

## Thought Project

In the beginning was the Word. However a thought precedes the word.

And that brings us to the beginning of Felix Hörhager's Thought Project., which began 13 years ago

It was a time of taking stock, and searching for clues, which led to a profound process of reflection on one's own position in the world and the meaning one would like to give one's life. Where do I come from and where am I going?

Felix Hörhager found the appropriate symbol for this search for orientation in the compass and made it the emblem of his Thought Project. It was about consciously developing his own clear orientation - a philosophy of life - which is based on simple truths and principles. And we all know it: in life we constantly find ourselves in situations that require us to make decisions. Life is actually a collection of such moments of decision that essentially determine our life path. What is right or wrong? Good or bad? What is ethical or moral? Making decisions without a guide is like navigating without a compass. Felix was therefore concerned with establishing guidelines for himself.

He connected the four points of the compass with the four basic elements, which are charged with certain energies: fire stands for warmth, light and renewal, water for feeling, sensitivity and the connection with the subconscious, air for the spiritual, the lightness and mobility, and the earth for order order stability and reliability.

Felix Hörhager condensed this network of meaning in a very practical way by assigning each element to a book that has a special meaning for him.

Felix Hörhager has translated his subjective processing of the books into four video stories. In them, the recordings that were made as part of his work as a freelance photographer, interlock with artistically staged scenes. This is how the Thought Project came about over the years. It wants to open up its own universe, which Felix invites us to enter.

The thought project begins with the cinematic transfiguration of the south, which for Felix is associated with water and Hermann Hesse's work "Siddhartha". In it, Hesse tells the story of the young Siddhartha, who is looking for wisdom. His journey leads him to religious groups that promise him enlightenment. In vain however. He experiences wealth and success. But he does not find fulfilment in it. He only found wisdom and inner fulfilment when he settled down on a river with a ferryman. Undisturbed by the busyness of the world, he spent his time there in silence and contemplation. His realization: let go! It is not the search that matters, but the finding. Searching gives us a goal to pursue. Searching keeps us in constant motion and fixes our gaze. We rush past many things without noticing or appreciating them. It is only when we rest and pause for a moment that we come back to ourselves, in the centre of ourselves again. Siddhartha learns at the river. Enlightenment is finding yourself.

The painter Paula Modersohn-Becker put this so wonderfully: "I am me, and I want to become this ever more so". This process of becoming is a long journey that requires a lot of self-examination in order to free oneself from conventions and constraints. Felix translates this into scenes of an underwater kick boxer.

"Becoming aware' is almost a key term for the Thought Project. This applies not only to spiritual wisdom, but also to our elementary feelings and emotions, which Felix Hörhager brings to the second level. For him, this is interwoven with the East, the element fire and the work "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" by Milan Kundera.

It is the story of two lovers in the middle of the Prague Spring, who cannot live without each other, but also cannot live with each other because their attitude to life and expectations could not be more contrary: the feeling of freedom comes up against the desire for attachment, the urge for self-realization fights against the desire for togetherness, and the longing for an intimate relationship hits hard on the fear of being bound.

Kundera's book takes a look at the complexities of human relationships that do not necessarily make life easier. The scenes that Felix composes for this draw directly on the book and challenge us to think about the potential lightness of being and raise the question why people through their emotions, decisions and actions the world keep creating difficulties in a world which is leaden and drains vitality, where life could be vital and full of energy.

With these two books as the basis for his film, Felix migrates to the West in the third part, which for him is symbolically linked to the element earth and the book "Wolf's Blood".

Earth is about consistency and being rooted, and that is what Jack London's classic is all about. It is

the story of a wild wolf who not only leaves his homeland in the course of the story, but also finds his best friend in a human being in the "new world". Friendship, solidarity and trust are values that run through the story like a red thread. Felix opens up a new interpretation of the literary material for us by contrasting scenes that determine his everyday work as a photographer and graphic artist: There are pictures of refugees and shots of celebrities on the red carpet. Two social and cultural worlds collide here and make us aware of the emotional and existential difficulties of the "foreign". Finding solidarity and friendship in a foreign country is a challenge and requires an open mind, understanding and solidarity from both sides.

In a world that is increasingly in flux, this aspect is of particular significance

These constant fundamental transformations challenge us to a profound reorientation. One could almost say that humanity has to go through a maturing process in order to be able to stand up to the challenges of tomorrow. 'Maturing process' is the central theme of the fourth act of the thought project. In this part of the thought project, Felix Hörhager wanders north, which he associates with the element of air. The book he chose as a source of inspiration for this is "Nils Holgersson" by Selma Lagerlöf. With great empathy, the author tells the story of little Nils, who, as an unrepentant, ruthless and boorish boy, embarks on an adventurous journey with a flock of wild geese on the back of the tame goose Martin. His adventures and experiences make him return as a more mature young man.

Felix Hörhager's version is an adaptation and is replaced by protagonists who are important to him as "guides". For example, the goose Martin is replaced by the lucky dragon Fuchur from the "Neverending Story". Instead of Nils, a female Udo Lindenberg double sits on the dragon's back. Both – Falkur and Udo – are symbols for Felix Hörhager. You are at home in the world and think far beyond the horizon. As Udo said in an interview: "Act according to your convictions, be an individualist, don't march with the others, but go your own way". Felix Hörhager would sign up to that immediately.

In the thought project, he puts the building blocks of values from which his world should be built on top of each other. The time that the Thought Project took was like a personal introspection that consolidated his location in the world. In order to think further about the experiences and insights of these years, he expanded the thought project to include the space project

## Space Project

If the compass was the symbol for his own, completely subjective orientation, it has become the launching pad in the space project. It is Felix Hörhager's aim literally to shoot the value system and his positive attitude into the world. From the horizontal - subjective - level it should go into the vertical - collective - space... towards the stars.

The space project is an opera in five acts. Felix draws repeatedly from the world of books for the production. In the first scene, Felix Hörhager was inspired by Christophe Galfard's bestseller "The Universe in Your Hands". As a student of Stephen Hawking, Galfard embarks on a fascinating journey through space and time. The images that Felix Hörhager inter- and superimposes are to be understood as clear symbols for this cosmic "departure": a ship that is on its way to new shores, astronauts in training who have to be prepared for the jump into space, scenes from NASA Film recordings that capture the earth orbit of the ISS. For the viewer it goes further and further up and out into the dark space: in some scenes you can see people riding in the air canal - the so-called bodyflying. They hover for only 2-3 steps in the air. Then again the rocket taking off with firepower to break through the Earth's atmosphere. In between, Felix Hörhager uses archive material that shows, among other things, J F Kennedy in his speech to the US Congress in 1961, when he promoted manned space travel, or documentary sequences of the first moon expedition in 1969. The first act of the space project chronicles humanity's steps as it gradually overcomes gravity in order to leave its familiar world and venture into new dimensions. The impossible became possible. In this sense also, the displayed images of Venice are to be understood. The lagoon city can well be seen as a symbol of a unique development: on swampy terrain that was once barren wasteland, this magical city, seemingly floating weightlessly on the sea, rose and is the epitome of beauty, art and aesthetics.

Every scene of the first act states that man can, if he will! The step to a higher level is possible. The musical accompaniment is like an acoustic exclamation mark: Symphony No. 9 by Ludwig van Beethoven, who was already considered the herald of a new era in his time.

Musically, the second act of the space project is determined by Johann Wolfgang Mozart's "A Little Night Music" Romance, Andante". The calmer beat of Mozart's famous Serenade puts us in the mood for Felix Hörhager's contemplative video sequences, which show the earth as the "blue planet". Frank White was an important reference source for this. In his book "The Overview Effect", White uses interviews and texts from 29 astro- and cosmonauts to describe how viewing the earth from space significantly influenced their perception of themselves, their world and, above all, the

future. Based on this, White argues that the exploration and colonization of space would be an opportunity for humanity to expand its perspectives, which would positively influence our existence on all levels and make us "citizens of the universe".

White's version of a better future permeates Felix Hörhager's thinking and thus the form of his video narration, into which he incorporates his own drawings and paintings. He does this because for him photography can only ever represent the present, which already belongs to the past at the moment it is photographed or filmed.

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In the fifth act, Felix Hörhager outlines the history of human development, based on Guido Tonelli's book "Genesis - The Story of How Everything Began". The composed video pieces show, for example, the Asam Gorge. Here, among other things, the life of the Stone Age man Ötzi was retold for a cinema film. At the end of the fifth act one hears "Apollo 11 goes behind the moon", alluding to the lunar expeditions. Felix Hörhager makes us reflect on the incredible possibilities humanity has opened up...from the Stone Age to a future where humans are reaching for the stars.

Felix Hörhager immerses the epilogue in a mood of serenity and relaxation in which people are attuned to each other and their world and create new living spaces in biospheres in the vast dimensions of space.

The sentence from "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse sounds like a mantra: "He saw pearls of light rising from the depths, still air bubbles floating on the mirror, the blue of the sky depicted in them". Siddhartha 'sees' the deep power of nature and finally comes to a moment of rest in his restless search for the question of meaning. He finds himself.

That is exactly the core idea of Felix Hörhager's Thought and Space Project: The target direction given to us by the compass is the path of mankind, to set off into a three-dimensional future in which man finds his centre, a profound understanding of togetherness with any form of life carries within itself and thus successfully builds bridges to a future in which we can overcome previous earthly problems. For him, space travel is a significant symbol in two senses. On the one hand, the success of every space expedition is based on the cooperation of people from different professions and nations, and on the other hand, you can see space travel symbolically as a mission in which man overcomes his gravity, lets go of the old, in order with floating lightness to develop a new way of understanding the world.

The door to a new, still unknown room is open when you see it. The quotes from Michael Ende's "Neverending Story" are of great importance: "The beginning is always dark", "that is another story and will be told another time". This is where the space project ends. But one could certainly think about whether it can be that the flight to new planets can also be an inner confrontation with ourselves and our home planet.

Marion v. Schabrowsky