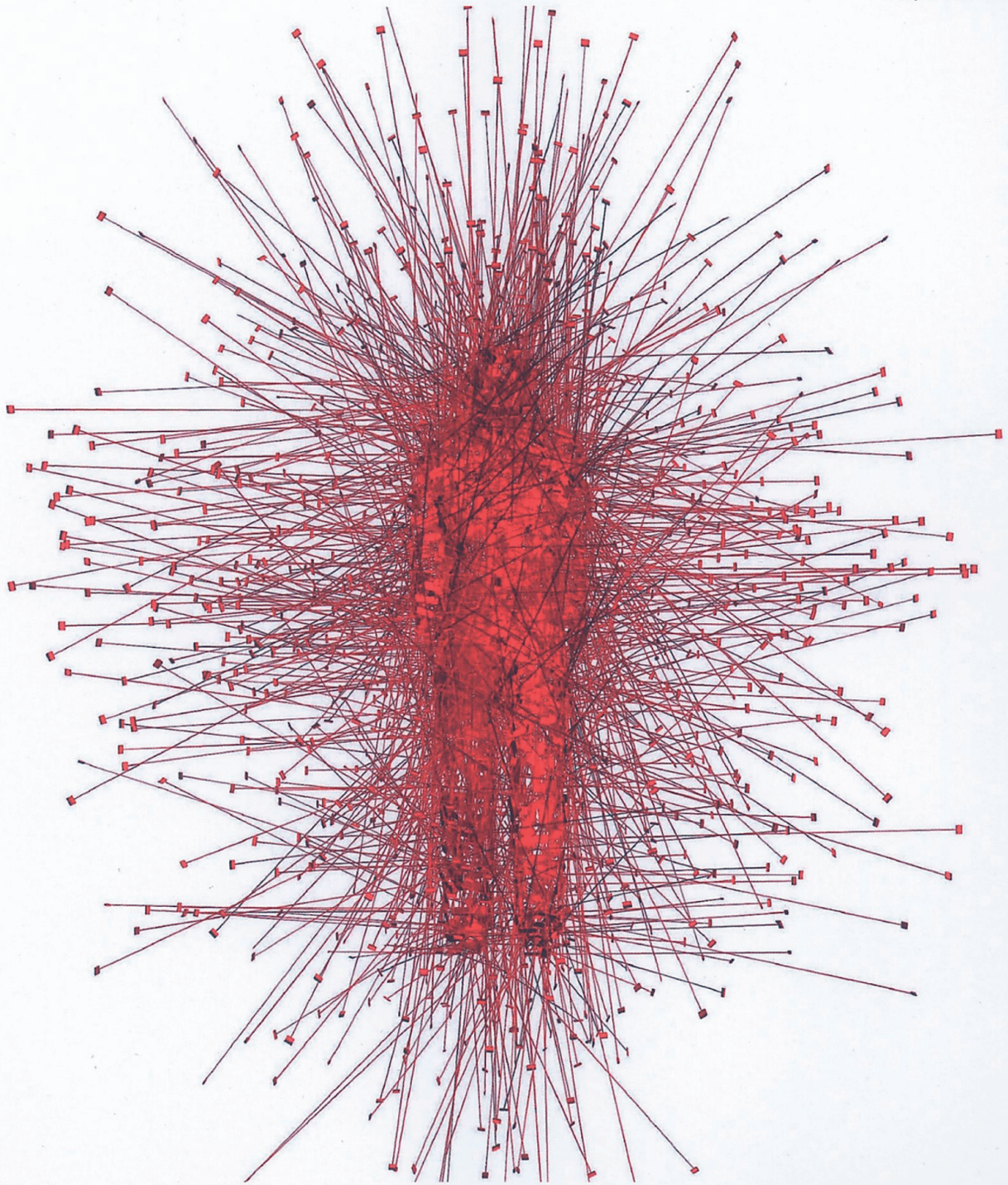


ARTEMORBIDA

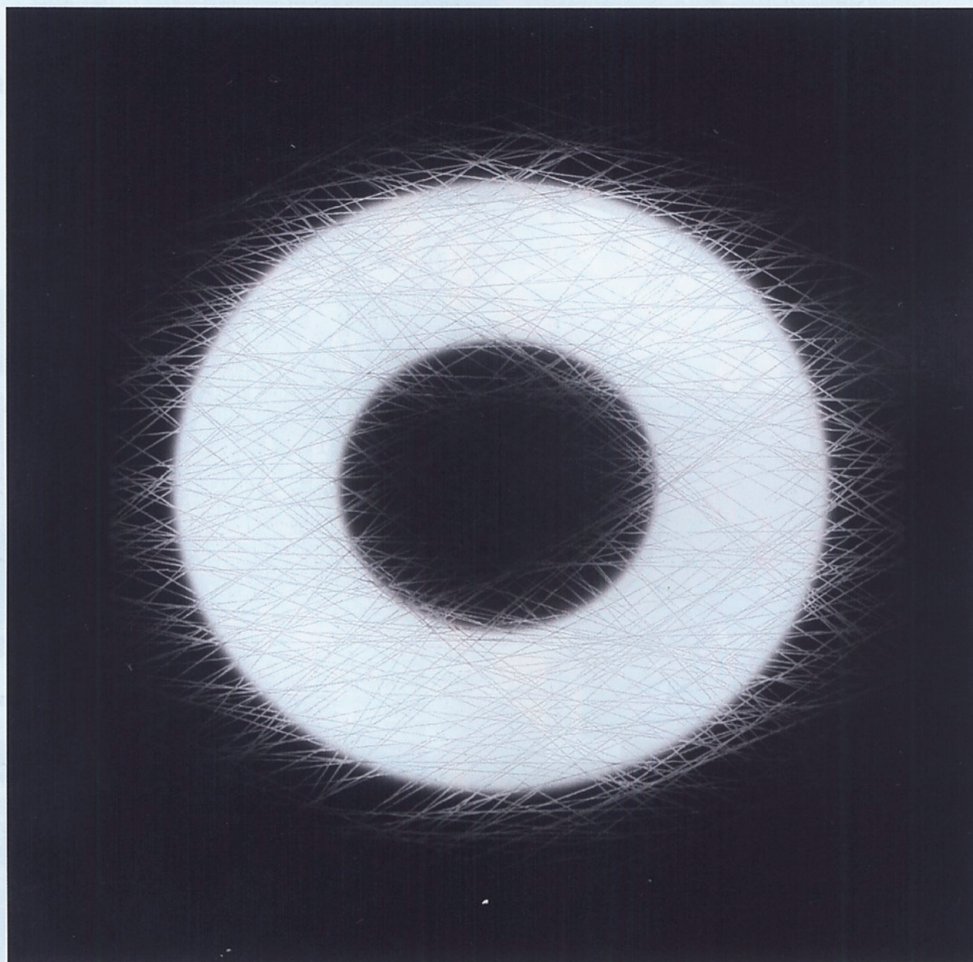
Textile Arts Magazine

July 2021 - n.04



€ 19,00

TECHNOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION: INTERVIEW WITH ESSER/HORN



Glow_1| 2014 (Wolfgang Horn) Photography C-Print, Acryl

Barbara Esser and Wolfgang Horn have been working together since 1994. Their artistic partnership envisages the use of different techniques to create works in which they experiment with designs, materials and dimensions. Award-winning, they have exhibited in countless exhibitions, projects, institutions also creating large site-specific installations in public spaces.

In your work, is the textile element the starting point from which you develop ideas that then become conceptually independent from the textile, or is it an integral, substantial part of the work itself?

The textile element in our works is an integral, substantial part of the works themselves. The emphasis we put on it varies but it remains in all our works.

Therefore, the attraction of textile structure and surface systems is not only part of our purely textile works but also of our works that are not made of textile materials.

Be it, for example, in the photographic series "glow", where light circles kind of "fray out" or in the series "stripes", where the structural surface system of the work is formed by warning tape.

Barbara, what inspires the geometric and abstract design of your textiles?

The geometric and abstract designs are, so to speak, the theme of weaving 2.0. I put the millennia-old theme of the textile in a contemporary context - it is the fascination and confrontation with the virtual, technologized world, for example, in the pixel or the triple warp series.

A recurring inspiration I find in nature. Despite the apparent contradiction, I try to transform organic forms into geometric forms and give them a kind of naturalistic narrative.

This shows in the work "Sun", which is a floor element, or the work Rhine "741".

Your backgrounds are very different: a textile designer, and an engineer. How do your different skills and creative abilities complement each other and lead to the creation of the artwork?

Our work is linked by the unbelievably multifaceted textile medium and the artistic freedom that comes with it.



No title | 2018 (Barbara Esser), Tripple weaving, mercerized cotton, 138 x 141 cm



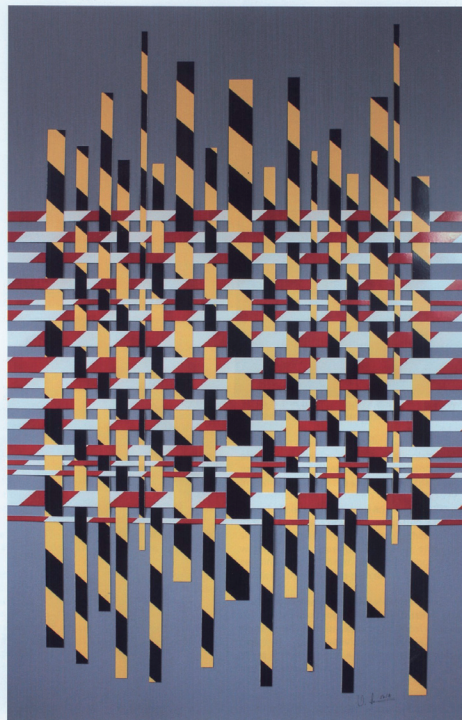
Stripes | 2018, Computer graphic, 100 x 100 cm, photo: Esser/Horn



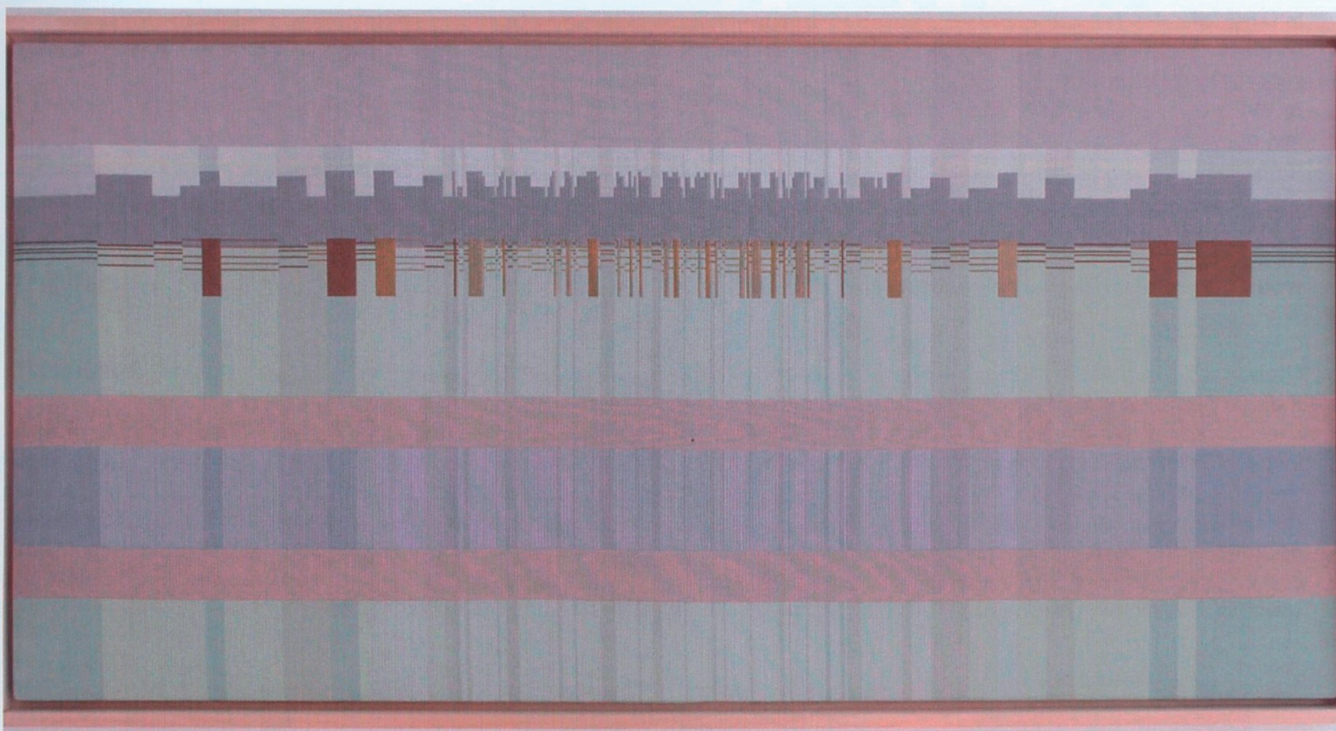
Sun / Sonne | 2007 (Barbara Esser), mercerized cotton, 138 x 243 cm



Tag pins red | 2008 (Wolfgang Horn), Suit / tag pins



Stripes | 2018, Computer graphic, 100 x 100 cm, photo: Esser/Horn



Rhine 741 | 2020, Triple weaving, 138 x 69 cm, photo: Esser/Horn

In it we inspire each other. We are also connected by our artistic process. A new work is created from thousands of individual elements. Where for example Barbara uses individual fine threads that form the fabric, Wolfgang shoots thousands of tag pins into a suit, creating a new interpretation (pic-8). Like that we consciously work against the fast pace of life with our art.

When we create big installation artwork, we work as a team right from the start.

How much is experimental in your work and how much is traditional? How do you combine these two aspects?

Both in crafts and in engineering precision is traditional – it is also the basic framework of our art. In contrast, the artistic substance of our textile works is created experimentally.

What do you mean when you say that your work “crosses borders”, balancing between applied and free art?

We try not to classify our work in the “boxes” of applied and free art. Balancing is exhausting in the long run and by the power of habit textile works are often classified only as part of the applied arts. We represent an autonomous textile art, which we comprehensively display in woven images, installations, animations, objects and photographs.

What is the most complex and daring project you have carried out during your artistic career?

Installation artworks in public spaces are always very complex. In combination with the artistic planning, it is necessary to plan for the technical peculiarities and limitations.

In addition, there is the size and time management.

For example, the installation “6 Carpets” (1999, Düsseldorf – Ehrenhof) (pic-13), covered an area of 3000 square meters. In several months of work, we created a frame system consisting of 276 individual elements that could be installed within a short time. On the loom, the current work is certainly one of the most demanding: a fourfold weave (fabric) with 72 threads per cm.

Barbara, colour is a leading element in your weavings, you use it in intense, sometimes contrasting, colour combinations that create unexpected optical effects in combination with your weaving techniques.

What is the role you entrust to colour and what do you express through it?

Yes, colors are my element, along with the three-dimensionality of fabric structures and the construction of surface systems. What the color palette is for a painter, the warp and weft threads are for me. The fact that these never mix directly

in terms of color, but rather create a new hue for the eye in combination, makes the subject of color in weaving so distinctly special for me.

As every color plays its part, their combinations and countless nuances makes it possible to make them sound like tones to the eye.

If you could choose or define an ideal place in which to design and have one of your installations live, what would it be and what characteristics would it have?

Concerning this, we work a little different.

There are no installation artworks in our heads or projects that we design at our desks. First, we always determine the specific location for an installation. Then we let ourselves be inspired by this place and develop the concept specifically for the situation there. Seen in this way, there is no such thing as the ideal place or, conversely, every place is ideal.

Because everywhere we encounter peculiar characteristics and it is extremely exciting to sound them out and to correspond artistically with them.

How do your large installations relate to the space they inhabit? Do they integrate with it, or do they intervene on it, modifying it?

We always work with the space and not against it.

Integrating the space or modifying it does not contradict this thought. The installations always offer the viewer the opportunity to perceive the original space more precisely.

It is always a great praise for us, when after our temporary installation has been dismantled the visitor has the impression that the space is missing something.

What artistic projects do you have for the near future?

We are very excited to start exhibiting again. Like most artists, we have spent the last few months exclusively in our studios. We are in talks with various museums and also an outdoor installation in a park is in negotiation. This installation will be a further development of the textile park that we designed in 2015. Tree sculptures and trees with textile fans will be created.



6 carpets / rugs | 1999, Installation, Düsseldorf



Der textile Park, Grevenbroich | 2015, Installation im öffentlichen RAUM von Wolfgang Horn / Barbara Esser