

CORY ARCANGEL

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

26 Saturday - 08 Saturday



We are pleased to announce our third solo exhibition of the young Brooklyn based artist Cory Arcangel. Born in 1978 in Buffalo (NY), Arcangel has particularly been attracting public attention since 2004 through his innovative performances, videos, and computer-generated or Internet-based projections.

The title of the exhibition, Variations on a Theme, points to an important source of inspiration for Arcangel's artistic strategy.

Prompted by his friend, the music historian C. F. Pohl, Johannes Brahms discovered the first of six Divertimenti for Two Oboes, Two Horns, Three Bassoons, and One Serpent by Joseph Haydn in 1870. Especially the second movement of this piece, the Chorale St. Antoni which refers to a pilgrimage in honour of Saint Anthony, inspired Brahms and served as the starting point for his Variations on a Theme by Haydn. This orchestra piece was first performed in 1873 in Vienna and is considered a turning point in Brahms' oeuvre, because the style in which it paraphrases a theme is unusual. »Many of our modern contemporaries nervously cling to a melody, but do not treat it liberally. We do not make something truly new out of them; we rather clutter them«, wrote Brahms to the violinist Joseph Joachim in 1856. With the purism and inventiveness of his Variations, Brahms himself was far from clinging to a theme. From a historical point of view, they are the first independent variations that were ever composed for an orchestra.

The radical form of Appropriation Art has been established in contemporary art no later than since Richard Prince, but the naturalness with which the American artist Cory Arcangel uses software, hardware, and Internet resources as raw artistic material and puts them into new contexts is new. Over the past years, Arcangel has particularly become well known for his applied archaeology in the historical computer technology of the seventies and eighties, while he has gradually been expanding his repository of artistic material and digital sources.

The main work of the Salzburg exhibition is A Couple of Thousand Short Films About Glenn Gould. It took Arcangel several months to painstakingly string together selected samples from Johann Sebastian Bach's Goldberg Variationen, composed in 1741, for this double projection. Arcangel acquired the samples from the masses of amateur videos by hobby musicians published on the Internet platform Youtube. With this work, Arcangel does justice to the rapidly growing parallel society of artists performing in virtual reality and at the same time pays tribute to Glenn Gould's revolutionary way of producing records: already in the fifties, Gould assembled outstanding parts of a piano piece to form a new composition.

We will also show the new sculpture Permanent Vacation: two computers standing on a table and continuously sending each other out-of-office replies in an endless conversation—an idea of a sculpture that plays with eternity, following Constantin Brancusi. In addition, there will be the projections Apple Garage Band Autotune Demonstration, in which the revolutionary sound of Jimi Hendrix' guitar solo is softened and polished by means of the Apple program Garage Band, as well as the work Crash Animated GIF Series, a type of computer-generated, animated version of the famous Warhol series.

Rarely has an artist of the youngest generation attracted so much attention from renowned cultural institutions. In 2004, for instance, works by Arcangel were shown at the Museum of Modern Art New York, the London Royal Academy of Art, the Liverpool Biennial, the Whitney Museum of Art New York, and the Guggenheim Museum New York. In 2005, he held a solo exhibition at the Migros Museum in Zurich. In February this year, Arcangel will take part in the exhibition Color Chart: Reinventing Color, 1950 to Today at the New York Museum of Modern Art.

Further details on Cory Arcangel and the group BEIGE, a union of like-minded computer enthusiasts and hackers, can be obtained under: beigerecords.com/cory.