



Andreas Greiner on Monument for the 308

Your Monument for the 308 is a precise copy of the skeleton of a broiler chicken of type 308 whose dimensions you enlarged to a dinosaur-like scale. How did you come up with the concept of paying homage to this new type of animal?

I've been interested in different manifestations of our human relationship with animals and the environment for a long time, and have incorporated this interest into my artistic practice. Some of my earlier works revolved around our perception of living beings that do not get much attention in our everyday lives – flies, algae, and more recently, broiler chickens. These chickens are raised by mass industries solely for human consumption. What struck me the most was that the agro-chemical food industry is actively breeding new species of chickens so that they have more meat. These new breeds, broilers or hybrid chickens, cannot reproduce — they are an artificial species created by humans for humans and live for only one generation. Their new genetics have transformed their anatomy so they are completely adapted to human needs.

This scaled up process of industrial production is carefully separated from our everyday experience when we buy, prepare, or eat meat. With *Monument for the 308*, I wanted to honour an animal that is rarely recognised as an individual. In this way, the *Monument for the 308* is an archaeology of the future. Just as dinosaurs are symbolic of past ages, so too will the broiler chicken, a descendant of the dinosaurs, be symbolic of the point in history which we are currently inhabiting.

Could you describe the research process which preceded the installation? Is it still ongoing?

I had already created works dealing with the case of the man-made broiler chicken, but for this work I wanted to create a monumental statue. The work should loom over the viewer – it should evoke a dinosaur in a natural history museum. To accomplish this, I looked into 3D printing, a new medium I had not previously worked with. 3D printing is, like the statue, indicative of our contemporary age, as it has only been introduced recently. My assistant Anna and I researched where a statue of such monumental proportions could possibly be printed, and luckily she found the ViNN:Lab at the TH Wildau, southwest of Berlin, which agreed to collaborate on the project.

This work is finished. However, as with most artists, I guess, my works build on each other. One work feeds off another and so forth. Naturally, the inspirations that were formative for *Monument for the 308* continue to motivate me. For example, I've developed a critical stance towards the agro-industrial complex and our anthropocentric conceptions of nature. I have recently been working on documenting ancient forests in Europe with an AI algorithm in collaboration with a researcher at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin. These forests are dying due to chemical pollution (from companies such as Agrofert) and deforestation, as we have recently seen in Poland. In both cases, nature is continually exploited due to fears of economic hardship.

What is the technology behind the installation?

The sculpture, which is approximately 8,5 metres tall, is made up of one hundred and twenty-three 3D printed chicken bones. For the model, I searched for a dead chicken from a fattening plant and had its body scanned in a special Computer Tomography lab at the Charité. The 3D scan was then enlarged 20 times and printed at the ViNN:Lab (TH Wildau) by Markus Lahr and his team. At this scale, the largest bone,



the Tibia, is around 1,4 meters long and took two weeks to complete. The printers were running day and night to finish before the opening at Berlinische Gallerie – we only just finished in time. The bones were mounted on a steel frame, just like the anatomical models in museums. We built the work in an old warehouse on the premises of my studio.

To what extent is your work activist?

I do not think of my work as activist – although if I have a certain conviction, it might be hard to hide it. I start off with a curiosity or a question about a subject. Recently, this has often meant ethical dilemmas – like should I eat meat because it might be useful for my personal health, or do I refrain because it is unfair and harmful towards animals and our ecosystem. These are questions that are multilayered and the potential answers are even more complex.

Besides the political aspects of the sculpture, there is also a neutral, “science-like perspective” I try to achieve. Enlarging the bones makes this chicken’s “human fingerprinted” anatomy more explicit and clearly perceptible. In that sense the work is more an analysis or dissection of the human–nature relationship – however, one that is open to interpretation. Of course I am personally against industrial food production and the exploitation of nature and animals – I also say this publicly in the hope of contributing to a public awareness against the political lobby behind this industry. That being said, there is a certain autonomy that an artwork and its audience hold which is out of the artist’s control – to a certain extent, one must let the artwork create its own dynamics.

The interview was held by Eva Riebová, curator of MeetFactory Gallery

Andreas Greiner: Monument for the 308

Kostka Gallery

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Curator: Eva Riebová

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ViNN:Lab (TH Wildau)

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