

## No Way to Return

*My work definitely cannot avoid misunderstanding, incomprehension, and inattention. I have to accept this, and I have to work with it. I do not complain.—Thomas Hirschhorn*

Michael Wegerer creates objects and environments to confound and disorient the senses. His primary goal is to provoke a second glance, an eternal second look that penetrates the appearance of things to question the nature of things themselves. The works are “Wandering Jews”: from Austria over England, in Turkey and in Mexico and beyond, packed up and packaged, shipped by land, air and sea, to be re-set up and re-installed in different locations. With traces from former stops incorporated into the works as they travel the globe, a gradual amalgamation does indeed take place in them.

The works, if not travelling physically through traditional transportation mechanisms, are then travelling through our capitalistic economic data highway, over the Internet auction platforms Ebay and Taobao. Wegerer takes images from the objects offered for sale by bidding, and translates these JPEGs into drawings, that he then offers on Ebay for sale, playing with the mechanism of desire in the marketplace. He wants the people who interact with his art to be amused and stimulated into questioning what is being presented to them, but most of all, to allow their feelings of longing to surface.

Wegerer travels prodigiously: a kind of extreme tourist, always on the edge of time and space coordinates. Is this bus stop in Ayers Rock or in London? The metaphors and associations of specific places and locations get mixed around in Wegerer’s hands. Installative art such as his, combining techniques from graphic design, printmaking, sculpture, Minimalism, diary keeping, word play, critical theory and audience participation, can be seen as a corresponding answer in the

medium of art to the omnipresent marketplace represented by Ebay worldwide and in China by Taobao.

Working with every day materials, such as cling film and paper, is another cornerstone of his approach. He records dreams, visions, fantasies and experiences on the medium of plastic wrap, known in the English-speaking world as “GLAD (!) Wrap”. In today’s Western environmentally friendly world, using plastic can indicate a throwback to another, more innocent era. Cling film as an art medium demonstrates critical naïveté and an Arte Povera sensibility. This is also evinced by his use of paper to make trompe l’oeil/fool-the-eye pallets and windows, ladders and ... objects that can only actually be properly perceived through touch, something generally discouraged in exhibition situations. Wegerer asks: where is the boundary between thought and action? How do we, in the post-post-modern world, decide where to look, where to touch, where to stop?

To be able to speak a universal language, that would be understood by everyone simultaneously, is an unspoken wish. Michael Wegerer’s attempts at translation, through different artistic mediums, in various countries, using many artistic languages, testify to this.

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