

DIE FREIHEIT / FREEDOM

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The installation DIE FREIHEIT / FREEDOM is based on the interplay of two levels: the *material-pictorial* level and the *immaterial-verbal* level. The material structure consists of simple grave crosses and portrait flags. In addition to the symbolic force of expression inherent to it, it fulfills the functions of being a physical carrier and distribution for the immaterial statements of the verbal structure.

The Installation

Simple wooden grave crosses are set up in the round park grounds of the Cathedral Square in the form of a burial ground. With slogans on the front and the back, they emulate a cemetery in the way they are made and in their arrangement. Portrait flags, also with slogans on them, are hung on the facades of the surrounding buildings. In this way, the installation takes up the existing spatial structure and uses analogies to implement the statement inherent to the installation: the garden becomes a burial ground. The clerical buildings carry the representational element of the flag.

The Slogan

The principal textual statements “*My body does not belong to me.*” “*My body is a weapon.*” “*My body is the battlefield.*” establish a connection to the myth of the Tyrolean battle for freedom and the death of Andreas Hofer in 1809. They make the myth tangible by referring to its basis – battle and “sacrificial death”. However, the statements are expressly so abstractly formulated in terms of space and time that the reader/viewer can easily make a link to the present.

The Language

The slogans flow into the installation not only in German. They are also translated into seven other, purposely chosen languages: French, Italian, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin and English. German, French and Italian emphasize the historical reference to the year 1809 again. Whereas Arabic, Hebrew, Greek and Latin allude to the three major religions of the book, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, English is the predominant language of economy and science around the world. Language is thus a means of identification for nationality, religion and identity. In this way it becomes a symbol of patriotism and demarcation, contrary to understanding and reconciliation.

The Cross

Along with its role as physical carrier of the verbal message, a strong symbolic expressiveness naturally inheres to the cross. As the visual epitome of Christianity, in the installation DIE FREIHEIT / FREEDOM it especially refers to the religious aspect of “Catholicism” and thus to the thinking, feeling and actions that still substantially characterize Tyrol today.

The Portrait

The portrait makes use of the iconography of the public, representative “presidential portrait”. The area of the eyes is covered with a white bar for anonymity and adorned with one of the three slogans. Whereas the cross conveys the religious aspect of the installation, however, general perception directly links the “presidential portrait” with politics, state power and power systems.

The installation FREIHEIT / FREEDOM seeks to make it possible to experience and grasp the traditional myth of the “battle for freedom” and to unmask it. The critical visualization of the individual components of religion, power, economy, politics, patriotism and nationality through the purposely public aggregation of its symbols cross, flag, portrait and language forces the myth to the surface, making it visible and thus discussable.

In this way, the installation DIE FREIHEIT / FREEDOM is intended to become an aesthetic counter-ritual.