

PRIMORDIAL TREE

The video-installation is build as a triptych.

First there is the real-time video-recording of the stake. I made a pyramid sculpture with willow branches and put it on fire. The burning was recorded on video.

Secondly, some time later, I created a two days lasting standing-performance on the circle of burned soil that remained. I was wearing a red dress made with spun, dyed and knitted sheepswool.

The final element is the transparant photograph of the dog. I met this dog when I was walking in a forest. I asked him to pose for me on the green mossy tree trunk. And so he did.

The primordial tree is a living sculpture, an image in a state of ongoing metamorphosis, in which the earth and her atmosphere are reflected. In extension, the tree could be a miniature of the complete universe.

The tree of life is burning, the situation is rather apocalyptic.

The three fates or “norns”, the one of the past, the one of today and the one of the future, whom used to sit nearby the roots of the tree and spin the threads of peoples lives, got up, frightened.

Around the tree there are circling mythological animals: the big eagle that nests in the crown, hungry deers gnaw his bark, a dangerous snake tries to climb up, and a squirrel runs up and down, an indefatigable messenger between the spheres. All these animals are united into the character of the dog, who is overlooking the scene, and looking towards the audience.

The following verses, from the EDDA, could be the script for the video-installation. This screenplay however was picked up after the work was made; only after the video-installation was ready, I recognized this script in the images. This upside down order is of no importance in this case. Archetypical images don't follow the chronological order of time, so they can pop up freely in artistic work.

Marie Julia Bollansée, 4-2016

Verses from the EDDA

VOLUSPO The Wise-Woman's Prophecy

*12. An ash I know, Yggdrasil its name,
With water white is the great tree wet;
Thence come the dews that fall in the dales,
Green by Urth's well does it ever grow.
13. Thence come the maidens mighty in wisdom,
Three from the dwelling down 'neath the tree;
Urth is one named, Verthandi the next,--
On the wood they scored,-- and Skuld the third.
Laws they made there, and life allotted
To the sons of men, and set their fates.*

40. Yggdrasil shakes, and shiver on high
The ancient limbs, and the giant is loose;
To the head of Mim does Othin give heed,
But the kinsman of Surt shall slay him soon.

50. The sun turns black, earth sinks in the sea,
The hot stars down from heaven are whirled;
Fierce grows the steam and the life-feeding flame,
Till fire leaps high about heaven itself.

GRIMNISMOL *The Ballad of Grimnir*

32. Ratatosk is the squirrel who there shall run
On the ash-tree Yggdrasil;
From above the words of the eagle he bears,
And tells them to Nithogg beneath.

33. Four harts there are, that the highest twigs
Nibble with necks bent back;

34. More serpents there are beneath the ash
Than an unwise ape would think;

35. Yggdrasil's ash great evil suffers,
Far more than men do know;
The hart bites its top, its trunk is rotting,
And Nithogg gnaws beneath.