



Kreuzlingen

KONSTANZ
Die Stadt zum See



Stadtverwaltung Kreuzlingen · CH-8280 Kreuzlingen
Stadtverwaltung Konstanz · D-78459 Konstanz am Bodensee

Press Release

Art opens borders

Sculptures mark the frontier between Switzerland and Germany

The border towns Konstanz and Kreuzlingen can boast one more attraction: No longer divided by a border fence, the two cities on Lake Constance are now joined by 22 sculptures of the artist Johannes Dörflinger.

First sculpture border worldwide

August 16th, 2006 was a historic date for the two border towns. This was the day when the two mayors of Kreuzlingen and Konstanz, Josef Bieri and Horst Frank, cut asunder the border fence and so made it possible to tear down 300 metres of wire netting near the lake. Now, more than six months later, the line of the border between Germany and Switzerland is no longer marked by a fence but by a sculpture border – unique throughout the world. Sculptures eight metres high made of stainless steel varnished in a red the colour of a hummingbird, join the shades of blue of sky and water and the shades of green of meadows and trees.

For realising the sculpture border, Konstanz artist Johannes Dörflinger designed a work of art comprising 22 individual sculptures. The objects represent the trumps of the tarot, the "Great Arkana". The motives of the cards stand for elementary features and ways of experience of the human existence. Today, tarot is often associated with reading the cards and fortune telling. This meaning, however, superimposes the underlying sources. With his sculptures, Dörflinger follows the basic idea of the tarot which is the moving of figures within a procession. Historically, it is about triumphal marches that took place in the Italian towns of the Middle Ages – a mixture of festivities, ecclesiastical processions, theatre, and carnival, organised by patricians, princes, bishops, and rich merchants. The figures of these events have been handed down in the tarot cards which were painted for the first time between the years 1420 and 1450 by order of the Duke Visconti.

Johannes Dörflinger interprets the tarot trumps in an abstract form. The figures of his sculpture border not only open the border literally, but in a symbolic and abstract sense, too.

The right idea at the right time

It was a long way to realize the idea: Josef Bieri and Horst Frank, the representatives of the two cities, have always regarded the unsightly border fence a thorn in their side. Eventually they developed the plan to remove the fence. The border authorities of both countries agreed, provided that the border would be marked in some other way. So the idea emerged to visualise the line of the border by works of art. When Johannes Dörflinger heard about it, he developed the concept further, resulting in the project of a sculpture border made of tarot figures. The Dörflinger foundation, presided by Bettina Rosenburg, agreed to bear the expenses for the production of the sculptures and further costs amounting to approximately 670.000 € all in all. About two years went by until all of the sixteen boards in both Germany and Switzerland had agreed to this plan, but then the fence could finally be pulled down, making way for the Art Border. "The timing to realize the sculpture border was just perfect", Dörflinger believes. All factors involved have been more than favourable: The two mayors who get on very well with each other, the rapprochement between Switzerland and the EU, the existence of the Dörflinger foundation with its idealism and generosity, the fact that thinking in symbols is more common today than it was in the past ... and, last but not least, of course: the profound knowledge Johannes Dörflinger has acquired about the subject of tarot over the last four decades.

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