

KIOSK – LATERNA MAGICA

Movable sculpture, to share images and minds in city streets - Public Art, writing workshops.
Social Design Grant, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart – Germany

Laura Martin 2000

Kiosks are the in thing in contemporary art. They have been the subject matter of publications, entire seminars have been devoted to them in history of art, in architectural studies and in town planning studies because they hold the answer to a question which concerns at the same time the notions of urbanity and of mobility, of public space and of private space.

Laura Martin obviously knows all the aspects of this discussion, but unlike others, she has not contented herself with just exploring a solely theoretical point of view. She has conceived of a kiosk during her stay at the Académie Schloss Solitude, thought out its materials, has discussed the technical problems linked to the issue of transportability, mounting and dismantling. Designed for use in an urban set-up, her kiosk was inaugurated in July 2000 on the occasion of the celebration fest of the Academie.

Open on all sides, the octagonal shaped kiosk of Laura Martin thus found its definition and its meaning which trace their origins from those of the open air lodges which existed in all probability in the Chinese gardens of the Solitude castle, at the time of the fests organized by the Duke Charles Eugène of Wurtemberg. With the music of Gunnar Geisse, composer in residency at Solitude, the video projections of Antonio Gallégo, Sora Kim and Charley Case, with the actions of the Skart group, and the writer's workshop conducted by Laura Martin, the kiosk reestablished contact with this 18th century tradition during an entire evening, an era where music, the fine arts, and bodies in movement all constituted just one and only logic of a Baroque style festival.

The kiosk had its real baptism by fire at the end of July, on the big square of Stuttgart at a time when the joyous demonstrations of Christopher Day and a counter demonstration by the extreme right were taking place. In such an environment, the kiosk was at the same time incorporated into the movements of the crowd as also endowed with an extra-territorial aspect. It was at the same time a place which attracted the crowds with its music, its lights, was the place in which video and photographic images were projected and also was an enclave external to the logics of the events that were taking place at the square. All around the kiosk, writer's workshops, projections, distribution of pamphlets and stickers were organized. By the end of the evening, the kiosk was transferred alongwith all its equipment to the Königstrasse. Just as a tank which is at the same time playful and symbolic, the kiosk then projected on the facade of a Mc Donald restaurant a video film relating an attack against another Mc Donald restaurant in London.

Conceived of in the protected environment of the Académie Schloss Solitude, Laura Martin's kiosk-on-wheels is a machine designed for conquering urban space in which it (the machine, but also Laura !) projects its desires for relationship and interaction between the city inhabitants whereas the all pervading urbanism is striving to separate people from one another... Jean-Baptiste JOLY,
Académie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart October 2000