

# FAHNEMANN PROJECTS

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## **Kai Schiemenz**

*Shrunken Theatre*

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Since the beginning of what is generally known as Modernism in art, it has been almost exclusively a matter of clarifying the complex question of how our vision and the image are brought into contact within real space, considering the conflicting poles of physiology, philosophy and art history. Taken to the extreme, one might even say that art's task in the age of mass media is the socialisation of vision and hearing. Besides archives and museums, galleries are usually the places where this is made possible today. Earlier in history, it was in rather ritual places such as churches, fairs or sport stadiums. In the meantime, galleries and museums (via installations and staged exhibition concepts) have confirmed their status as particularly entertaining places - not only apart from everyday life, but also the source of unusual experiences. Beat Wyss once described the observer of such staged scenarios – and it is tempting to refer to him as the user – rather polemically as a “totally over-excited peeping Tom”.

Kai Schiemenz operates on the ruins of such theatrics, so to speak; for years now, he has been constructing architecture/sculpture that satisfies contemplation and showmanship to equal extents. His works oriented on sport arenas, stadiums and pavilions no longer coordinate perception exclusively between the viewer and the work, but between the viewer, the work and the place where both are located.

An overview of these works can be seen for the first time in Galerie Fahnemann. The drawings and models go far beyond simple design sketches. They are sculptures and pictures with autonomous aesthetics; their staging can be read like the model of a French garden, the calculation of which was far less dispassionate than is generally supposed. Quite the contrary: it was a place for life, colours, music, movement and play, and inasmuch it reflects the intended purpose of models by Kai Schiemenz.

From the very beginning, the gardens of the Baroque were also particularly associated with theatre. And just as Louis XIV danced in Versailles, a man and his reflection dance together in Schiemenz' large, walk-in theatre model. The form and function of this large model inevitably remind us of the utopian potential of Minimal Art and Constructivism, making Schiemenz' work seem like a vision of the future that looks back, continuing to develop the ideas and concepts of those movements. With a third element – images of sky formations – the artist finally introduces an autopoietic level that interferes in a double sense; by functioning as a generator on the one hand and a disruptive factor on the other. This element – known in the 18th century as the omnipresent and ‘circumstances’ - ultimately makes the exhibition into the epitome of a dystopian landscape.

Susanne Prinz