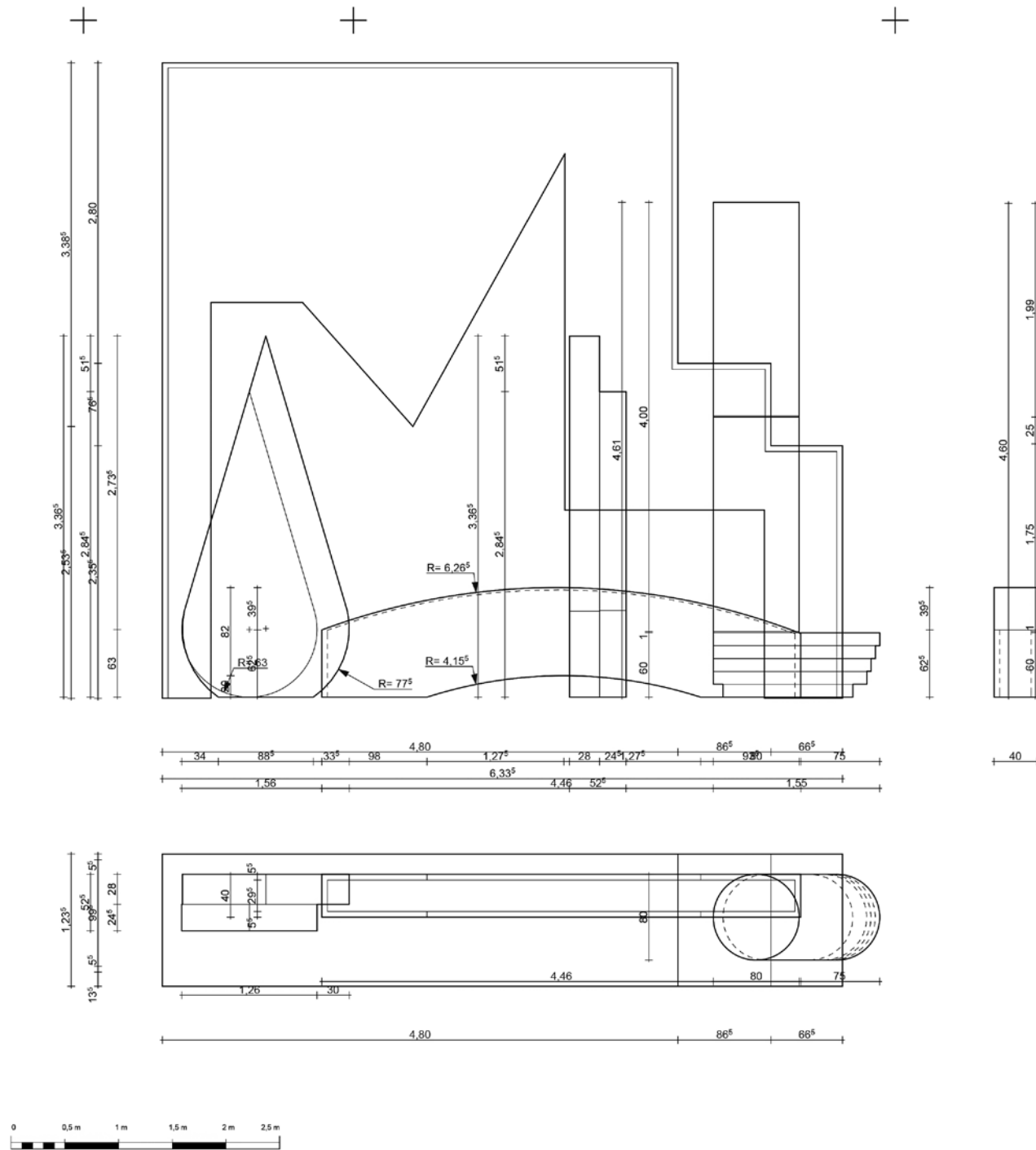


SCULPTURE/MODEL

THE CHALLENGE

Art today can often be seen exiting the museums that were specially constructed for it in modern times. Since the 1980s it has increasingly sought out places that originally served a different purpose, which they make no secret of even when the art arrives. In many cases it is the artists themselves who lay claim to decommissioned factories and other facilities as either a short or long term home for their work. Initially the artists' hope was that this would allow them to escape the various constraints that applied in established art institutions and to confront their works with a different spatial aesthetic and back story. The aim is often to connect more closely with the real world outside the art scene, to break with tradition and for the work to become more relevant in a wider social context. This is particularly true of a particular type of art that, unlike easel painting, is openly space-hungry – from sculptures without plinths, environments, installations and performances to film and video projections. The post-industrial era with its many defunct factories has a plentiful supply of suitable premises and it has not taken long for the presentation of not only contemporary art but also theatre, dance and concerts in these places to be approved for state funding. In aesthetic terms this has led to a certain vogue for a rather conflicted convergence of art and ruined or romanticised industrial relics. At the turn of the century the conversion of the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in London in effect ennobled this trend: abandoned industrial architecture acquired a new function, in a sense the art museum swallowed up its own alternative.

Even if the presentation of contemporary art in repurposed industrial premises has by now become a widely accepted practice that few still ponder on, there is as yet no conclusive answer to the question as to what venues of that kind can offer art. Leaving aside the overwhelming impact of art on a spectacular scale and our diffuse delight in the unusual, spaces of this kind can in fact serve as experimental zones in the most fundamental sense. They can challenge an artist's concepts and methods, testing their limits and drawing out their specifics in a very particular way. In these



cases the point is not so much the actual spaces and their effect as their utilization as instruments by artists honing their work and taking it forwards. The larger and the more self-sufficient a space, the greater the risk for an artistic project. And if the project is a success, it generally marks a watershed in the development of an artist's work, meaning that it is impossible for the artist to resume what he or she was doing before it – regardless of dimension or context.

In the three short years of the exhibition history in the Kesselhaus at the KINDL–Centre for Contemporary Art (formerly the Kindl Brewery), the express policy has been to invite artists with very different approaches. Anyone hoping to offer a space such as this to artists in a targeted, responsible way has to have experienced it first-hand. What is possible here? What are the opportunities and what are the dangers? It all started with a light touch, despite the size of the work. Roman Signer suspended a yellow light-sport aircraft nose-downwards from the ceiling, with two fans positioned so that it turned on its own axis in the artificial breeze. Everything was clear – lucid – in the cuboid space and the bright light from the almost floor-to-ceiling windows. Art took possession of the new space with absurd ease. The following year the huge space was rendered invisible: it was turned into a black box for a video work. Visitors only had an indirect sense of its dimensions in the twilight of the projections or, somewhat more clearly, through the subject matter of David Claerbout's work (the Olympic stadium in Berlin). The Kesselhaus mutated into a visual and physical 'sounding box' for the theme of this piece. And in its third year, Haegue Yang's hanging constructions made from blinds and lights, turning around, introduced a form of sculpture that was – literally – physically dependent on the space. In this case the term installation referred to something that, whilst retaining its innate characteristics, is nevertheless a changeable medium that can adapt to all kinds of spatial conditions.

Plateau mit Halbfigur by Thomas Scheibitz is the first work to stand solidly on the floor of the Kesselhaus and, in that respect at least, demonstrates that it is a sculpture. Its maker is an artist who is at home in much more than just one medium. First and foremost, besides sculpture, there is painting. The third realm of his work embraces photographs, sketches and book designs. Given this polyfocus, Scheibitz is able to deploy various aspects of his own work as vehicles for mutual critique. This leads to a heightened concentration in the selection of artistic means and forms and to a greater sensitivity to the distinctions between mediums and how they interact with each other and with a particular context. Therefore the invitation to realize a project in a space measuring around twenty by twenty by twenty metres, still marked by its industrial past, must have led to complex, time-consuming deliberations. One of Scheibitz's precautionary measures was to approach the sheer size and seductive power of the space with scrupulous care. Of course it would have been perfectly possible to ignore the huge height of the Kesselhaus and devise an exhibition with a

group of sculptures at ground level – in a sense as a companion piece, at the other end of the spatial spectrum, to the ten-square-metre exhibition in one room (*Schaulager 9.44*, 2016). If such a thought ever did cross his mind, it would quickly have been dismissed; it would have meant ducking the challenge and letting its innate potential slip away. His response had to be a three-dimensional work designed to suit this space as it is. In twenty years of creative work an artist naturally develops something akin to a repertoire. It is hard to avoid and even if one could, the cost would be the loss of hard-earned experience. On the other hand, the solution is not simply to reach for items from one's repertoire and enlarge them, in whatever combination, to fit the given dimensions of the exhibition space. A mechanical adaptation of this kind would by definition not be the answer because it would merely be a geometric interpretation of the spatial challenge. So, what now?

PARA-WORK

A steady stream of visual and textual notes accompanies the work of Thomas Scheibitz. These notes comprise images and reproductions of all kinds, sketches and photographs by the artist, lists and clusters of concepts. It could perhaps be described as a materialized stream of consciousness or as an ever-changing archive. In among these multifarious collections things loom into view that can be seen, retrospectively, as early stages of paintings or sculptures. On the whole, however, the connections between the collected notes and finished works are much more fluid. In the same way that these notes as it were refuse to reveal the genesis of an individual work step by step, particular images or concepts are reluctant to provide unambiguous keys to their meaning. And the fluid nature of Scheibitz's working materials is also not constrained by the fact that he occasionally discloses excerpts from them in publications. Reproductions of his own works in among the notes are at times almost impossible to distinguish from this labyrinth of things and ideas. When the artist is at work, they surface *de facto* almost of their own accord. It would be too pedantic an approach to insist on reading the notes as reference images or explanatory footnotes. In their published form they in fact stand in their own right as an supplementary artistic form. Painstakingly selected and shaped, these materials look like a para-text on the artist's main body of work – a para-text that revolves around the Before, During and After, that contains within it something of the visual, reflective and situative context of works, and that also has a certain autonomy. In the many nooks and crannies of this agglomeration of notes – in images and texts alike – one constantly comes across elements that might be triggers for particular themes, that are relevant to certain works. Yet they do not provide any meaningful definitions – just incentives to investigate particular aspects of this autonomous body of work. These collections of materials may yield instruments for viewing the work, but they never offer up conclusive interpretations.

Volume I of the catalogue for *Plateau mit Halbfigur* – the workbook – is a distillation of the extensive notes made by the artist during the eighteen months he spent researching and preparing this work. Some refer to individual steps in the actual work process – these include various models and tests for colours and positions. Other notes indicate possible points of reference in art and architecture, stage design and movie sets, industrial products and of course Scheibitz's own work. It is not by chance that the workbook starts with an image looking out through a window, which immediately sets up an ambivalent relationship between this side and the other, between here and there. This spatial complexity is further heightened in a studio shot (fig. 2), which is rendered strangely confusing by its double frame. Elsewhere a collage uses similar means to continue the game (fig. 36). The studio and the exhibition space, superimposed on each other, open up new perspectives in other real and unreal realms. The method seen here is also used by Scheibitz in other publications, possibly to sustain the suspense surrounding the relationships between studies and works, images and meanings, form and content. Nevertheless, the intention is not to obscure the work process or maybe even to mystify it as a creative act. The countless allusions – as a para-work – to his own perception, his own thought processes and his own doing are an attempt to keep the viewer's response to the art flexible and open. The para-work allows the viewer to approach the act of seeing and to engage in visual or mental speculation as a way of continuing the artist's work so to speak, not as a way of categorizing it.

Architecture features in the workbook with striking frequency – more often than not in the form of eccentric structures and designs with stereometric basic elements and combinations of the latter. The proximity to architectural speculation fluctuates (buildings as letters of the alphabet) as does the proximity to temporary constructions (buildings for movies and the stage) and models. Monumentality is an important subtext. Given a space with the dimensions of the Kesselhaus one's thoughts naturally turn towards architecture. Determining the absolute size and hence the proportions of the work is one of the most difficult, most important tasks. While Scheibitz is not interested in monumentality purely for the sake of overwhelming the viewer, in his work he nevertheless does want to approach a tipping point – albeit without losing touch with the scale of a human figure. Architecture is also a point of orientation, because for all the freedom of the forms pertaining to his sculpture, it still has to be a rationally planned construction. Things have to make structural sense and they do not hide this fact.

In the workbook there are two lists of diverse objects in what looks like no particular order: frame, box, gateway, column, table, jug and so on. Both lists begin with the word *Gesichtsfeld* ('field of vision'), which already anticipates the viewer's contemplation of the future ensemble. These 'names' relate to the numerous pictorial and sculptural forms and elements that Scheibitz has developed over the

years. The word repertoire might seem appropriate here, were it not for the fact that it is too easily confused with the idea of a canon. In the same way that words are the repertoire of language, here, too, everything hinges on the way these elements are used – how and in what context – on the emphasis and the semantics. The artist himself has talked of prototypes, or rather of pre-products in the sense of semi-finished items or workpieces, and alludes to how they will be worked and used in different circumstances. In the context of this work the 'semi-finished' item ultimately becomes a half-figure. The artist's lists of objects or concepts are not to-do lists; if anything they are attempts to stake out the wide field of associations that arise from the development and realization of particular ideas. The written words help the artist to gain a different perspective on the wealth of images and thoughts passing through his mind.

With its abundance and variety of references in words and images, with its creative rhythms and its unique combination of pragmatism and speculation, the workbook is not only a para-text to the work at Kesselhaus but also a meta-text of sorts. Just as there are few if any clear connections between different elements and themes within the workbook, there is little if any clarity as to its artistic form. As such it functions like a model for the contemplation of *Plateau mit Halbfigur*.

PLATEAU, HALF-FIGURE

The title of the work is not as descriptive as it may seem. In fact it contains all sorts of undertones and pointers. Plateau is a concept that openly borrows from geographical features or from the terminology used in science and technology. On a purely linguistic level it already establishes a certain distance from the usual notion of a plinth that is associated with the traditional concept of sculpture. At the same time, plateau – in the sense of a territory or domain – is also distinct from the idea of a platform, which refers to architecture or (metaphorically) emphasizes the discursive or intentional nature of a place. The word 'plateau' ultimately also contains within it the idea of a landscape, with associations not only to the topographical feature but also to a state of mind: plateau as a thought construct.

The reference to the first/lowest layer of the work as a plateau creates distance in two ways. It distances the ensemble from the floor of the exhibition space and distances the sculptural event from the viewer. The 'step' at one corner has a purely spatial and visual function: it is not an invitation to ascend the plateau. Walking around between the shapes would give the work the feeling of a building (still under construction) or a stage set; it would make the experience too literal, setting limits on the work's potential and spatial-visual ambiguity. This piece is neither an environment nor an installation: it unmistakably sets itself apart from the space and

does not seek to physically draw the viewer in. Its connections to the space and to the viewer are not sustained by a physical continuum or by any such illusion; they require critical mediation on the part of the viewer. In this situation distance does not equate to separation, it does not hinder connections; it is an instrument that allows a connection to be made as a result of recognizing difference. This is true not only of the plateau but also of the work as a whole.

In the workbook there is an illustration of a sculpture from 2010, *Halbfigur* ('Half-Figure' fig. 24), which does not feature in the Kesselhaus work. It barely fulfils the art-historical definition of that term, which is normally used of a half-length figure, yet it is certainly somewhat reminiscent of a figure. And, as a sculpture, it does convey a vague impression of something not complete. It is in fact half a figure – and half something else. Similarly, the elements on the plateau are half what they appear to be in our imaginations and half something else or many other things. It is as if each figure had its other half – be it visible or invisible – with it, like a mirror image or a shadow.

According to the title, *Halbfigur* refers to everything on the plateau – not just each element but the totality of these objects. However, this totality only exists in the viewer's imagination; it cannot be seen as such. Each viewing angle reveals another figuration; new details loom into sight, others recede; the silhouette of the work as a whole is in constant flux; the depth of the configuration changes; colour combinations shift. In this case the term *Halbfigur* implies something akin to interminable change. In search of the figure one can only ever identify half-figures. Even so, the title implies that this should not be seen as a source of frustration but as a gain, in the sense that the constant vacillation of all these half-figures does in fact occur on a plateau, that is to say in a shared space, which the viewer experiences as a distinct interlocutor.

CHOREOGRAPHY

So how should the viewer walk round the sculpture? This is not only about individual preferences – given a choice of direction – for left or right. The sculpture itself seems to propose a particular route for the viewer's movements and observations. On one hand there is the irregular 'step' at the front right of the plateau, which signals an opening in this direction. By contrast the brightly lit element at the front left corner is like a hollow block facing forwards. Behind it things seem closed, if anything, almost like an internal courtyard. Most of the elements are placed at an angle to the edges of the plateau, fanning out towards the right-hand side. Since the plateau is itself slightly adrift from the axes of the exhibition space, it also seems to point the visitor in that direction. However, the movements required by the work

are not only about direction, they are also about rhythm. Some views slow the visitor down, because there is a lot in the depth of the work clamouring for attention; other sections speed it up. Thus the viewer's level of concentration on the work varies. And one's distance to it alters depending on the viewing angle. Sometimes it seems there is a need to zoom in on it, at others an overview is wanted. And then there are the pauses: coming to a halt, letting one's gaze pan through the space, shifting one's focus away from the sculpture.

The choreography of the viewer's encounter with the sculpture ensues from the constant effort to calibrate not only the forms and the structure of the work but also his or her attention and interest. The necessary movements are thus not prescribed by the sculpture, they arise in dialogue with it. Both the sculpture and the viewer retain their integrity despite constantly interacting. The viewer's movement with regard to the work is a tool for exploring it. However, the sculpture is not purely passive; its innate dynamics present possibilities to the viewer. This interaction through movement is an important factor in the question as to what the construction on the plateau actually is. Unlike a sculpture that is concentrated in one figure, the plateau's succession of views cannot be extrapolated in advance. It is only the free, changeable rhythm of the physical and spatial act of circling around the work that reveals its full complexity.

FILM

While routes around the work may appear to be continuous, its perception is not cinematographic in the true sense. This may come as a surprise, considering that during the time when Scheibitz was engaged in preparations for *Plateau mit Halbfigur*, he explicitly made a close connection between film and his own work. In 2018 an important exhibition of his work was presented with the title *Masterplan\kino*¹ and his artist's book, *SOLARES DELPHI / ENTWURF FÜR EINEN FILM*, was also published. The exhibition title has many layers of meaning, which are already hinted at by the way it is written. A masterplan defines the direction and creates a framework; by contrast in a cinema things never stand still. Is this contradictory combination of two concepts a metaphor for the artist's works or for the exhibition as a medium? That (sun)light is a crucial factor in film goes without saying. Yet Delphi calls to mind the oracle in the ancient world and its dark, ambivalent pronouncements. In one passage in the book the word *Unschärfe* ('out of focus') is also used. Ultimately an outline for a film is not the film itself, even if the act of quickly leafing through the book causes an ever-changing flow of visual events to pass before one. The exhibition title and the artist's book imply myriad connections between film and Scheibitz's works. There is a suggestion that there is a similarity between many aspects of the way

people view films or paintings and sculptures. Specific mention is made in the book of light, bright, dark, colour, sharp, soft, cold, warm, fluid, moment, collage or title, regulating. At the same time, however, the different media are not simply equated with each other. In this case film, like all metaphors, is illuminating and seductive, but also incommensurable. In *Plateau mit Halbfigur* the materiality and steadfastness of sculpture consistently slow down any form of perception inspired by film. Or to put it another way: even if movement and lighting are crucial prerequisites for one's engagement with the work, any continuous choreography is thwarted by its physical presence: motion and inertia constantly oscillate.

THE ELEMENTS

Taking the stage from left to right, there is the section of a building, the letter of the alphabet, the face, the drop and the window (which may only be the back of the face), the doorway and the bridge, the 'boot'. But there is no plot, the story is missing. Yet each half-figure tells a tale of its own – about its shape, its colours, its associations. And each half-figure responds to the others as part of a loose composition. The section of a building secures one side of the work and marks it with bright light. The letter, a greatly elongated 'A', lays claim to the highest point. The face brings figuration and, as a flat body, painting into play. The drop and its shadow remain in motion. The window gleams in the background. The doorway dynamically sustains a whole front. The bridge lies in between, a relativizing factor. And finally, the 'boot' is up to its own devices. All of this plays out in an extremely confined space. Each element makes its mark as a piece in its own right but also, presumably, comes into conflict with the others. Can a sentence work without a verb and connectives? In poetry it can.

All the elements can be read as images of objects in the real world – even the face is more like an object (a mask, a painting). But as a group they do not replicate a scene in the real world, they do not combine to form a still life. Neither the semantics nor the iconography comes full circle. The relationship of the images/objects to each other is paratactic. They crowd together without linking up. But they all have their origins in what is known as public space, be it real or virtual. These are one-offs – some are only fragments – that seem to have escaped from the ever-changing, never-ending continuum of 'public' perception. On the plateau personal issues, even more so private matters, are strangely arrested. There are signs of individuality, but only as the ephemeral colouration of certain object types. It would be overly romantic to describe the ensemble as a picture, as a collage of a city – thus allocating it to a particular genre. Indeed sculpture no longer seems capable of that any longer, now that any scrutiny of the external world seamlessly switches between the surface of real objects and the virtual depth of the Internet.

And in the sense that by virtue of their materiality and ideas the individual elements look like sculptures, they constitute a twenty-first century contradiction. They seem to assert an autonomy that they cannot enact in this chance togetherness. Nor are they parts of a whole, they are just an indeterminate plurality.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Plateau mit Halbfigur will exist as such for nine months. There are no plans to subsequently reconstruct it elsewhere or to re-use it in some other form. It is a temporary construction, as anyone can see from its appearance. More than that, in many places it even creates the impression of being unfinished – for instance where there are clearly visible braces or struts, particularly inside the doorway. It is almost as if the final skin is missing in places. Yet it soon becomes apparent that these struts are not in fact functional in terms of the construction. These internal areas are deliberately designed components in the sculpture as a whole. What looks unfinished, is in fact design. The same is true of the way external surfaces are painted. For a start, the paint application on the plateau is not homogenous and has irregularities similar to scumbling. Some surfaces and elements are painted evenly, but in others cases there seem to be almost random inconsistencies in the paint application. And in yet other cases there are clear signs of fillers having been used. But ultimately a second look at the panel with the face confirms that all these features that might appear to signal an unfinished work process are in a sense simply forms of painting, aspects of the intended overall look of the sculpture as a whole.

These seemingly improvised but entirely intentional features of the work give it an almost sketch-like openness that tempers any threat of monumentality. They also create associations with other constructions – at fairgrounds or trade fairs, in stage sets or model making. The similarities are not just technical, they also arise from the special impermanence and iconographic quality of projects of that kind. Aside from their practical use, structures of that sort have to convey, by visual means, a particular purpose or idea (a mood, an application, a story, something to do or to think about). They are 'makeshift' constructions and their reference objects may exist either in reality or in fiction. This sense of impermanence provides access for the viewer's imagination or speculation. In the case of *Plateau mit Halbfigur* 'under construction' thus does not indicate a temporary state, soon to be remedied, but rather a perfectly valid mode for a work of art. Occasional reminders of a construction site are in fact artistic form. However, it is not so much the physical object in the space that is provisional as the way it is contemplated and interpreted – provisional because the various perspectives and supplementary observations with which the work is approached are themselves experimental. And yet, 'under construction'

does not negate the constructive side of the work. The thrust of a concept, a plan, a viable realization (in whatever form) still survives as a possibility.

1:1 MODEL

The concept of a model may help viewers to better understand *Plateau mit Halbfigur* as an art form. And it should not be forgotten that a model can be much more than – and very different to – a small likeness, an ideal notion or a set of instructions. As the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss remarked, models or ‘miniatures’ are ‘not just . . . passive homologues of the object’ but ‘a real experience with it’. More recent research has widened the scope of models in very different disciplines and contexts. Models cannot merely be seen as forms of mediation, representation or replication. On the contrary they draw their strength from a ‘specific indeterminacy or underdetermination’. This leads to their ‘productive uncontrollability’. Ultimately, as the viewer contemplates a model the ‘boundaries between a world and its comprehending re-enactment in the model’ disappear.²

Plateau mit Halbfigur could technically be described as a 1:1 model, because there is no indication that it stands for something smaller or larger than itself. All it reveals is its actual size in the actual space of the Kesselhaus. It is only here that it has its true dimensions, which can only be discovered in situ. However, as a form, as a (built) image, as a sign it seems to be a hybrid, making reference to diverse objects but not replicating them. Its individual elements, and even more so the work as a whole, call to mind objects and ideas in the real world without finding fulfilment in them. If anything, these elements exist in their own right or on their own terms, which – with every shift in the viewing angle – suggest other symbols and tell other stories. This work is speculative: its forms and configurations have a hypothetical relationship to reality and are constantly coming up with new, independent types of forms and meanings. The modellike quality of *Plateau mit Halbfigur* thus expands its existence as a sculpture. The range of meaning of a model does not negate the work’s sculptural character but it does render the viewer’s perception of it more fluid, more buoyant. This piece shows that it is a meticulously planned and worked out experiment, that is to say, it is not just an artistic statement, it asks questions of a particular kind of art. At first sight it appears to be a ‘legitimate sculpture’ (a concept we owe to the artist Franz West), but on closer examination it raises questions as to its own status and function. And these questions relate not least to its dimensions and spatial context. Throughout the history of sculpture – from the distant past to the nineteenth century and its monuments, to the emergence of abstract art and on via certain aspects of Minimalism to Land Art

and beyond – monumentality has always been an issue. There is no avoiding the link between extremely large-scale art – mostly in public spaces – and power and theatricality. The modellike nature of *Plateau mit Halbfigur* is one answer to this problem. It relativizes size and monumentality, without undermining the proportions of the work. The scale 1:1 is not a way of shirking responsibility but as a model the syntax of the sculpture is in the subjunctive mood, in other words, it modifies its own claims.

ANALOGUE/DIGITAL

Plateau mit Halbfigur is clearly an analogue object. In fact, bearing in mind the constant checks on the work as it developed in situ, the many exposed traces of its manual production, and the need for the viewer to move around to take it in, this piece rather makes a point of being analogue. This work only exists in one medium, in one place and for a limited time. The viewer’s experience of it ‘corresponds’ to its production; the relationship between its material and its contemplation is ‘proportional’. The relation of object to perceiving body is analogue. In that sense the sculpture unambiguously, emphatically occupies the realms of traditional reality. That is also true of the fact that this object is a work of art, that it has a symbolic dimension. Even if individual components of the sculpture can only partially be linked to concrete meanings, these sorts of sense-seeking operations are very much part of analogue thinking as we know it. Does that mean that this work is irrevocably tied into a historical concept and experience of art? There is a widespread view that new media and realities can only – or at best – be grasped with the help of exactly these new modalities. But the question is whether earlier or even anachronistic mediums do not in fact have the potential to critically appraise and evaluate these advanced phenomena from a useful distance?

Of course, Scheibitz’s work is certainly not a tool for analyzing wider relationships between analogue and digital, it is not some form of philosophical apparatus. But at least one conclusion can be drawn from what has been said so far about the viewer’s experience: there is no continuous, steady connection between what is seen and what that signifies. The truth is that between the two there is a transformation system that is potentially infinite (movement in space) and that opens up countless potential connections between the one and the other. At the same time fixed correlations slip away into something of a virtual space. Returning to an earlier point, namely the modellike nature of the work, this now also demonstrates the potential of *Plateau mit Halbfigur*: as an image this sculpture exists as much in the real space before us as it does in our mind’s eye.

SCULPTURE

The array of shapes on the plateau is finite. Yet if one considers their overall spatial potential, an improvised, almost infinite game ensues – shapes interact, overlaid by colours interacting. As (not only) jazz and electronic music prove, not that many notes are needed to play a whole piece, to create almost endless variations, moods and meandering thoughts. In Scheibitz's work the colours provide sound, timbre and groove, which in turn change the physical components from moment to moment – without wishing to take the analogy with music too far. On the plateau there are thus not just seven shapes (or eight, counting the window) that one could name individually as a way of finding a supposedly firm footing; what we really see here is a flexible model of a world. It does not describe or explain that world, but it does clarify the way it functions. Although the starting point is just a handful of shapes, they evoke the hybrid interconnections of the disparate and the continuous in the way we experience the world today. The tangible and the intangible constantly intertwine, with individual objects coming to light and sinking back into unending transformation.

Plateau mit Halbfigur, as a 'model', is experimental in the true sense: it can only be experienced and understood in the totality of viewer, object and contemplation. For this to happen, it must not play down its real presence in an actual physical space, it must prove itself as a sculpture. In its own way it marks a moment when sculpture is to a certain extent still (or again) itself but is also reaching out into an 'expanded field', as one critic put it exactly forty years ago.³ What was described at that time as evidence of the postmodern break with modernism (following on from a rather rigorous, conceptually logical scheme) is in Scheibitz's work – as it were in the guise of a sculpture – condensed in the traditional sense. That is to say, the ensemble of objects on the plateau adapts the form and medium of a sculpture without being one in every respect. As a 'model' it is neither architecture nor site-specific in a wider sense, neither a monument nor representation, neither purely processual nor interactive – and yet all these and other categories converge in it. For all that it is unequivocally an entity that is both distinct from the surrounding space and interacts with that space, *Plateau mit Halbfigur* is a deeply unsettling object. It subtly questions its own status in numerous ways – and thus, in a highly unorthodox manner, breathes new life into the question of what 'sculpture' can do.

Translated from the German by Fiona Elliott

- 1 Thomas Scheibitz, *Masterplan\kino*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, 1 February–29 April 2018, and Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen, 18 May–12 August 2018
- 2 See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 1966); Reinhard Wendler, *Das Modell zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2013) [translated for this essay].
- 3 Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', *October*, vol. 8 (Spring, 1979): 30–44