

Knut Eckstein

"Uncertain Terrain" Symbols represent something that they themselves are not. They refer to the absent and they build systems of signs to form the basis of a 'here and now' into a communicable reality. To the world of symbols also belong those characters that are advertised by companies in the form of letters or a combination of text and image element itself. As illuminated emblems these largely determine the nocturnal appearance of our cities. With his intervention "Uncertain Terrain" the Berlin-based artist Knut Eckstein (\* 1968) opens the four-part installation-series "More Light" that Goethe-Institut at Ráday utca 58 hosts in between 2012 and 2014. The exhibitions include light installations by artists from Hungary and Germany that are presented on the facade of the building itself.

"Uncertain Terrain" is a work that is driven by the world of symbols, specifically of company logos. But what is produced by the companies in high-end modus and most advanced technology arises by the artist Knut Eckstein from the simplest materials, from different colored flexible light tubes, so-called cable-lights. With these material he drew in his latest work of art the emblem of the French mineral oil company, that is the fourth largest in the world. Attached to a fragile bamboo scaffolding that was previously anchored to the shiny, modern facade, the word TOTAL lights significantly and name giving besides its dynamic roundshaped imagemark of the company.

The deliberately provisional execution of the installation, resembling Asian sites bamboo scaffoldings on the facade of the Institute, gives it the impression of a building itself being under construction. A process seems to be set in motion, refers to future changes - for total? For indeed, can the word TOTAL lead to numerous associations. Total may include everything and so can a holistic exclusion of everything be in question. In any case, this term can be connected to a wholly claim. For totally believes everything. Without exception. And without further ado. Just totally. But it is not clear what was the intention pursued by this concept, not sure it has a positive or negative wholly claim it will bear. And also what does the term means, this wordmark, What does it mean for a company that considers itself to be the eighth largest company in the world. What does this brand, this word imply for a Frenchman, a German or even a Hungarian? With these questions Knut Eckstein work "Uncertain Terrain" touches a fundamental idea of the art - and cultural historian Aby Warburg, the fact that a piece of art and not to be regarded purely aesthetic can' be seen isolated, but only in the context of his time and very special traditions in writing and picture. With the iconology of the on the facade of the Goethe Institute installed materials and signs, the artist illustrates the importance of the relation between experience and awareness within various cultural experience moments of local or national needs and globally circulating characters. Displacements and condensations are the ways in which the artist acts, to question the meanings of the surrounding characters in a humorous and clever way. He is thus one of those artists who do not make the medium of light itself the object of contemplation, but to use it as part and meaning for complex issues in relation to the surrounding, ubiquitous symbols, characters, not least social phenomena and processes

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'unsicheres terrain (on a shaky ground)', 2012, bambus, cable-light, elektromaterial, dim. ca 20 x 4 x 4 m courtesy Galerie Mark Müller, Zürich, Goethe-Institut, Budapest