

BJÖRN SCHÜLKE

b.1967, Cologne, Germany

Lives and works in Cologne, Germany

Björn Schülke is a sculptor who playfully transforms live spatial energy into active responses. Slow deliberate movements in his sculptures consider mass and weight of form, while their striking physical presence is anchored in the formal vocabulary of modern abstraction. His constructions delight, disrupt, and disorient the viewers' expectation— staging an unpredictable behavioral exchange between the audience and the machine.

Portraying an animist worldview, Schülke's work is characterized by its lively interior consciousness. Revealed through a complex cycle of communication and movement, each object possesses irrational character traits or distinctive emotional features. Using solar panels, infrared surveillance and air propulsion to trigger movement or sound, the immediate surroundings of Schülke's sculptures become sites of observation and intervention. His 'creatures' are suspicious, vulnerable subjects that are awakened by motion sensors as the viewer approaches. Psychically charged, these automated works seem fantastical, inheriting an odd performative humor from Valie Export, one of Schülke's mentors at the Academy of Media Art, Cologne. Evoking the tools of modern observation and precision, his work suggests artificial intelligence as well as absurdity.

Recent exhibitions of his work include Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco, CA; Boghossian Foundation – Villa Empain, Brussels, Belgium; National Art Museum, Beijing, China; Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; Telfair Museum of Arts, Savannah, GA; Museum Villa Rot, Burgrieden, Germany; KulturBahnhof, Kassel, Germany; Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain; Verbeke Foundation, Stekene, Belgium; Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin, Germany; and the Biennale of Electronic Arts, Perth, Australia. Collected privately throughout Europe, the US and Australia, Schülke's work has also been acquired by Bank of America, The Progressive Collection, the Borusan Collection at Perili Köşk Museum; 21C Museum and Hotel, Sharjah Art Museum; Sculpture Museum Glaskasten, the Neiman Marcus Collection, Jülich Research Centre and the City of San Jose. Selected exhibitions of Schülke's work include the Telfair Museum of Arts, Savannah; Museum Villa Rot, Burgrieden; KulturBahnhof, Kassel; Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid; Verbeke Foundation, Stekene; bitforms gallery, New York; Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin and the Biennale of Electronic Arts, Perth.

Schülke holds a postgraduate diploma from the Academy of Media Art (KHM) in Cologne, Germany.

EDUCATION

- 1997-2000 Resident Artist, German National Research Center for Information Technology, St. Augustin
1995-1998 Postgraduate Studies, Academy of Media Art (KHM), Cologne
1988-1993 FH Bielefeld

SOLO AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Cosmos*, bitforms gallery SF, San Francisco, CA
2018 *Sentinel is Watching You*, Ringel Gallery, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Later today I fly, Luftmuseum Amberg, Germany
2017 *Vision Instruments*, bitforms gallery, New York, NY
2015 *Wunderkammer*, Kunstverein Worms, Worms, Germany
2014 *Björn Schülke – Orgamat*, Luftmuseum Amberg, Germany
Björn Schülke, Burlington City Arts, Burlington, VT
2013 *Björn Schülke and Dierk Maass*, Lagerhaus 62, Zürich, Switzerland
2012 *Luftraum*, bitforms gallery, New York, NY
2011 *Selected Work: 2003-2010*, Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA
2008 *Überschall*, bitforms gallery, New York, NY
2006 *Björn Schülke and Peter Vogel*, bitforms gallery, Seoul, South Korea
Björn Schülke and R. Luke Dubois, bitforms gallery, New York, NY
Björn Schülke: Kinetic-Interaction-Robotic, Kornhaus Gallery Lirchheim/Teck, Germany
2003 *Aerosalon*, Galerie Rachel Haferkamp, Köln, Germany
European Media Art Festival, Video and Sound Sculptures, Gallery Anette Rohr, Osnabrück, Germany
2001 *Controlled Voltage*, Galerie Rachel Haferkamp, Cologne, Germany
1999 *Modulator#1 and other Installations*, Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain
1998 *Medieninstallationen*, Gallery 68elf, Cologne, Germany
1996 *Bar jeder Zeit, 10th International Photo Scene*, Cologne, Germany
1995 *Zoetrope and Other Works*, Artists Unlimited Gallery, Bielefeld, Germany
1994 *In Progress*, Exit Art, Cologne, Germany
Landung, KAOS-Gallery, Cologne, Germany

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *Kinetic Machines*, MMIII Kunstverein Mönchengladbach and Krefelder Kunstverein, Mönchengladbach and Krefelder, Germany
AND YET IT MOVES, San Quirino's Church, Parma, Italy
KUNST BEWEGT, Galerie Tobias Scharde, Ulm, Germany
2018 *SWARM*, Moss Arts Center, Virginia Tech, Blackburn, VA
2017 *Erwarten Sie Wunder*, Museum Ulm, Ulm, Germany
2016 *Fifteen-Year Anniversary Exhibition*, Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco, CA
THE VIEW, Sommerausstellung, THE VIEW CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE, Salenstein, Switzerland
Magie und Macht - von fliegenden Teppichen und Drohnen, Museum Marta Herford, Germany
Where are we going?, Kunstverein Emsdetten, Emsdetten, Germany
Witness, New Media Gallery, New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada
To See Without Being Seen: Contemporary Art and Drone Warfare, Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, MO, curated by Svea Bräunert and Meredith Malone
2015 *From Heaven to Hell. Flying Carpets and Drones*, Boghossian Foundation, Villa Empain, Brussels, Belgium
Playing Future, Kunsthalle Kiel, Germany
2014 *Luminous Flux*, Art House, Santa Fe, NM
Transmission / Frequency: Tesla and His Inspiration, Interdisciplinary Experimental Arts at Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO
thingWORLD, International Triennial of New Media Art, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China, curated by Zhang Ga
Szenarien des Umheimlichen, Kunstverein Neuhausen, Germany
Transform: A State of New Media, Wasserman Projects, Detroit, MI
PublicPrivate, Spring/Break Art Show, New York, NY
2013 *Kinesthetics: Art Imitating Life*, Pratt Institute, New York, NY
Transposition: Motion is Action, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China
2012 *Klang*, Künstlerverein Walkmühle, Wiesbaden, Germany
Denkmal an Wagner, Kunstverein Worms, Worms, Germany
2011 *Works from the Borusan Contemporary Art Collection*, Perili Köşk Museum, Istanbul, Turkey
Pulse, Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA
2009 Martin-Mullen Gallery, SUNY Oneonta, New York, NY

- 2008 *Sound and Tone in the Contemporary Art*, Museum Villa Rot, Burgrieden-Rot, Germany
 2008 *Vision in Motion – Motion in Vision*, Verbeke Foundation, Stekene, Belgium
 2007 bitforms gallery, New York, NY
 2006 *Cybernetic Sensibility*, Daelim Museum, Seoul, South Korea
War in the World, Hunterdon Museum of Art, Clinton, NJ
Sound of Music, Maison Eclésièrè 5, Toulouse, France
 2005 St. Michael & John Church, Dublin, Ireland
Field Research, Gallery Brigitte Schenk, Cologne, Germany
 2004 *TAINMENT*, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (NGBK), Berlin, Germany
Sequences, Peterborough Museum, Peterborough, England
 Biennale of Electronic Arts, Perth, Australia
 Raima Biennale Balticum, Rauma, Finland
Der elektronische Raum, Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten, Marl, Germany
Privatgruen, Kunstraum Fuhrwerkswaage, Cologne, Germany
 Z33, Hasselt, Belgium
Cyclic Eye, Museu Paulista, São Paulo, Brazil
Monitoring, Kulturbahnhof, Kassel, Germany
 2003 *jeune création*, Exposition Internationale d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France
 2002 *Sentient Cog*, 5th Gallery, Dublin, Ireland
 2001 *Koeln Quartett 01*, Kunstraum Fuhrwerkswaage, Cologne, Germany
Skif-5, Sergey Kuryokhin International Festival, St. Petersburg, Russia
 2000 Biennale Arte Emergente, Torino, Italy
 Stein der Weisen, Bonn, Germany
 1998 Edison-Station, Leipzig, Germany
Licht, Museum Jena, Germany
 1997 *Gute und Boese Maschinen*, Cologne, Germany

AWARDS

- 2002 German Video Installation Award for *Drone #2*, Marl
 2000 Torino Emerging Art Biennale, Amica Award for *Modulator #1*

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

- 2010 *Space Observer*, a permanent sculpture for the San Jose International Airport, Terminal B

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2018 Kvam, Erika. "'Sentinel Is Watching You' at Purdue Galleries; AI meets art," *Purdue newsroom*, October 23
 Editor. "From Insects to Birds, Planes to Drones, Swarms are The Subject of Moss Art Center's Newest Exhibitions," *The Roanoke Star*, October 17
 Geiger, Peter. "Björn Schülke's absurd machines," *Mittelbayerische*, August 5
 Lew, Josh. "Airport art is taking off around the world," *MNN*, June 1
 2017 Waleczek, Agata. "Berlin is gaining momentum in the side streets," *Welt*, September 16
 Dunne, Susan. "Real Art Ways' 'Nothing To Hide?' Examines Surveillance," *Hartford Courant*, March 8
 Stewart-Sanabria, Denise. "The Future of Electronic Art Opens Up at KMA's New 'Virtual Views' Exhibit," *Knoxville Mercury*, February 8
 Nunes, Andrew. "'Spider Drones' Sculptures Marry Surveillance and 60s Sci-Fi," *Creators Project*, February 3
 "Extended until March 4: bitforms fifteen-year anniversary exhibition at Minnesota Street Project," *ArtDaily*, January 7
 2016 Wurche, Bettina. "KINETIC Automobile. Skulpturen. Musikmaschinen," *ARTMAPP*, December
 "bitforms Gallery: 15-year anniversary," *Wall Street International*, December 14
 Morris, Jane. "Can you digit? A media art pioneer celebrates 15 years," *The Art Newspaper*, November 11
 Pangburn, DJ. "Bitforms Gallery Celebrates 15 Years with a Retrospective in San Francisco," *Creators Project*, November 8
 "You're Being Watched: WITNESS set to open at New Media Gallery," *The NewWestminster Record*, August 29
 2014 Heißenbüttel, Dietrich, "Im Blick der neugierigen Kameraaugen," *Styrtgater Zeitung*, June
 Simpson, Judy. "Burlington Sculpture Exhibit, New Interactive Experience," *WCAX.com*, June 13
 2012 Meier, Allison, "Our Robots, Ourselves," *Hyperallergic*, December 4
 "Mechanical Life Forms at bitforms: Björn Schülke's 'Luftraum'," Press release of the *German Missions in the United States*, November 15
 Ayhan Demirci, "Science Fiction in Kölns Hafenstrasse," *Express*, July 30
 2011 "Commissions: Art + Technology," 22-23. *Sculpture Magazine*, April
 Gorbet, Matt, Gorbet, Susan LK, Bannerjee, Banny, "Collaboration with the Future: An Infrastructure for Art +

- Technology at the San José International Airport", *Leonardo*, 4: 334–345.
- 2010 Ashok, Mala, "Flight of fancy to Silicon Valley," *Deccan Herald*, July 20
Kiefer, Peter, *Klangräume der Kunst*, 35. Kehrer Verlag, Berlin.
Baskas, Harriet, "High-tech art welcomes passengers at San Jose International Airport," *USA Today*, July 14
- 2009 Björn Schülke, bitforms gallery
Woolfolk, John, "Giant space robot headed for San Jose," *San Jose Mercury News*, April 16
Salaud, Julien, *Antennae*, 9: 69-72. Spring.
- 2008 Brillson, Leila, Renzi, Jen, and Zhong, Fan, *Surface*, 72, 88-93. July
Troika (Freyer, Conny; Noel, Sebastien; Rucki, Eva), *Digital By Design – Crafting Technology for Products and Environments*, 90-93, 273, 296. Thames & Hudson, New York.
- 2007 *Esquire North: A New View*, 14, 18-19, 55.
- 2006 Hwang, You-mee, "Cutting-edge Art Experiments with New Media," *The Korea Herald*, October 17
"Explosion Futurista," *Neo2*, August
Listing, *Time Out New York*, July 13
- 2003 Kisters, Jurgen, "Liebenswerte Monster: Björn Schülke faehrt bei Haferkamp Fangarme aus," *Koelner Stadt Anzeiger*, October 31

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

21c Museum, Louisville, KY, USA
Argor Collection, Luxemburg
Bank of America Collection, United States
Borusan Contemporary Art Collection, Turkey
Jonathon Carroll Collection, England
Neiman Marcus Collection, United States
The City of San Jose, California, United States
Progressive Art Collection, United States
Research Centre Juelich, Germany
Sculpture Museum, Glaskasten Mari, Germany
Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates
View Contemporary Art Space, Switzerland