

# Der Lauf des Wassers

Video by Michael Pilz  
Austria 1988, 44'

Crachez sur votre raison!  
*Konstantin Brancusi*

We have the chance to associate with matter.  
*Karl Prantl*

Karl Prantl, born in 1923 in Austria, is one of the leading abstract sculptors. In 1957 he founded the International Symposium for Sculptors.

We meet him on a train and in a quarry in Eastern Tyrol, Austria, in the snowy March of the year 1987, when he and a sensitive workman are looking and waiting to discover some huge dark green rocks.

Kengiro Azuma, a famous Japanese sculptor living in Milan, Italy, has been working with Karl Prantl at symposium for many years. He states that Karl Prantl seems to be much more *Japanese* and *kind of Zen* than some of the most important eastern sculptors are or have been.

Karl Prantl's friend, the quarry-worker, on working with stone: "You must see, you must see it, then it is simply there, because if you don't see it, you might chop it off!"

I was not interested in filming a portrait of the sculptor. It was the idea of working with video and film in the way Karl Prantl does with stone, in an attempt to approach his philosophy of life and art.

In 1986 we began a dialogue between the two very different kinds of art, sculpture and film, which has led to this video and to a 16mm-film of 115 minutes, "80cm 5t".

**Der Lauf des Wassers** (Watercourse Way) means *to act without force* and *to move in harmony with the flowing course of nature*, it also means *law* or *the universal way*. In terms of making films it means to be *here and now*, twenty-five times a second.

Modern art gives birth to ideas, it doesn't represent them. That means, real art arises intuitively, there is no preconceived idea. Because real art is the reason itself and cannot be explained at all (Konstantin Brancusi).

*Michael Pilz*



Citations from the Video **Der Lauf des Wassers**,  
Karl Prantl on the train from Vienna to St. Johann,  
Eastern Tyrol, 10 March 1987, original version:

#### STAUNEN

„Wenn sich Regionen wieder ein bisserl kräftigen, das ist was Schönes.

Die eigenen Substanzen bisserl spüren, was da drin ist an Begabung, an Chancen, an Möglichkeiten. das ist nicht schlecht.

Diese Brauns und Grüns da drinnen, was? Da drüben, faszinierend. Schön.“

#### SPUREN

„Naja, das ist, vielleicht ist g´rad dieses Erleben dieses Grüns und dieses Brauns –

Das sind auch letzte Spuren des malerischen Erlebens – Aber das kommt in der Skulptur jetzt auch wieder, das ist für mich jetzt interessant, daß mich so Steine interessieren, die stark von der Farbe her leben, eben diese Grünen da unten in Osttirol und die Blauen da, der chinesische Stein –

Fällt mir auch so auf und daß ich nicht bei dem Stein geblieben bin, der mich ständig umgibt, in Margarethen, die Steine der Region, sondern daß man da ausholt. Von dort her kommt ja so eine Faszination, das ist vielleicht diese Spur, vom Anfang her, also das Phänomen über die Farbe oder die Malerei zu erkennen und zu suchen.“

#### SEIN

„Ja, aber was Farbe kann, was Stein, was Farbe im Stein kann, sind ja wirklich auch wieder Möglichkeiten und Chancen, um zu erkennen, um einzusehen und um andere Dinge geht’s ja nicht.

Von Kunst braucht man da ja gar nicht reden, das hört sich doch eh alles auf. Das Schönere fängt ja erst dahinter an.“

#### ERINNERN

„Es ist ja auch das Schöne, teilhaben zu können an diesen Prozessen der Veränderung da draussen, daß aus diesen braunen Wiesen plötzlich wieder etwas wird, in vierzehn Tagen blüht’s da draussen, das ist aufregend!“

#### DRAUSSEN

Na, es ist –, man ist –, wenn man dort so sein kann und es betrifft einen ja so direkt in der Existenz, also dieser Anruf ist so stark, daß man dann eine Zeit lang sehr irritiert ist und fast gespalten, man weiß nicht wohin –, soll man dorthin oder soll man wieder zurück, soll man in die Stadt und soll so als Bildhauer agieren und agitieren oder soll man teilhaben an diesen Prozessen –, nicht, das, was mich ja sehr beschäftigt.“

#### DIE ANDERS DENKEN

„Naja, die leben eigentlich von unserer Schwäche, die sehr schön genährt wird und es ist so schwer, sich zu solidarisieren, denn innerhalb derer ist eine viel stärkere Solidarität, über deren Geruch –.

Wenn man so ein bisserl Wein trinkt, fühlt man sich plötzlich schon wieder kräftiger, kriegt so fast Ambitionen zum Aufwiegeln, aber vielleicht ist das ganz was Wichtiges, aufzuwiegeln, hin zu einer Begeisterung –. Ja, auch daß man da hinunter fährt, in einen Steinbruch, in ein Steinwerk, wer redet denn schon von St. Johann, von Hinterbichl, wen interessiert das schon.“

#### FINDEN

„So bewußter wurde das Ganze über die tägliche Arbeit, denn die kann nur so stattfinden und hat wahrscheinlich immer so stattgefunden, daß man diese Müdigkeit auf sich nimmt und die Schwielen, die Blasen –, am Anfang –, weil man es nicht gewohnt war. Wer hat denn so gearbeitet, vorher, wie die im Steinbruch? Niemand! Man hat in den Ateliers gegipst und modelliert und ist eigentlich diesem Widerstand, dieser Schwierigkeit, dieser Müdigkeit, dieser Erschöpfung aus dem Weg gegangen. Sicher gibt es andere Prozesse auch, wenn ich den ganzen Tag im Atelier bin und quäle mich herum an einem Spiel- und Standbein, kann auch dazu führen, allerdings wohin es geführt hat bisher, das erlebt man jetzt eh täglich: Städte, wo diese Dinge herumstehen, um die Portale, egal, im Belvedere, vor den Fassaden am Graben, am Kohlmarkt. Daher kommt nicht mehr die Faszination, man muß was anderes suchen und finden.“

English translation of the original version:

#### AWE

"It's great when regions manage to revive themselves, feeling your own personal resources a bit, your talents, possibilities, the chances you have, that's not bad. Look at those browns and greens over there, fascinating, beautiful."

#### TRACES

"You know maybe it's really experiencing this, the greens and browns, they are the last traces of a painterly experience. But you're finding this in sculpture again, too. It's interesting for me that the stones I am interested in are those alive with color, just like the green stones down in Eastern Tyrol and the blue ones here, the Chinese stone. That really strikes me. And the fact that I didn't stay with the stone which surrounded me in Margarethen, the stones of the region, but that you look for stones wherever you can get them. That's where the fascination comes from, maybe this trace, from the very beginning, to recognize and search for the phenomena by colors or painting."

#### BEING

"Yes, but what color can do, what stone – what color in the stone can do are really possibilities and chances to recognize, to see clearly, that's what it's all about. It's not art we need to talk about, that's all coming to an end anyway. Greater beauty begins where that leaves off."

#### RECOLLECTING

"It's beautiful to be able to take part in these processes of change out there, that these brown fields are suddenly coming alive again and you just know that in a fortnight it's all going to bloom out there, that's exciting!"

#### OUT THERE

"You know, it is – you are – when you can be there and it affects your existence directly and the calling is so strong you're perplexed for a long time and nearly divided in two – you don't know where to go. Should you go on ahead or turn back, should you move to the city and act and agitate as a sculpture or should you take part in these processes out there. That's what I think about a lot."

#### THOSE OF DIFFERENT THOUGHT

"Well, you know they actually live off our weakness, which is even encouraged, and it's hard to act with solidarity because their solidarity is so much stronger because they can smell one another –. If you drink a little bit of wine you feel a sudden gust of strength again. You almost get ambitions to want to stir

things up but maybe that's very important to stir things up into an enthusiasm.

Yeah, even to travel a quarry.

Who is interested in talking about St. Johann or Hinterbichl anyway?"

#### DISCOVERING

"The whole thing became more obvious through the daily work, for that is the only way it can take place and probably always has been, that you accept this fatigue and the calluses, the blisters at the beginning because you weren't used to it. Who has ever worked like that before, the way they work in a quarry? No one.

One has worked in the studios modelling and plastering, avoiding this resistance, this difficulty and fatigue, this exhaustion. Surely there are other processes as well when I spend the whole day in the studio racking my brain about standing leg and trailing leg however what this has led to so far. You see every day now, cities where these things are all over the place, around the portals at the Belvedere, in front of the facades on the Graben, on Kohlmarkt – they no longer exert any fascination. You've got to search and discover something else."

3sat is showing three new sequels of its series "Dokumentarisch arbeiten" ("Making Documentaries"). This time around, the focus is set on three authors who explore the line between documentary and fictional films with their works: Elfi Mikesch, Michael Pilz, and Thomas Imbach. A visit of several days was paid to each of these film makers, either at their homes, work rooms, or montage tables. Christoph Hübner, who is himself a documentary filmmaker, talks to his colleagues, touching on subjects such as "working into the open" or finding previously unforeseeable scenes. Christoph Hübner: "The conversations and encounters show just how wide the scope of the term documentary has become these days". Thus, Thomas Imbach refers to the process of selecting his "actors" as "castings", a term that up to now was used in the world of feature films only. Michael Pilz takes attentive listening during conversations to be an utterly underrated art of the documentary. As if it were only natural, Elfi Mikesch includes acting and staging of scenes into her films. In this vein, "Träumen, spielen, jagen" ("Dreaming, Playing, Hunting") was chosen as the title of Elfi Mikesch's conversation with Christoph Hübner. As in previous years, 3sat complements these conversations with a selection of exemplary films, which illustrate the overall characteristics of each author's oeuvre. Thus, Elfi Mikesch films presented by 3sat include her latest documentary "Die Markus Family" as well as early productions such as "Was soll'n wir denn machen ohne den Tod" ("What are We Supposed to do Without Death"), her classic "Ich denke oft an Hawaii" ("I often Think of Hawaii") and last, but not least, the documentary "Verrückt bleiben verliebt bleiben" ("Staying Crazy, Staying in Love") which played at movie theaters during the nineties.

"Im Spiegel des Fremden" (In the Mirror of Foreign Parts) is the title of Christoph Hübner's conversation with Austrian documentary filmmaker Michael Pilz. It was aired in February together with his Films "Karl Prantl – DER LAUF DES WASSERS" ("Karl Prantl – The Course of Water") and his five-hour long-term observation "Himmel und Erde" ("Heaven and Earth"). In March, the conversation with Swiss film maker Thomas Imhof will follow under a title highly characteristic of his working method: "Die Kamera als Sonde" ("The Camera as a Probe"). In connection with these broadcasts, 3sat will also show the films "Well Done" and "Ghetto".

To complement the "Dokumentarisch arbeiten" series, Gabriele Voss has published a book titled "Dokumentarisch arbeiten". Just as in Volume I, the sequel documents not only the conversations with authors mentioned above, namely Mikesch, Pilz, and Imbach, but also broadcasts from 1998 featuring Hans-Dieter Grabe, Egon Humer, Reni Mertens, and Walter Marti.

*Making Documentaries –  
Directors in Conversation with Christoph Hübner)  
3sat Presse Special, Cologne, February 2001*

The most significant tool used by artists is a sensitive and subtly differentiated perception of the world. For Austrian sculptor Karl Prantl, listening and watching attentively stand as the basic prerequisites for his creative approach to coming to terms with his surroundings. Michael Pilz provides insight into Karl Prantl's way of thinking and inner composure, thereby applying the same artistic principles as the artist himself.

Karl Prantl was born in Upper Austria and presently lives in the Austrian province of Burgenland. He is credited for initiating a series of symposia that are currently held across all continents. According to Prantl, art cannot be made, it must evolve and emerge. "The stone has a life of its own and we are here to discover it" – words that clearly outline the artist's relationship to his artistic objects. Aggressive, self-centered feelings disturb the natural harmony that makes all the difference between what is good and what is not. For this reason, Prantl takes his time to uncover the secrets of his material, to let the stones speak their own language. His art expresses itself in a silent way, just as he himself prefers silence over noise. In this vein, his stones turn into signs and occasions for sensual and authentic encounters, immersed in seductive tranquility and unfamiliar ways of seeing and hearing. Prantl's method of approaching stones conveys an idea of the spaces, times, feelings and thoughts that lie at the heart of his work.

Michael Pilz was not interested in creating a portrait of the sculptor. With his own working materials – film and video – he set out to work in the same way as Prantl, thus trying to close in on his idea of life and art.

"Der Lauf des Wassers" ("The Course of Water"), that means to "act without compulsion" and "to move in harmony with nature's ways". As far as making movies goes, Michael Pilz takes this to mean being "here and now", twenty-five times per second.

*Dokumentarisch arbeiten –  
Regisseure im Gespräch mit Christoph Hübner  
3sat Presse Special, Cologne, February, 2001  
(für Der Lauf des Wassers)*

Das wichtigste Werkzeug des Kunstschaffenden ist die sensible und differenzierte Wahrnehmung der Welt. Dem österreichischen Bildhauer Karl Prantl sind aufmerksames Horchen und Schauen Grundvoraussetzungen für die kreative Auseinandersetzung mit seiner Umgebung. Michael Pilz gibt Einblick in die Gesinnung und innere Haltung Karl Prantls und bedient sich dabei ähnlicher gestalterischer Prinzipien wie der Künstler selbst.

Karl Prantl wurde 1923 in Österreich geboren und lebt heute im Burgenland. Er gilt als Initiator der gegenwärtig über alle Kontinente verstreut stattfindenden Bildhauersymposien. Prantl zufolge läßt Kunst sich nicht machen, sie muß entstehen. „Der Stein hat sein Eigenleben und wir sind hier, um es zu entdecken“ – Worte, die sein Verhältnis zu seinen Kunstobjekten in aller Deutlichkeit widerspiegeln. Aggressive, egozentrische Gefühle stören dabei die natürliche Harmonie, von der stets abhängt, ob etwas gut ist oder nicht. Deshalb nimmt sich Prantl sehr viel Zeit, um die Geheimnisse der Materie aufzuspüren, um den Steinen zu ihrer eigenen Sprache zu verhelfen. Seine Kunst äußert sich auf leise Weise, so wie er selbst die Stille dem Lärm vorzieht. Dadurch werden seine Steine zu Zeichen und Anlaß sinnlich-ursprünglicher Begegnungen, die zum Schweigen, zu einem ungewohnten Sehen und Hören verführen. Wie Prantl sich den Steinen nähert, läßt erahnen, in welchen Räumen und Zeiten, Gefühlen und Gedanken Prantl zuhause ist.

Michael Pilz war nicht daran interessiert, den Bildhauer zu portraituren. Er wollte mit den Mitteln seines eigenen Mediums – Film und Video – so arbeiten wie Karl Prantl mit dem Stein und versuchen, seiner Auffassung vom Leben und von der Kunst näher zu kommen.

Der **Der Lauf des Wassers**, das bedeutet „ohne Zwang zu handeln“ und „sich in Harmonie mit dem Lauf der Natur zu bewegen“. Soweit es das Filmmachen betrifft, bedeutet es für Michael Pilz im „Hier und Jetzt“ zu sein, fünf- und zwanzigmal in der Sekunde.

*3sat, Programm Information  
Februar 2001*

Original title .....	<b>Der Lauf des Wassers</b>
English title .....	Watercourse Way
Country of production .....	Austria
Years of production .....	1986/88
Date of completion .....	July 1988
Producer .....	Michael Pilz
Production .....	Michael Pilz Film
Original format .....	Film 16 mm Color Negative (AGFA-XT, Fuji, Eastman), Video 3/4" (TDK-videotapes)
Tape format .....	Video 1"-C, 4:3
Sound .....	Mono
Language .....	German (Ch 1), english dub voice (Ch 2)
Running time .....	43'30"
Number of tapes .....	1
Concept & realization .....	Michael Pilz
Cinematography .....	Michael Pilz Äaton 16, Angenieux, Wollensack, Panasonic 3/4"
Original sound recording .....	Othmar Schmiderer Nagra 4,2 mono, Sennheiser, AGFA-tapes, TDK-metal-tapes
Featuring .....	Karl Prantl, Rudolf Zwischenberger a.o.
Editing .....	Michael Pilz
Sound mixing .....	Heinz F. Reifenauer
Financial support .....	Austrian Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Art Viennese Film Fund Cultural Department of the Government of Lower Austria Südwestfunk Baden-Baden (SWF-TV, Germany) Cultural Department of the Government of Salzburg Cultural Department of the Town of Salzburg International Summer Academy for Fine Arts, Salzburg AGFA Gerhard Lenz
Locations .....	A train to Eastern Tyrol, Austria Sankt Johann and the quarry Hinterbichl, Eastern Tyrol, Austria Richisau, Glarus, Switzerland International Symposion for Sculptors at the International Summer Academy for Fine Arts, Salzburg 1986, Austria International Symposion for Sculptors <i>Stones at the border</i> , 1987, Wellingen, Germany Biennale di Venezia 1986, Italy Karl Prantl's hometown Pöttsching in Burgenland, Austria
First public screening .....	31 July 1988, Südwestfunk Baden-Baden, Germany
Festivals, specials .....	Wels, Austrian Film Days 1988 3sat-TV, 11.02.2002
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