

## Preface

'Take thought, when you are speaking of water, that you first recount your experiences, and only afterwards your reflections.'

This piece of advice comes from no less a source than Leonardo da Vinci. But which of us could say that we have experienced water sensually in all its dimensions, to say nothing of understanding it intellectually?

Experience is the starting-point for this book. Experiencing water in nature, and surprises derived from conducting experiments in a water studio, finally led to the water features placed between people and their surroundings that are shown here. Because they make a contribution to townscapes or landscapes we have called them 'waterscapes.' Twenty years ago, when I started working with water in public spaces in towns and on housing estates, my first projects were fountains designed for squares in towns and country communities. However satisfying this kind of experience may be for a sculptor, it left me with a feeling of unease. I was particularly dissatisfied with one very common idea: water as a decoration in the townscape, a pleasant toy for artists and architects, but a superfluous one sometimes – and this is said while all the essential water management in the town, like for example rainwater removal, drinking water provision and sewage disposal, is dealt with functionally, scarcely visibly and without any aesthetic sense as part of the engineers' domain.

So on the one hand we have water as a sporadic superficial embellishment for all and on the other hand functional municipal water management, accessible and comprehensible only to specialists. And public awareness of this topic seemed to me to be similarly split, whereas in future we should be increasingly concerned with being able to experience water and gain insights into how to handle it sustainably. Because without this insight, priorities in society and politics will be too weak to preserve this resource in sufficient quality and quantity, while it is of existential importance for evolution and for future generations.

This experience quickly led to ideas about linking water-art with more complex themes: new and more visible routes for rainwater to avoid floods, comprehensible re-use as service water or newly designed approaches for more natural sewage treatment. I am also interested in human-aesthetic and social aspects. This led to a deliberate qualitative change in ambient and urban sounds with images created by the sound of water, or to light presentations using water, down to the air-conditioning of rooms and, just as importantly for people, to adventure areas, water playgrounds, art installations and to workshops and projects aimed at citizen participation.

From the outset the key to our professional approach and to the studio concept was working in an interdisciplinary team. Over the years, we brought experts together who were keen to go beyond their own specialist training as architects, engineers or designers and get to know other people's ideas and subjects, and thus become overall artists in a team dea-

ling with water in all its aspects. Through our work we have jointly met major specialists who are now our friends, and some of them have made a central contribution to this book as authors. They have written in essay form and each of them presents a view that is entirely its own. Here the sum is greater than the parts, and also the result of interdisciplinary work.

This book is written against the background of practice, and hopes to speak in the spirit of the opening quotation. The numerous examples of our work together, which has now extended over 25 years, are intended to be the principal source for illustrating this idea; they are arranged in groups relating to the essays. We look back on all this experience and these working processes with great gratitude, but this is owed above all to the people who made this possible for us.

We would like to thank our authors and friends for their expert work and patience in co-ordinating the essays: Professor Wolfgang Geiger, Professor Detlev Ipsen, Wolfram Schwenk, Robert Woodward and not least my colleagues in the Dreiseitl studio.

We were able to secure the services of Stefan Leppert for the project texts and also for editorial work on the essays. We owe this rewarding co-operation a large number of stimulating ideas. Michael Kimmerle dealt with layout and graphics in a masterly fashion. Not least, we would like to thank our publisher, and here we are particularly grateful to Ria Stein, who has worked with us and advised us most attentively, and edited the text as a whole.

This book first came out in 2001 and sold out quickly. The great success of the first edition thus proved the topical relevance of the themes we deal with. This second, revised edition has given us the opportunity to include 14 new international projects. Many of the works from the first edition have been expanded or updated with new image material and some with more extensive texts. The essays of the first edition have lost nothing of their relevance to the present, and consequently have all been kept.

We hope that this second edition will also be a success, and that it will supply impetus for steps towards a healthy environment, a synergy which is most essential for our socio-cultural needs. Water calls for imaginative design.

Herbert Dreiseitl