

Introduction to the exhibition "Life & Death - Death and Life" by J.D. Fritz

The material world consists of opposites, day & night, plus & minus, order & chaos, becoming & passing away, life & death. We are taught duality from childhood. That makes sense to us. But is it really that simple?

In principle, we explore the world in two different ways, which we call the outside view and the inside view. Historically, we can equate duality with the material outside world = science, while unity corresponds to an inner world = faith. A clear separation between observer and observed, between subject and object, has become generally accepted in order to grasp the structure of reality.

However, physics has been proving us wrong for more than 100 years. It shows that the internal view is at least as relevant in order to have an effect. Scientific proof of this is, for example, the placebo effect, where belief in an effect produces it.

In Buddhism, the concept of unity is described by "non-duality". Because as soon as we speak of unity, we look at it from the outside and are instantly separated from it. Unity therefore means the fusion of subject and object. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, modern physics has realised that the classical principle of cause and effect is not capable of explaining events and knowledge down to the level of the atom. Newtonian physics helps us with the calculations for sending a spaceship to Mars, but it reaches its limits when it comes to the events surrounding the interior of matter. In fact, it becomes clear that even language proves to be a "barrier" when trying to explain them. In the words of nuclear physicist Peter Dürre: "When we try to take the material world apart down to the smallest particle, in the end there is nothing left that reminds us of matter. In the end, there is no substance left, only form, symmetry, relationship, connectedness, processes. There is no more matter, nothing, only vibration, which cannot be grasped."

And that's not all that physics discovered around a hundred years ago. Apparently, everything is connected to everything else. The spatial separation of objects and our bodies only exists in our perception of the material world. This is probably also reflected in Jesus' words when he says: "Love your neighbour as yourself." And we find the realisation of this "unity of all" in many religions.

Nature shows this to us when we observe the cycles of water more closely, for example. It moves in a cycle of states, becomes invisible, rises, rains down. We would not describe a cloud as death if it disappears in the form of rain. The ocean is a good metaphor to describe this. It doesn't occur to us to see it as a collection of water droplets. Nor can we say that it is made up of waves and whitecaps. The wave is rather a part of the ocean, whereby the part should not be understood as a component, but more in the sense of a "participation". Figuratively speaking, the ocean is the cosmos and the whitecap of the wave is a human being. Viewed from above, it looks as if the whole ocean is covered in white spots. The "as-if-part" whitecap arises from the whole that encloses it. This "whole-one" is always there, whether the ocean is calm and only a few whitecaps appear or whether it is highly differentiated and foaming up in a storm. Each whitecap is individually different and is formed as a possibility from the drops of water. Human life comes and goes, the ocean remains. The ocean represents the fundamental context in which we are all integrated and

from which we then, like a wave with its whitecap, experience an invisible and visible "individual" manifestation that is not permanent in its particular form.

At the same time, we have cultivated the ego in our society. Our upbringing, our needs and our value system are primarily focussed on material prosperity. Hardly anyone wants to do without it, although it is now clear that we cannot go on like this. Money means power and rules the world. Yet the last shirt has no pockets and we can't take our accumulated wealth with us when we die. Nevertheless, the plutocrats have become greedy kleptocrats and we see the wars they are waging and the injustice in this world and feel helpless.

"It is what it is - but nothing is what it seems!" an American baseball player once said in an interview. And he perhaps describes the situation better than some scientists.

We are part of the whole. Sociologically, this realisation seems to be slowly transforming the way the world's population sees things. People are increasingly asking themselves: isn't the world unique? Aren't we "one" human species living on "one" planet Earth? If there was a big bang, weren't we all originally one?

I heard a story about an English biologist. He was working on a book about whales and travelled to the Indonesian islands in search of a particular species of whale to photograph it. After weeks of fruitless searching, he ended up in despair in a café on the beach. There he met the village elder and told him what he was looking for. The village elder said: "No problem, we have a twelve-year-old girl here who can get the whale for you." So the next day he sat down on the beach with the girl and she closed her eyes. After about twenty minutes, the biologist, his heart pounding, saw the whale he was looking for appear on the horizon. And then, he reported, his heart raced as the whale came closer and closer and finally beached itself at the girl's feet. Later, they had to get many villagers to return the whale to the sea. The biologist asked the girl: "How did you do that?" She replied: "Oh, it was really quite simple. I went to the place where we all speak the same language and asked the whale to come." The biologist was flabbergasted. He asked the girl if she might be able to find other fish. "Sure, I can try to listen to them and get them," she replied. The next day they took a boat and went out to sea. Every few minutes, the girl would stick her head in the water and say "let's go ten miles this way" or "let's go that way" and that's how they found all the fish they were looking for.

In the end, the biologist couldn't help himself, he had to try it too. So he stuck his head in the water until he almost suffocated, surfaced again and said: "I didn't hear anything." And the girl, this little twelve-year-old girl, replied: "That's the trick, to hear the silence. In the silence is the space of all possibilities."

I think this story vividly illustrates the difficult-to-understand findings and connections of quantum physics. In this silence, subject and object merge. Language is no longer needed to communicate.

We need to realise that everything belongs together, that we are one with nature and that there is a connection. There is no separation. There is no shadow without light, no sound without silence. Duality does not consist of opposites, but forms a unity. The field is not a continuum or a model of space-time events that move in one direction according to the

principle of cause and effect. The field is pure potentiality. It is the effect of all possible stages of energy and information, which later manifest as space-time events in reality.

It is therefore useful to regularly enter a state of stillness, for example through meditation. In recent years, I have started to meditate regularly, also together with my parents since I have been caring for them. My father passed away while I was working on this project. This process was intense and initially brutal and painful, but eventually came to a conclusion in peace and tranquillity. I hope that my artwork can express and convey some of the "inward rest" in a contemplative way.

The black painting entitled "Death - Ocean of Possibilities" turned out to be an interesting revelation in this process. Originally I had a very static image in mind that would create a deep black field in the centre. But the black turned out to be extremely "alive". It changes constantly depending on the incidence of light and the angle of view. It is reminiscent of a picture my father painted in 1966 that he called "Central Pervasion".

I have placed a white grid picture opposite it, which symbolises life. The arrangement of the white gradations here is more irregular, unpredictable and follows less of a mathematical regularity. As I am not yet sure whether it is finished, I have labelled it unfinished and left it open as to whether I will continue to work on it - just as I am constantly working on my own life. Perhaps it will only be completed when I die?

The installation of the printed acrylic glass panes is also based on the "pervasion pictures". The white and black squares form a spatial field that changes with the movement of the viewer. The viewer becomes a co-author, discoverer and changer of pictorial phenomena that can unfold in his or her consciousness into a meaningful and meaning-forming shape. The work of art thus releases processes in the viewer that directly affect their mind and possibly also their body. It is a process of bilateral events.

At the same time, the discs between the benches remind us of the separating discs between life and death that were placed everywhere in times of Corona.

The best-known geometric symbol that embodies "unity in duality" is probably the yin-yang symbol. It symbolises that two forces are always in harmony with each other. In my work, this is integrated as a light installation on the wall and an ornamental progression in the frames on the gallery. My interpretation is based on two paintings by my father, which, like many of his works, he painted in a positive-negative variation - once in white on black and vice versa. However, he never had the idea of realising this principle in a single picture. In this case, the division of the square figure is reminiscent of a Tangram tile and forms the micro-element, so to speak, from which a fractal structure develops. This structure becomes a large sign that follows a regularity. The picture does not end at the edge, but transcends its boundaries. It embodies a process that can also be understood as an idea. This is a central point of abstract constructive concrete art.

I would like to explain this art movement to you in a little more detail.

I will start with the essentials:

The evolution of man was conditioned by the production and handling of tools, objects and sign systems:

1. for practical use

2. for intellectual use.

The creation of images falls into the second category, as it is directly linked to human thought. Thinking, as the essential characteristic of human beings, makes it possible to organise emotional values and create works of art from them.

At the beginning of the 20th century, artists began to move away from the true-to-life depiction of reality. Technological progress, in particular the invention of photography and faster means of transport such as trains and cars, changed the perception of the world. These changes led to the emergence of movements such as Impressionism and Cubism, which were characterised by artists such as Pablo Picasso.

As a result, the first generation of constructivist concrete artists emerged. Kazimir Malevich took abstraction to an extreme with his famous "Black Square", which caused outrage among the public. Piet Mondrian, on the other hand, orientated himself on natural objects, such as a tree, which he increasingly abstracted until he finally arrived at the characteristic red, blue and yellow rectangles on a black grid with a white background. The founding of the Bauhaus in 1919 marked another important step, as it was the first school to deal intensively with the new principles of colour and form.

By turning away from the reality of nature towards pictorial reality, the artist became a direct witness to his aesthetic designs and realisations. Art became a reflection of the identification between artist and work. This autonomy of the image led to the autonomy of seeing, which in turn meant the freedom of seeing. This freedom embodies the joy of recognising the truth and opens up the boundaries between emotion and intellect.

In the 1960s, serial artists, including my father, regarded their art as revolutionary. This art form, known as methodical constructivism, emerged parallel to the beginning of the electronic age and the development of the computer. In these works, one no longer finds the usual artistic handwriting, but the intuitive compositions gave way to a calculated composition characterised by sequences and symmetries. The pictorial ideas were rendered in signs and sign complexes that were no longer images of the outside world, but embodied new objects, symbols and metaphors - they are spirit turned material.

I found the following text by Heinz Nickel, who also taught my father, to help me better understand the working methods of the concrete constructivist artists:

"Structurally determined pictorial art as I practise it is - generally speaking - that which is based on a conscious principle of order, a controlled and controllable organisational scheme for the creative process.

This means that creative thinking takes shape in a logically determined process of realisation, whereby the inner logic of sequence and structure also includes the chance of appearance in complete freedom. Or more precisely:

the image structure is integrated into a design concept - but the decisive factor is the order, the reference system itself, the coherence in principle - t h e s t r u c t u r e .

The aim: to derive many different constellations from one structure, to change the position of the elements, to give their relationships a new weight. Because each new constellation consists of a mixture of free decision and inevitable result. Method as programme, programme as method.

This is not formalism, it is not form and colour as l'art - pour - l'art - but knowledge; not the epidermis of things - but the structure and order of our world.

Making pictures is a variation in the realm of invention. The section is outlined; the visual field, or more precisely, perception through seeing. The means are given: Proportions and constellations. The elements are defined: Colours.

The production is therefore: fixing proportions and constellations, combining colours and linking them with the formal structure, integrating, dealing with colours, proportions and constellations is based on experience and lives from speculation: sensing what has not yet been experienced, searching, being surprised by what is found, seen as a whole, a constant process with a clear beginning and an undefined end. The threshold is formed by the individual image, which itself is the end product, always immediately becoming a new experience, the starting point for subsequent speculation.

My contribution may be original or unoriginal, topical or not. My experience may interest many or few: as a painter, I allow myself enough reason to be occupied by an idea. I make a concrete picture of the idea, on my own commission, on my own responsibility, with unlimited liability for the product.

Picture-making, understood as intellectual labour, is limited in the first case by my ability, in the second by my perspective. I can only reproduce and pass on in pictures what my own insight into the design of the world encompasses.

The mathematician Andreas Speiser says:

"Even the artist is not the creator of his works, but, like the mathematician, he discovers them in a spiritual world created by God, the only one that is true."

To the extent that the technologically orientated change in the world concentrated on externally visible successes and achievements, the artist penetrated a previously unknown dimension of perception by adapting scientific methods and changed art. The areas in which the so-called non-objective artists moved were no longer primarily to be grasped in materially tangible values, but had shifted into the realm of ideas.

It should be noted here that the meaning of artistic work has not changed. The aim and content of art are still the laws of life, which must be grasped in an increasingly complex way and conveyed in a visual language appropriate to the times.

So when philosophy speaks of a new reality, it means a changed view of the laws of life, a changed understanding of interrelationships and the effects of forces that are rooted in the human being. In order to activate this inner reality that lies deep within us and to allow it to enter our consciousness on a broad level, we need more than ever intuitive strength and insight, judgement and knowledge, and an inner responsibility towards the biological and social laws of life. The new artistic self-awareness arose precisely from the knowledge of this responsibility. For the artist, this means that he is no longer the interpreter of a predetermined order outside himself, but that this order is his own reality of being. To make much out of little, to create something qualitatively different from individual quantitatively measurable parts, from the actual to the real." *1

In my eyes, this is exactly what I have experienced in my work in this church: There is a deeper and actual reality in art. I invite you to let the art take effect on you and hope you enjoy the exhibition and the dialogue about the works.

*1 Excerpt from a research report by Heinz Nickel Topic:

Rows for systematic configuration finding with equal progressive quantities in a field that is always the same, superimposed with colour rows and colour contrasts.

Typescript, 24 pages Din A4, 8 of them with colour. Fig.

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the text is divided into the sections

on the motivation, on the matter, for a better understanding, on the case, concerning the figuration, concerning the colour, concerning the method, résumé. The section "on the matter" is reproduced here.