

"The Large Piece of Turf – Contemporary Art in the Public Domain"

"Farewell"

Olaf Metzel

780 stadium seats, steel scaffold, concrete, steel, 17m, surrounding the "Beautiful Fountain" on the Main Market Square

CONCEPT:

Arranged in a spiral similar to a molecular chain, the 780 stadium seats plus stand elements in Olaf Metzel's sculpture "Auf Wiedersehen" (Farewell, 2006) surround the "Beautiful Fountain" on the Main Market Square.

This installation might also be reminiscent of a stadium section collapsed after a crash. Or of Vladimir Tatlin's legendary "Tower" (1919). But the 17 m sculpture can also be seen as a larger-than-life allusion to the World Cup trophy or to the history of Nuremberg's main market square. These many meanings make sense, particularly since the work is a temporary monument which wants to make people think, not only about the great moments of football, but also about its tragic events – such as the 1985 disaster in the Heysel Stadium in Brussels or the 1989 disaster in Sheffield's Hillsborough Stadium where many people were killed or injured.

"Farewell" in its formal aspects seems both "trashy" and constructivist and/or constructive. It deliberately replaces historical and representative official culture with the problematic culture of contemporary everyday life. The artist has emphasised that this work is also aimed at the "Friends of the Third Half".

In his works, Olaf Metzel, one of the most important politically committed sculptors on the international contemporary art scene, has repeatedly dealt with the football topic. His work "Besiktas Jimnastik Kulübü" (1995) is a kiosk presenting Besiktas fan articles, as well as materials documenting the sporting achievements of the then Turkish champions.

Incidentally, one of the collaborators in this installation was the team's coach, Christoph Daum. The sculpture also included an autographing session with the club president, coach and team players. "Some people visit museums, others go to the stadium, some do both" was Metzel's motto.

Probably Metzel's best known sculpture: a work consisting of road barriers and super market trolleys named "13.4.1981" (1987) which was erected on the Berlin luxury shopping street of Kurfüstendamm, showing up the barriers and the principle of exclusion of our consumer society in a provocative and metaphoric way. The title refers to the date of a militant demonstration in Berlin.

The Beautiful Fountain is a modern copy made around the turn of last century: between 1897 and 1902 the fountain which had originally been made from sandstone, was replaced by this copy sculpted from more durable shell limestone. Parts of the original, from the late 14th century, can be seen in the anteroom of the Carthusian Church within the Germanisches Nationalmuseum.

While the Beautiful Fountain is covered up, Nuremberg Municipal Museums' arts and culture education department offers (within the Germanisches Nationalmuseum) a special 30 minute tour in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum informing about the original fountain, for 2 Euros plus museum entry fee

Additional guided tours for groups may be arranged and booked on 0911-1331 238.