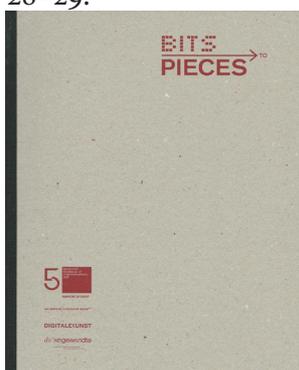


DARWIN'S EYE

3D-print on wooden pedestal
White polymer plaster, milled nutwood

erschienen 2013 in:
in: Schnell, R. & Fiel, W. (Hg.), *Bits to Pieces*, Wien: Universität für angewandte Kunst,
28–29.



The work is based on a text passage by German author and philosopher Durs Gruenbein about Charles Darwin when shuddering to think of the eye. The passage from the Berlin diary ‚Das erste Jahr‘¹ describes aesthetic aspects of the scientific paradigm shift deriving from the impact which modern visualization technologies have had on scientific world views. Darwin however was still able to precisely look into and examine the eye as an object — the visual sense here becomes aesthetic pre-condition and objective at the same time:



¹ Gruenbein, D, 26. Dezember, in: Das Erste Jahr, Frankfurt/Main (2001), pp. 306-313

‚Only by means of it (the eye, K.G.) it becomes possible what philosophers of old have since called perception, *aisthesis*, with which the fine arts begin as well as the reflecting cognition.‘²

On the other hand we have Darwin’s famous quotation from his ‚Origin of Species‘ about the incredible complexity of the human eye. It has been used until today by Creationists as evidence for the failure of evolutionary theory resp. to try to establish the religion motivated ‚Intelligent Design‘ as an equivalent accepted ‚theory‘. However, they never refer to the last sentence of the paragraph which concludes: ‚... **but I may remark that as some of the lowest organisms, in which nerves cannot be detected, are capable of perceiving light, it does not seem impossible that certain sensitive elements in their sarcodae should become aggregated and developed into nerves, endowed with this special sensibility.**‘³

Third, there is the renowned remark by the replicant Roy Batty to the maker of (his) artificial eyes in the movie ‚Blade Runner‘: **‘If only you could see what I have seen with your eyes.’**⁴

All three texts are installed on an eye model with a diameter of appr. 120 mm where the letters manifest themselves as small architectures on the planet ‚Eye‘. Darwin’s text in a ‚Base 12 Serif‘ font by Zuzana Licko covers the more or less visible half of the eye apple which pokes out from the eye socket. Gruenbein’s text in ‚Helvetica Neue Bold‘ by Max Miedinger/Linotype is mirrored in the iris like the reflection of the entering light, and the replicant Batty’s text in a ‚Star Wars‘ font by Suzy Rice, based on ‚Helvetica Black‘, becomes the black hole of the pupil which can read the future.

Many thanks to my daughter Elisabeth for her inspiration.

² ‚Mit ihm erst wird möglich, was die Philosophen seit altersher Wahrnehmung nennen, *aisthesis*, mit der die schönen Künste beginnen und das reflektierende Denken.‘ Ibid., p. 307 (Translation K.G.)

³ Darwin, C, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: sixth British edition (1872), p. 187
Cit. <http://darwin-online.org.uk/Variorum/1859/1859-187-c-1872.html> (last access 22aug13)

⁴ (Rutger Hauer as) Replicant Roy Batty in 2019 to the eyemaker Hannibal Chew in the movie ‚Blade Runner‘ by Ridley Scott (1982)