

# FRANK SCHÄPEL

## NOTIZEN

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### **notes between art and science**

catalog-contribution for the “missing link”-exhibition (Berlin/New York 2005/06)

“one can certainly imagine a pure cruelty, without tearing apart the flesh. and what is then, philosophically speaking, cruelty? from the point of view of the soul, cruelty means remorselessness, and merciless determination, non-returnable absolute determination (...)

specifically, cruelty is lucid, it is a type of inexorable guiding, a subjugation under necessity. no cruelty without consciousness, without a type of applied consciousness. consciousness gives every function of life its blood color, its cruel nuance, since life always involves somebody’s death.”

*antonin artaud*

in 2000, I began documenting the exterior human form in perspective view, without vanishing point, precisely life sized and in exclusive relation to the model. in 2003, I began exhibiting relevant image material in installations- pages of medical professional literature, for example. in 2004, I began examining the inner parts of dead human bodies in anatomical section.

art has a purpose. it aims at the valorization of life.

as an artist, I stand in the tradition of archaic and antique art. this is to be continued after almost 500 years of disruption.

it is necessary for the correct media and technology to be used for every documentation/examination– this was done for the installation “caput medusa”. for this exhibition, I displayed medical photography that remains raw. removing these photographs from their explanatory context of within the publication, makes the disillusionary and destructive - but deeply human - power of these image-documents apparent.

several of the excerpts of medical technical literature exhibited here have been used by artists such as tuysmans or kahrs for their image production– the price of making these images artistically compatible can be seen in their direct comparison: information and complexity is lost.

I can accept this loss as little as can scientists in their research.

the artists of today can be found among those working scientifically and searching for enlightenment.

the differences between my painting and medical image production is not the result of thinking in boxes, but rather from different ways of posing the problem. in painting, I examine the entire living, unfragmented human body, in direct engagement with the model.

the experiment is set up as follows: a living human body places itself in a specific position on a pedestal. this position will be taken up for 20-60 minutes a time- over the course of several months- over and over, until the painting is complete.

the body- in permanent physical change- thereby runs through different light, temperatures and other circumstances. this body is put through a manual scanning process and is transferred two-dimensionally, and in precise life size, to the panel. without perspective.

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there are measuring scales between the model and me. I measure the body in front of me with their help. I show the surface of this body with as much precision and congruence as possible. the timeframe of this painting is synthetic. it is part of the biographies of the model and the painter. and this painting shows the scandal of the dissolution of the body– this potential cadaver.

the conservation of the body is more desirable than its documentation. numerous attempts have been made: egyptian mummification techniques, artaud's attempt to create a new functioning body for himself, today's biological research.

“because without a body one cannot exist...” antonin artaud

is a re-egyptianization of our culture (CONCRETELY) possible?

in autopsy, pale corpses, saturated in formaldehyde, lay covered in plastic on modern, metal tables.

in anatomical autopsy, knowledge is acquired through progressive partitioning and destruction of an entire cadaver, just as with the preparation of individual body parts. the knowledge acquired through the dissection of the dead, fragmented body is intended to provide understanding about the build and function of the live human body. those studying are intended to learn how to apply their theoretical knowledge– acquired through texts, drawn and photographed images (from atlas'), x-rays, computertomographies and plastic models– to the reality of a concrete, living, human body. which is only possible with an awareness of the distinction between image, plastic model, dead, formaldehyde-saturated body and what is the norm, on the one hand, and the concrete living body on the other.

“... and then the fear of dying, the mound on the back of the arm, fear of pain, that remains entirely in the imagination, that sometimes overcomes me in the evening, this threat of being spent once and for all, this no one can actually imagine–“ rolf dieter brinkman

does cryonic ice work? does the hand of another, attached to an american, function? does my painting function? why do I not simply cut up flesh- the flesh– itself?