

## **BREATH – by Carlo Borer**

Despite its size, the volume of the two blue cargo containers has been much too closely calculated for the gigantic brown lung placed inside. Each of the two lungs fill with air, try to expand, fight against the metal spatial limitations, fail, deflate, and like Sisyphus, try again in their struggle to survive.

The simulated movement of the breathing organ comes from large ventilators on the outside. These stand as symbols of technology and science. By contrast, the containers might symbolize global logistics and migration. Only by means of artificial respiration can the collapse be averted, or respectively, delayed. The installation's sound of what is supposed to be breathing has been alienated digitally. Sound expert Abdullah Benabdallah was responsible for the sound installation, for which, among other things, he used "cosmic sounds" from NASA.

As had already been the case with his "NoReadymades", with "Breath" Solothurn artist Carlo Borer examines phenomena and rituals of our culture. He calls our attention to ubiquitous themes such as overpopulation, new life-supporting technologies, the transportation sector in a globalized society, and our finite supply of resources. His is a sincere, though critical, admiration for scientists, inventors, and tinkerers - whose research and inventions have actually made possible today's lifestyle in the first place. The artist emphasizes: "The most astonishing, but also most dangerous, thing about today is the phenomenon that - due to mass production - we integrate into our everyday lives ever cheaper and better lifestyle products, such as automobiles, smartphones, and personal computers. Life seems to become increasingly better, more comfortable, and ever simpler. The quantity of the mass production, the price, and the quality, however, are proportionally, if not even exponentially, linked to the overpopulation and destruction of nature, or rather our finite resources. Our success yields a false and deceptive feedback."

This "life support" function of the container organism "Breath" stands as a pessimistic, but also loving, symbol of our culture and of mankind faced with a population explosion. By means of poetically combining an associatively charged readymade with an oversized organic structure that is just as symbolically charged, Borer achieves a break both optically and in terms of content, something which causes the viewer to pause and reflect. For a

moment, he forces us to hold our breaths, and view our own civilization through different eyes and from a more contemplative observation point than we are otherwise accustomed to do.

*Florence Isler in conversation with the artist*