

Godehard Janzing

Falling Waters at Ground Zero: when Terrorism turns into Nature

In September 2011, on the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the 9/11 memorial at Ground Zero was inaugurated at the former location of the Twin Towers. In the winning design 'Reflecting Absence', by the architects Michael Arad and Peter Walker, two giant water basins took the place of the destroyed skyscrapers, framed by America's biggest artificial waterfalls. While the metaphors of void and loss, created by the former buildings' gaping footprints, are easily understandable, the symbolic use of water remains problematic. The stream of falling water, drags the visitor's gaze permanently downwards and seems to echo the endlessly repeated media loops of the collapsing towers. Rendered in a semi-natural setting, the memorial thereby runs the risk of converting political history into nature-given destiny.

Godehard Janzing (Paris) is deputy director of the German Center for Art History in Paris. He is currently working on a book on the political iconology of negative verticality (*Der Fall der Bilder*). He recently published a monograph on the art history of Berlin (Paris, 2015).

Valérie Bussmann

Artists as designers of public spaces: water sculptures of the 1970s and 80s in Paris and its surroundings

From its beginning, the city of Paris had a special relationship to water. Its public fountains, from the 'Fountain of Innocents' (sixteenth century) up to the 'Wallace Fountain' (nineteenth century), always served as both a water supply as well as a public ornament. During the 1970s a new form of fountains emerged as more and more artists were commissioned to plan and design public spaces. The role of water sculptures became dominant in these new settings, as urban parks (François Stahly in the Parc floral) and the newly built quarters of Greater Paris (Yaakov Agam and Takis in La Défense; Gérard Singer, Marta Pan and Dani Karavan in the new quarters of Evry, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines or Cergy-Pontoise). During the 1980s, increased government spending on art programmes and the establishment of a national art fund strongly encouraged and endorsed water constructions by contemporary artists (for example Niki de Saint-Phalle and Jean Tinguely at the Centre Georges Pompidou or Pol Bury and Daniel Buren at the Palais Royal).

Valérie Bussmann (Berlin, Paris) is an independent art historian. Her recent study *Das Denkmal im Pariser Stadtraum. Zum öffentlichen Kunstauftrag in Frankreich und seiner Erneuerung in der Ära Mitterrand (The Monument in Paris Urban Space. Public Commissioning of Art in France and its Renewal during the Mitterrand Era)* was published in 2014.

Nicole Wermers

Surfaces of water and the sunlight reflected in them, the sky, and nature are numbered among the most frequently cited visual stimuli that people associate with happiness and natural beauty. Sculptures, devised to be shown in the open, are therefore often designed so that water can accumulate in the depressions, for example in the works of Barbara Hepworth or Henry Moore.

Nicole Wermers' series of *Watershelves* presents water as if it had been made for this express purpose. A peculiar shift is achieved via the deliberate misuse and by isolating a specific observation which can actually only normally be performed outdoors. As a furnishing for the space and by means of the inclusion of the element water, these sculptures prompt associations ranging from the petri dish to the swimming pool. However, as an open storage system or display, they represent a counter design to the closed museum vitrine.

Nicole Wermers (b. 1971) was born in Germany and lives and works in London. She completed an MA in Fine Art at Central St. Martins College of Art and Design, London in 1999. Her work will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Hamburger Kunstverein in 2018 and a new public art installation has been commissioned for *Elevation 1049* taking place in early February 2017 in Gstaad. In 2015 she was nominated for the Turner Prize. Other solo exhibitions include *Grundstück (Property)*, Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco (2017), *Givers and Takers*, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York (2016), *Infrastruktur (Infrastructure)*, Herald St, London, (2015); *The London Shape*, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston upon Thames (2014); 'Manners', site-specific sculpture, Tate Britain (2013); *Hôtel Biron*, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, (2011); *Masse und Auflösung (Mass and Dissolution)*, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado; 'Earring', site-specific sculpture, Camden Arts Centre, London, (2006); *Chemie (Chemistry)*, Secession, Vienna, (2005).

Caroline Locke

Water - bringing life and energy to my work

'I will be speaking about my interest in water and experiences working with it during my twenty-five years as a practicing artist. I have been working with water since the early days of my practice. In the beginning I was particularly concerned with the sound quality of running water and worked with various metals to explore reactions to water – intrigued by the rusting and etching processes that take place over time. Explorations continued and I became fascinated by the movement of water. I studied flow systems, the power of water, how it holds on to energy and how heat moves through it – spending many days in the thermodynamics lab whilst studying for my Master of Arts.

Works shifted into cyclical themes – spinning, life cycles and beyond. I made sculptures that sent water spiralling in opposite directions after studying the Coriolis Effect and have used large bodies of water to explore its reflective qualities.

I have sent sound through water exploring waveforms and frequencies and have now spent over fifteen years developing my "Sound Fountains".

Water has always been the key element in my work and has enabled me to make links to our natural world and in many different ways, expose the beauty of it.'

Caroline Locke has been described as one of the UK's most innovative interdisciplinary artists. She has exhibited nationally and internationally and is widely known for her large-scale installation works and sculptures. Working with water, sculptural devices, new and old technology, sound, video and live elements, Locke makes works that are often sited in public spaces as well as in galleries and performance venues. Water and vibration are recurrent themes within her practice.

Her exhibitions have travelled to Japan, Australia, USA, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Ireland and the Czech Republic. The sound sculpture 'The Frequency of Trees' is her most recent work and is now part of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park Open Air Collection.

Born in Somerset, Locke is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and a Principal Researcher within the Digital and Material Arts Research Centre at the University of Derby. She is also currently artist in residence within the Horizon Digital Economy Research Laboratory at Nottingham University.