. 16), painting's "anti-representative revolution" is associated with the idea of its "purity," which eschews imitation and which, as in the case of Kazimir Malevich, is associated with the overall vision – imbued with pathos – of a "new man."

41 Gottfried Boehm speaks of the iconoclastic quality of Reinhardt's paintings, of a "gesture of farewell, submersion, and extinction"

(Gottfried Boehm: *Wie Bilder Sinn erzeugen. Die Macht des Zeigens*, Berlin 2007, p. 65).

42 "The Philadelphia Panel," ed. Philip G. Pavia and Irving Sandler, in: *It Is* (New York), no. 5 (Spring 1960), p. 37.

43 Ad Reinhardt, *Art as Art* (note 35, above), p. 53.

44 Martin Heidegger: *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill, Cambridge 1998, p. 289.

45 Georges Didi-Huberman: *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Paris 1992.

46 See Gérard Genette on this concept: *Paratexte. Das Buch vom Beiwerk des Buches*, Frankfurt/M. 1992.

47 This sentence came from a waiter in a Chinese restaurant, originally an architect in China, who helped van Daalen resolve a problem with the staging of an exhibition.

See A. von Berswordt-Wallrabe: *Etwas zu Piet van Daalen*, Bochum 2005.

48 According to a C14 analysis, the sculpture dates from between 1324 and 1439.

49 Max Imdahl: "Kunstgeschichtliche Bemerkungen zur ästhetischen Erfahrung," in: *Max Imdahl. Reflexion – Theorie – Methode* (note 36, above), pp. 282–302, here 296.

50 This becomes particularly clear in Wittgenstein's book *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford 1969.

- 51 This is one of Donald Judd's famous statements. See Donald Judd in: "Questions to Stella and Judd by Bruce Glaser," in: *Art News* 65 (1966), pp. 55–61, here 61.
- 52 Gianni Colombo. *Kinetische Objekte, Strukturen und Räume*, exh. cat., Städtisches Museum Morsbroich Leverkusen/ Kunsthalle Baden-Baden/ Staatliche Kunsthalle Kiel, Leverkusen 1975, p. 10.
- 53 It was Flavin's contemporary, the painter Frank Stella, who formulated this dictum. See Frank Stella in "Questions to Stella and Judd by Bruce Glaser" (note 51, above), p. 59.
- 54 Georges Didi-Huberman: *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* (note 45, above), p. 43.
- 55 Jacques Rancière: *Le dessin des images*, Paris 2003, p. 138ff.
- 56 "Serra's sculpture is not the 'image' but the real case of an existential structure." See Max Imdahl: "Serras *Right Angle Prop* und *TOT*. Konkrete Kunst und Paradigma," in: *Max Imdahl. Zur Kunst der Moderne*, collected works, vol. 1, ed. Angeli Janhsen-Vukicevic, Frankfurt/M. 1996, pp. 316–27, here 323; and this volume, pp. 137–41.
- 57 *Omphalos* is the Greek word for navel. In classical Greece the so-called omphalos – a stone that marked the middle of the world – was worshipped in the Temple of Apollo in Delphi.
- 58 See Max Imdahl: "Serras *Right Angle Prop* und *TOT*" (note 56, above), p. 323ff. See also Karen van den Berg: *Der leibhafte Raum. Richard Serras Terminal in Bochum*, KunstOrt Ruhrgebiet series, vol. 1, Ostfildern 1995.
- 59 Ibid., p. 325.
- 60 Max Imdahl: "Überlegungen zur Identität des Bildes" (note 36, above), p. 416.
- 61 This is the term that, carrying on from Umberto Eco's concept of "interpretative co-operation," I should like to use for the kind of perception that is encouraged. See Umberto Eco: *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington 1979.
- 62 In a related sense, Gottfried Boehm suggested defining art as "sinnlich organisierten Sinn" (sensually organized meaning). See Gottfried Boehm, "Bildsinn und Sinnesorgane," in: *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 18/19 (1980), pp. 118–32, here 119.
- 63 Peter Sloterdijk: "Museum – Schule des Befremdens" (note 5, above), p. 357.
- 64 Ibid., p. 360.
- 65 Bazon Brock: "God and Garbage: Museums as Creators of Time," in: *The Discursive Museum*, ed. Peter Noever, Vienna 2001.
- 66 See Erwin Panofsky: "Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art" (1939), reprinted in: *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, New York 1955, pp. 26–54, here 30.
- 67 In ethnological, archaeological, and art historical collections, trained curators are generally responsible for such labels while not visibly authorizing them. Mieke Bal critically referred to this fact in her text "On Show: Inside the Ethnographic Museum" (note 3, above) when she inquired about the "invisible I" in the labels at the American Museum of Natural History and justifiably asked: "Who is talking?" (p. 120ff.).
- 68 There is consequently nothing more embarrassing than fakes in a museum. Regarding the need for rarity and exclusiveness for the specifically deictic didactics of a museum, see Karen van den Berg: "Ausstellung," in: *Das große Lexikon Medien und Kommunikation*, ed. Leon R. Tsvasman, Würzburg 2006, pp. 49–54, here 49. Regarding museumization as a strategy for appropriating the world, see principally Peter Sloterdijk: "Museum – Schule des Befremdens" (note 5, above), p. 357ff.
- 69 Max Imdahl: "Ikonik. Bilder und ihre Anschauung" (note 19, above), p. 308.
- 70 To this extent, the reflecting glass cases are a compromise, being designed to protect the objects rather than making it easier to see them.