

S P A C E D O U T

SPACED OUT | Gut Kerkow

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Open daily 10am – 6pm

RETO PULFER

Tagetes und Nachtkerze

11. December 2022 – 05. March 2023

Opening: 11. December 2022, 14 – 17

She went out early that day, there were only outlines gleaming gold, and everything else, shielded from the sun, blued a friendly, intimate, and dormant violet. It was the blue of sleep, of the half-invisible, of the bleary-eyed poet, of the half-dead, of the dozing-off fog forms, the blue of the lolling creature mid-metamorphosis, the blue of the love of a deep ocean.

Was the desert alive even though it didn't look like it?

When stepping into the historic granary of Gut Kerkow through the large hatch, an entirely new space opens up: Reto Pulfer has stretched reused and plant-dyed, embroidered, and knitted fabrics into a structure, and enriched them with organic materials, wooden sculptures, and self-built instruments. He has created an immersive landscape that appeals to all the senses; that captures and involves. When walking through it, its visual details, but also smells and sounds can be discovered - until one has unexpectedly become a part of the whole!

Reto Pulfer, who internationally appears not only as a visual artist but also as an author and musician, works with what is already there and what surrounds him in his everyday life. In a playful, often intuitive way, he creates site-specific environments for his exhibitions using processed textiles, sculptural, drawn, and painted works, found objects, and text fragments, all of which he calls "states." The public can enter these "states" to experience them with all their senses. What preoccupies the artist is often revealed in a way that is both personal and poetic.

In 2018, Reto Pulfer moved with his family to the Uckermark. Here he planted his own artist-garden, where he experiments with wild and cultivated plants, with symmetry and asymmetry in horticulture. It is the place where he observes plants, insects, and animals and perceives nature's processes and their diverse cycles and rhythms more intensively.

Already in his earlier work, the relationship of man to nature and the cosmos formed a focal point in his artistic and poetic exploration. It was only through living in the Uckermark's Biosphere Reserve Schorfheide-Chorin and through the direct proximity to organic farming initiatives that Pulfer can work in and from his garden today. His experiments and observations, but also the plants themselves, the confrontation with their history, their biological and aesthetic features, and possibilities – they all flow directly into his work.

Some of the reused fabrics shown here are dyed with plants from the artist's own garden and embroidered according to their shapes and patterns. The knitted textiles are made from designs by the artist and refer to life in the garden and to Pulfer's stinging nettle science fiction novel *Gina in pictures*, but also in diary-like texts. They show ornaments and patterns composed of earthworms and garden tools, stylized leaves, and flowers. The textiles not only refer to the artist's examination of all components and levels of his own garden, but also bear witness to his preoccupation with complex questions of geometry such as possible combinations through mirroring and rotation. Dried plants, found wood, and other natural materials are as much a part of the installation as the walk-in garden shed, which is built from traditionally mortised wooden connectors and reused clay tiles. This "state" (or *Zustand* in German) only exists temporarily, and is inspired by the landscape of the Uckermark, its hills, forests, and lakes. It was created particularly for Gut Kerkow and is complemented with self-built instruments made from wood and strings, giving the space its own sound, and inviting visitors to play with them.

When moving through the exhibition and taking into account the mirrored symmetry of the historic granary, one can discern various contrasts and tensions; for example, between fragile and balanced or symmetrical and asymmetrical elements. While Pulfer's approach to nature is at times systematic, it then also is animating elsewhere; sometimes it appears controlled, sometimes intuitive. The title of the exhibition *Tagetes und Nachtkerze* suggests that both sides should always be considered in their interaction with one another. The title highlights two types of plants and their structures and uses as edible, medicinal, wild, and cultivated plants. While the ornamental Marigold (or *Tagetes* in German) grows in many front gardens in Kerkow, the small-flowered wild Marigold is a Mexican spice and medicinal plant. The Evening Primrose (*Nachtkerze* in German) is meanwhile encountered as a long-blooming wild plant that takes root as a weed or as an ornamental plant with an intense buttery fragrance. In addition to this literal reference, the exhibition title *Tagetes und Nachtkerze* also evokes the association with the interplay of day and night.

Text: Rahel Schrohe