

INTRODUCTION

VIDEO WINDOW as a guest at Zimmermannhaus Brugg on the occasion of the Brugg Documentary Film Festival from 14–17 September 2023 presents

Christoph Oertli **SUPERPOSITION, 2022**

Video HD, single-channel, colour, sound, without dialogue, 22 min., loop, 16:9

VIDEO WINDOW as a guest at Zimmermannhaus Brugg presents *Superposition*, the new work by the prominent Swiss video artist Christoph Oertli (Basel), as a contribution to the Brugg Documentary Film Festival 2023. Following its première at the Videoex Experimental Film & Video Festival Zurich 2022, this is the first opportunity to see the work exhibited in a contemporary artistic context.

Christoph Oertli lived for many years in major foreign cities, most recently Brussels, before returning in 2017 to Switzerland, where the locations of his videos can be found. In *Superposition*, he is observing the world that now surrounds him with the interested eyes of the outsider. Addressing the interface between individuality and social coexistence, he examines the phenomenon of isolation, which he pursues as the leitmotiv of the film.

The artist traces a trend that appears pronounced in economically saturated Switzerland: the growing preference of many of the privileged for expensive and over-dimensioned cars (SUVs) combined with a home in the countryside that is hidden behind palisade-like hedges and walls. We see people comfortably and safely commuting between home and the downtown settings in which they work and shop in cars that seem more like armoured vehicles. The video investigates mobility and illustrates the appropriation and reshaping of the countryside, model nature und urban sprawl. It takes us to suburban villa developments and contrasts these with the urban architecture of places of work.

Superposition is a quiet work with lengthy shots. Free of commentary and dialogue, it is based on accurate observation, visual power and the subtle editing of sequences that make use of found footage material, image manipulation and animation, interwoven with the precise soundtrack of the musician and sound designer Thomas Jeker. Oertli composes everyday observations in public space into a rhythmic and evocative narrative that repeatedly contains surprising twists and makes us marvel.

In formal aesthetic terms, the video work with the unmistakable signature of the artist oscillates between documentary observation and expression, seemingly choreographed scenes in public spaces, fiction, narrative and dramaturgy with suspense and references to movies. The atmospherically and creatively intense and tableau-like scenarios leave us enough time for contemplation, while simultaneously sharpening our perception, triggering associations and encouraging us to engage in open reflection.

Finally, *Superposition* can also be read as an urgent artistic statement and critique of civilisation. Oertli reflects the apparent self-satisfaction of the protagonists, whose lifestyle appears crassly inconsistent with the challenges facing the world.

Bruno Z'Graggen