

The Argentine artist David Lamelas (\*1946) is known today first and foremost for his structuralist films and media installations. His solo exhibition “V” at Kunsthalle Basel, curated by Ruth Kissling, opens with a concrete object that serves as a reminder of Lamelas’s early sculptural works of the 1960s, but which also embodies his fundamental concern to liberate sculpture from the traditional ratio of mass and volume – a recurring theme within his oeuvre. For David Lamelas, sculpture is not only the aesthetic form and specific mass occupying space, but rather the centre of an accumulation of spatial and social interactions. The site of the artwork – as place of creation as well as place of presentation – is central to the conceptual approach underpinning his works. As seemingly invisible material, tied to the experience of the viewer, time complements the vacuum of space.

Ascending the stairs and reaching the landing before entering the gallery, visitors are greeted by the sculpture *Study of Relationships between Volume, Space and Gravity* (1965/2008). The wooden object, whose shape – resembling a V – lends the show its title, leads the visitor around the sculpture into the first gallery. The V can be read as an inverted prism that opens up the space above the sculpture and in so doing highlights the volume and architecture of the Kunsthalle interior. The associative title reflects Lamelas’s broader understanding of sculpture as a medium that transcends all possible iterations of material form.

As visitors enter the historical Oberlichtsaal, the gallery at first sight appears empty. In this space, the public will perform the work *Time* (1970/2014). A white line is marked on the floor, there are also two photographs and a gallery attendant is present in the gallery at certain times. The purpose of the line is to guide people to stand in line next to each other and perform the piece. The performance constitutes the physical activation of the piece *Time*, first shown in public in 1970 in the French Alps. (Please read the instructions for the performance provided by the artist and reproduced on the centre pages of this leaflet.)

With this piece, David Lamelas moves away from the classic notion of object-based work of art and decides to elevate the space and the time that a person normally needs to walk around and examine a sculpture to the status of actual work. The idea is to see time as an object without volume. Visitors taking part in the performance commit themselves to time insofar as they take up their position along the white line and become part of the work. The artist talks about the work in the following terms: “(...) And one of the great qualities of art, I think, is that it goes through time and is alive now and in a thousand years from now. And especially this work, because a thousand years from now people from 3010 will be able to perform a piece of today. So it’s about that, you know, in a way, it’s about immortality of concepts. The immortality of art, really.”

In the Kunsthalle foyer, where the reception team members explain the visitors how to perform the piece in the show they will see upstairs, a film of the work *Time* (2007) is being shown on a monitor. It documents the performance of the piece during the exhibition *Living Currency* at the STUK kunstencentrum in Leuven, Belgium in 2007 curated by Pierre Bal-Blanc.

On Sunday, September 21, 2014 in the Oberlichtsaal, the work *1416 m<sup>3</sup>* (2014) is premiered live in front of an audience. Recorded, it will be played back during the exhibition in rear-right corner of the main gallery. This composition has been written by US-based composer Gavin Gamboa (\*1984, Mexico) following the concept of David Lamelas. The situational chamber piece for tenor and string quartet (which is performed on Sunday, September 21, 2014 at Kunsthalle Basel by the Austrian-Mexican tenor León de Castillo and the Marcel Rubin Quartet) represents sonically the amount of cubic meters at the Oberlichtsaal. The tenor will describe the architecture of the space where the concert takes place by filling each cubic meter of the space with sound.

Playing in Room 11 is a 16-mm film that Lamelas produced in 1970 in Paris for the exhibition *18 Paris IV.70* (curated by Michel Claura with Seth Siegelaub). The eponymous *Film 18 Paris IV.70* shows three friends, each shot for three minutes in a different Paris location: Raúl Escari (17:19–17:21), an Argentinian writer living in Paris, Pierre Grinberg (12:10–12:13), a French filmmaker who was also the cinematographer of the film, and the French artist Daniel Buren (16:25–16:28), who had already worked with Lamelas on the first performance of *Time*. They give to the cinematographer the starting time and after 3 minutes the ending time of the shooting, so in front of the camera the experience the passage of time with no other meaning but time itself. The performative nature of *Film 18 Paris IV.70* is significant here, since it establishes a direct link with the work *Time* installed in the main gallery and once again takes up the concept of counting time.

The three-minute film format is reiterated in the catalogue *A Three Minute Film Taken in a Certain Place in the Following Cities* (1970), which lies open in the glass display case next to the projector. This small book contains the artist's proposal to shoot a three-minute film in 25 cities around the world, from Amsterdam via Moscow to Santiago de Chile, in a pre-specified location at some point between 10 a.m. and 10.55 a.m. These parameters serve to convey Lamelas's vision for the work at the conceptual, mental level rather than to provide the basis for its actual realization.

*A Study of Relationships between Inner and Outer Space* (1969) in the last small gallery 12 is David Lamelas's second film work and was made while he was a sculpture student at Central St. Martins in London. The artist conceived the work for *Environments Reversal*, a show curated by Peter Carey in 1969 at the Camden Arts Centre in London. While his fellow students worked within the

paradigm of classical sculpture, Lamelas realized that his interest lay not in sculpture itself but in the overall experience of the viewer, and he began to work increasingly in the medium of film. In *A Study of Relationships between Inner and Outer Space*, Lamelas analyses the architectural, social, infrastructural, climatic and sociological conditions of the Camden Arts Centre and of the city of London. The first part of the film analyses the space where the film is projected. The second part of the film looks at “the outer space of London” and guides the viewer through London’s contemporary means of communication, including its transportation systems and various contemporary forms of media, and the climatic zones in the region around London. The film ends with interviews on the streets of Camden Town, in which passers-by are asked what they thought about the Apollo moon landing, the main theme in the mass media at the time. *A Study of Relationships between Inner and Outer Space* thus establishes a conceptual kinship with the audio piece *1416 m<sup>3</sup>* (2014) in the main space: here, too, the space inside the building and the space outside it become a metaphor for the inner and outer psychological worlds of the viewer and for the space as invisible supporting structure behind any artwork.

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