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Artist Talk - Michael Sailstorfer

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<https://www.lemilemagazine.com/artist-talk-michael-sailstorfer>



Born in Velden, Germany (1979) and based in Berlin, Sailstorfer is known for his experimentation within the field of sculpture. His work defies natural dimensions and physical characteristics, creating an immersive and totalizing experience for his audience while transcending common aesthetic boundaries and challenging sensual perceptions.

What made you decide to focus on sculpture? What was your first conscious work within this field of art?

As long as I can remember, I built things with my hands, either at my father's stone workshop or at my grandfather's farm. There are old photos of me holding a hammer before I was even able to walk. Art always played an important role in my family's life since my father studied art in the 1970s. We often visited important exhibitions, such as *Skulptur Projekte Münster*, *Documenta Kassel* or *La Biennale di Venezia*, as well as with artist friends. When I applied at the Academy of Arts with my drawing portfolio, I received the feedback that my art was rather sculptural, so I applied for the sculpture class and got in. My first piece at the Academy was, of course, sculptural. For *Waldputz* (2000), I transformed a natural space – the woods near my father's house – into an artificial space by cleaning the forest ground and the tree trunks. It was about removing material instead of adding anything new. *Waldputz* is one of the works that is still presented quite often and one edition is part of Centre Pompidou's collection.

Your work inhabits galleries and art spaces, but the presentation itself has never represented the final product.

Site-specific interventions are part of your vocabulary as these spaces feed off of your work. Is the relationship with the space spontaneous? How do you switch from natural contexts to gallery spaces?

My early works originate from a natural context. Back then, I was a student and didn't have the opportunity to exhibit my art in galleries or institutions. When I started to display my work in gallery spaces, I was suddenly facing new challenges, since the interaction between space and sculpture is more present within a white cube exhibition space. For me, it's highly important that all my sculptures are site-specific.

You are known for recycling and repurposing a range of different materials and found objects. Do you think that metamorphosis always represents positive development?

Deterioration and deformation generate a substantial value. When an object is degenerated, its function value ceases to exist, whereas its artistic value generally increases.

Is the new story always better than the former one?

It's not about better or worse, it's about telling a story and creating temporality from the start to the endpoint.