

The "Virtual Lingam Garden" series is an extension of my investigations into the world of the Shiva Linga. The Lingam is exoterically a symbol of male potency. Esoterically it has to do with the figure of Shiva, who has 1000 names. It represents a constant cycle of destruction and renewal. The female counterpart, the "Yoni", is not so often seen.

In 1995 I was invited to exhibit at the "Kunststation Sankt Peter" in Cologne by the "Peter Paul Rubens Society for Modern Art and Music", headed by the extraordinary priest Friedhelm Mennekes. A Jesuit church in the center of town, the church boasts a wonderful painting of the crucifixion of Saint Peter by Peter Paul Rubens, who was baptized in the church. The painting depicts Peter upside down, as he was crucified. The upper portion of the painting is half-round. These two facts led me to meditate on the idea of rotation.

I took an oval and jade lingam stone in my possession as the principal image in a film which was projected onto the wall above the right altar. One sees simply a jade stone floating in space. The stone grows in size and the contours become out of focus. The object gives up its identity as such and becomes a part of the picture plane of the film. After it swells to the maximum size anatomic collages dance over the surface. In the film this episode is merely a flash. The stone then recedes and its edges become sharp again. I call this "One Breath".

The film is named "LIMEN", meaning a perceptual threshold. I recently finished an artist's book with "Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König" which is titled LIMEN. It's basically a flipbook and contains one single white page on which one sees a collage of the Rubens painting, two images of the same paired to form an oval. The book, essentially a flip-book, is extremely elegant. We sell it for € 98 including a signed lithograph of the "Virtual Lingam Garden / Alnatura". The edition is 500 and all are signed, numbered and dated in the book and on the print.

I searched for more than one year for a suitable historical photo of an Indian Lingam Garden and found nothing that satisfied me. My solution was then to invent one. Neighbors, friends and collectors of ours bought this particular sculpture from Desiré Feuerle many years ago. I got their permission, hired a professional photographer for one hour and came away with both views which occupy the photos. I worked with a young graphic designer in Cologne named Markus Taubeneck to make the composition, which is roughly based on a Magritte painting. We scaled the stone to three sizes and put them in three grids which collide with one another. To subvert the illusion of deep space we moved the middle and smallest sizes selectively to the front of the grids. The color combinations occurred to me immediately. My earliest oil on canvas attempts while a student at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York demonstrated my sensitivity as a colorist. I did Josef Alber's color course at Cooper Union with someone who repeated the course several times at Yale while Albers was still teaching there. I found it mechanical and uninteresting.

The "Floating World" images are macro-photos of collages, which I did between 1992 and 1995. The collages all have 19th Century French map etchings as the carrier or "background" paper. I bought about 80 of these in NY in the early 1980's. The paper is of such high quality that the prints look completely fresh. In most cases I over painted the maps with liquid rubber cement. I then give the sheets several layers of black ink. Once the ink has dried I remove the rubber cement, giving "windows" into the paper and etchings. This is a technique, which I developed as a student. I've produced numerous bodies of work using this technique, for instance in 2006 for my last show with Jule Kewenig I over painted high-quality loose leaf lithographs of Karl Blossfeldt

photos, taking the sheets from a boxed set released by his estate in 2004, I believe.

For the collages I took two sheets of anatomical illustrations, which I had bought in NY in the early 1980's. The quality of the drawing was very high but the paper was completely rotten. I carefully cut them out and mounted them on two cardboard carriers. I sent these sheets to Max Dunkes in Munich, with whom Gerhard Richter had produced heliogravure prints in the 1970's. I had Mr. Dunkes produce heliogravure plates from the images, both as they were and mirror-reversed. This allowed me to mount (with glue) the anatomical parts in complete symmetry as a contrast to the "abstract expressionist" rubber/ink paintings on the maps. The nine images in Sydney are taken from a body of maybe 150 35mm slides made in 1992 from the first body of collages, which I showed in that year at the Galerie Aurel Scheibler in Cologne. I continued making the collages until I had no maps left, ending in 1995. I showed them in Munich and New York in solo exhibitions and at several museums such as the Drawing Center in NY, the Soho Guggenheim in NY and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice Italy. The "Floating World" images are a departure from the collage themselves in that they contain no symmetry.

Again, I take something complete and extract a detail, which has its own right to be.

Curtis Anderson, November 2012