

# Gottfried Bechtold

## Reine und gemischte Zustände

October 1 thru November 19, 2006

**Press conference: Friday, September 29, 2006,  
11 a.m.**

**Opening: Saturday, September 30, 2006, 6.00 p.m.**

Gottfried Bechtold (born in Bregenz in 1947) is one of the most outstanding artists in Austria. Now, in keeping with its series of large-scale work presentations by international artists, the Kunsthaus Bregenz is dedicating a solo show to his work. For more than 30 years, Gottfried Bechtold has focused above all on extending the concept of art, especially in sculpture. His artistic roots go back to the tradition of the European and American art of the 1960s and 1970s, to the approaches of Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell, and Franz Erhard Walther on the one hand and of Walter De Maria, Robert Morris, and above all Robert Smithson on the other.

Departing from sculpture and influenced by postminimalist art, Land Art, and conceptual art, Gottfried Bechtold started out experimenting with different media such as photography, film, and video. In his events, performances, objects, and text works his main concern was always exploring and redefining the corporeal, psychological, physical, social, political, and thus, in the broadest sense, the public and aesthetic borders of artistic activity. Despite the preeminent character of exploration and experimentation in his works, what has always remained important is the issue of sculptural form and its conceptual conclusiveness in relation to real time and real space.

At the same time, he strives always to avoid isolating his artistic practice as a pure model of thought, but instead to expose it to as wide an audience as possible. In this way, he is continuously maintaining the link to reality, to people, to everyday processes, to universally understandable physical laws, and to the decisive factors of his work, to time and space. That means that



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his events, sculptures, films, objects, and text works are always aimed at the all-important receptive role of the viewer and user.

Among some of his most well-known works are the “Interkontinentale Skulptur” (1985/87) for the plaza of the Austria Center in Vienna, his series of “Reisebilder” (1971), his contribution to the documenta 5 “100 Tage Anwesenheit in Kassel” (1972), “Betonporsche” (1971 and 2001), “Weg Schloss Tirol” (2001), and “Signatur 02” (2002). Moreover, he has also created countless installations for public space, among them for the University of Constance and the Medienhaus Vorarlberg, a light installation for the administration building of the Vorarlberger Kraftwerke AG, and currently the sculpture “Ready-maid” for the newly designed square in front of the Festspielhaus Bregenz.

Under the title “Reine und gemischte Zustände,” Gottfried Bechtold will be showing four work series at the Kunsthhaus Bregenz, starting with the new sculpture ensemble “Elf Elf” (2006) installed on the Kunsthhaus Bregenz Plaza as part of the KUB Arena series. Before casting, each of the eleven models of a current prototype of the Porsche 911 series was covered with a snug protective cloth, which adds to the paradox of transforming a high-speed object into a concrete sculpture.

Exactly 35 years ago, on October 10, 1971, Gottfried Bechtold presented his first concrete Porsche at the Galerie Krinzinger in Bregenz as a cast of his own car. This was followed in 2001 by “Crash-Porsche,” and with this current work, Gottfried Bechtold has finalized his examination of the car as legendary object and the idea of movement. After two years of intense and highly precise effort, he arrives at a kind of monumental closure with which he brings the Porsche project to a definitive halt. This also includes the sculpture on the ground floor. It shows the original Porsche Carrera S 997 prototype that served as the model for casting the first concrete Porsche, in compacted size after having been subjected to a baling press.

The “Reisebilder” were taken in 1971, and according to the legend that goes along with them they can be traced back to trips to different European countries. They show the artist standing with his Porsche in front of different buildings, which in reality are all in Vorarlberg. Thirty years later in 2001, Gottfried Bechtold repeated this series under different circumstances. This time the photographer of 1971 slipped into the role of the artist: while he and his new version of the sports car once again pose as the main subjects in front of the same buildings, some of which have meanwhile changed



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drastically, the artist adopts the role of the documentarist. A total of 17 pairs of these so-called “Standbilder” from 1971 and 2001 make up the work series on the first level.

The second level is more of a “classical” sculpture room with its presentation of new works from the series “Ready-maid Dianas” (2005/06). A number of polished and surface-treated naturally occurring Y-shaped branches easily conjure up associations with a woman’s lower torso and legs.

The show concludes on the third level with the site-specific work “Kalt Warm” (2006). It can be classified as one of Bechtold’s many sculptures determined by physical laws. The series here has a precursor in the work “Ofen in der Kühltruhe” (1973), where an electrical oven regulated the temperature in the freezer to exactly 0° C. The work back then, which was limited to mere conceptual perception, has been expanded here into a work that can actually be experienced and felt by the visitor. Technical measures render two absolutely identical, minimalist steel objects experiencable as extremely warm and cold objects.

Thus what comes full circle here is a large-scale presentation of projects in which Gottfried Bechtold refreshes and finalizes certain core ideas to such a degree that central concepts of his work like time, space, material, and reality become tangible and immediate to the visitor.

## **Filmpremiere**

**Sunday, October 8, 2006, 11 a.m.**

The ORF Vorarlberg and the KUB invite you to the Vorarlberger Landestheater for the film matinee screening of “Elf Elf” followed by a discussion with Gottfried Bechtold and Dr. Walter Fink (cultural program director at ORF). Afterwards, there will be a reception at the Kunsthaus Bregenz. Produced by ORF, the film “Elf Elf” is a unique documentation of the genesis of Gottfried Bechtold’s eleven concrete Porsches – from the inception of the project to its installation on the KUB Plaza.

# **KUB-Billboards**

## **Gottfried Bechtold**

### **Die Lust an der Arbeit, 1 – 6, 2006**

**September 25 thru November 19, 2006**

The six photographs that Gottfried Bechtold has prepared for the six KUB Billboards along the Seestraße in Bregenz provide a glimpse at the working conditions in his studio.

Gottfried Bechtold writes the following about this work series: “Like in much earlier works, for example in my contribution to the documenta 5, in which, in a reverse situation, the material was of secondary importance and the physical presence of the artist was all there was, what I was intensively concerned with were the preconditions leading up to the production of art. With the KUB Billboards I focus on the material aspect of the preconditions of art, for in addition to the thoughts and ideas there are also material conditions that give rise to art. The intellectual component is kept to a minimum. The photographs give examples taken from the material pool of my art production. Out of this tool box and material trove the viewer is free to develop his or her own ideas and to imagine his or her own artworks.”



## **KUB-Publication**

### **Gottfried Bechtold**

#### **Reine und gemischte Zustände**

The catalogue being published in conjunction with the Gottfried Bechtold exhibition revolves around the extensive one-man show by the Austrian sculptor and concept artist. The work series presented on the KUB Plaza and on the four levels of the Kunsthhaus – “Elf Elf,” “Standbilder,” “Physik,” and “Skulpturen” – show the current state of his examination of an extended concept of sculpture. Short essays by well-known authors from the fields of sociology, physics, and art history introduce each of the four work series; the main essay is by Robert Fleck, Director of the Deichtorhallen Hamburg, a longtime expert on the artist’s work. The graphic design by Walter Nikkels harmoniously reflects Bechtold’s conceptual view of art.

#### **Reine und gemischte Zustände**

German/English

Edited by Eckhard Schneider

Graphic design: Walter Nikkels

With essays by Robert Fleck, Dirk Baecker, Sylvia Taraba, Josephine Gabler and Gerhard Grössing

Approx. 136 pages, approx. 26 × 21 cm , approx. 60 color illustrations

Due to be published: October 2006

Price: approx. 52 €

## **KUB-Edition**

### **Gottfried Bechtold**

#### **Standbilder (1971/2001), 2006**

Black and white photograph on baryta paper in a cardboard folder (this edition comprises 17 different motifs with 3 prints of each)

Limited edition of 51 pieces, numbered and signed

Sheet size: 105 × 41,5 cm

Special price during the exhibition: 480 €, price after the exhibition: 530 €, incl. 10% VAT, plus forwarding expenses

Publisher: Kunsthhaus Bregenz

#### **Porcellin-Porsche, 2006**

White cast porcellin in a cardboard box plus black and white photograph on baryta paper depicting a production-site motif

Limited edition of 51 pieces, numbered and monogrammed

Size: 24 × 7,5 × 10 cm

Special price during the exhibition: 880 €, price after the exhibition: 950 €, incl. 10% VAT, plus forwarding expenses

Publisher: Kunsthhaus Bregenz



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**A-6900 Bregenz**

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**Thursday 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.**