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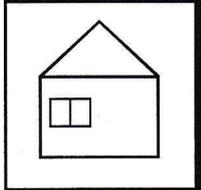
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HAUS/HAUT

ARTIST: **KURT VON BLEY**

The word *Haus* comes from Old High German *hūs*, which originally meant cover, shelter, shield. The word has Proto-Germanic roots (*hūsą* or *husan*), but its last origins are lost, though it did refer to a construction with a defensive and protective role. The word *husan* is related in meaning with *sku* (in Sanskrit), which means cover. *Sku* is etymologically related to *skyto* (in Scytho-Greek), which means skin, tegument, but it is also related to the Proto-Baltic word *skeûtia* (or *skut*), which means piece, rag.

The vocabulary separation of the words *house* and *home* is of Slavic origin, but the clear distinction of the two concepts – in the sense that the origin of the alternation between *house* and the bonds that come along with it in time – appeared within the German language (*Haus/Zuhause*). *Home* is used to express the feeling of belonging and safety, a refuge or a property which finds its connotations in larger or smaller natural spaces, or artificially created ones, in order to adapt to often hostile environments.

Kurt von Bley deconstructs and symbolically reconfigures, in his own way of existence, the etymology of the word *Haus* (house), assimilating it with self-knowledge, in the way that it is inseparably connected to the human body: *Haut* (skin) is the intimate-protecting space of the individual, symbolizing biological nature and the survival instinct. *Haus* and *Haut* are reinvented and they end up replacing each other in various installations of light, object, sound and photographic projection. They become symbolical means of self-rendering. In certain states, the representations are the mirror of the ego and of the affective super-ego, projections of a public image, of the cultural transformation of the individual and his role in society. The subject of the inhabited house becomes a place of alienation and uprooting. The archive of the past, rendered through flash-back effect, represents an area of regress in the image of the classicised urban spaces, the place of origin, or a certain context of socio-cultural upbringing.

Skin-cover-house – these are man's inhabitable dimensions, which, in material terms, separate physical intimacy from the exterior environmental elements, as well as the representations of the psychic, both conscious and subconscious. *Haus&Haut* is a unifying space of introversion with expansion, of the privileged intimacy with the desire of (self) possession, control. Kurt von Bley's objects and images are expressions of his own representation in his memory, and in those of others, as a live presence and a future projection. The process of self-representation is a game between appearance and the essence of human dimension, in the relation of the individual (body) and his own identity (personality). This game presents the dichotomy of choice and destiny throughout life, emphasizing the importance of certain stages of transformation and relation with the self and the objective reality.

Olimpia Bera, curator Visual Kontakt