



Insertfilm presents a film by  
Pedro Haldemann

# Angelehnt

Gunter Frentzel

# In memory of Gunter Frentzel

We were given the permission to gain insight into the last years of the artist's private and working life for which we are deeply grateful.

The Insertfilm team

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*«Art has to take risks.»*

Gunter Frentzel

## Logline

«Good art must take risks.» – The film wants to take this basic principle of Gunter Frentzel's art into account in an essayistic and documentary form.

## Synopsis

We approach Gunter Frentzel's installations on his interior views, his thoughts during the process of their creation. We discover the slowness of the structure and the meditative effect on everyone involved in the work.

Through constantly shifting perspectives we enter into new spheres and spaces. Close to balance.

## About the movie

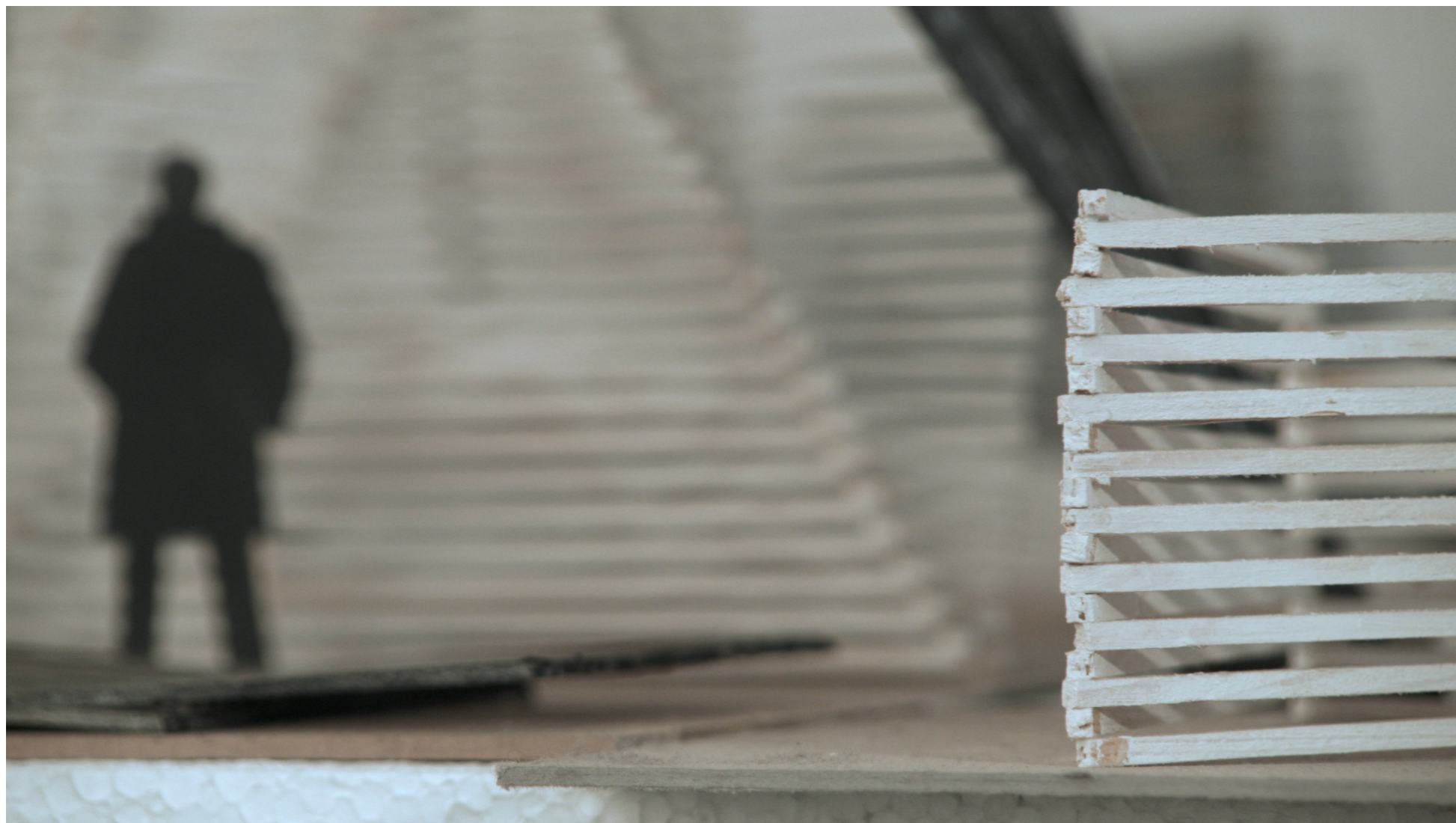
We regard Gunter Frentzel's objects and installations as open systems in which the architectural space always forms the basis. The camera orbits in rides – floating – Frentzel's spaces and Sculptures. The ongoing shifts in perspective and the incidence of light make his objects – and the space around them – more sensually perceptible. This 'floating slowness' creates gaps, a kind of meditation, as it happens when the artist is placing the square bars. Sometimes one wonders whether in reality it is not much more about the emptiness of the space, similar to the breaks in the music.

With some distance, Gunter Frentzel as a human being moves into the picture.

His wife Ulrike 'Uli' Frentzel talks about their cohabitation and her husband's artistic career.

Also the 'White Art Box', which was so important to Gunter Frentzel, finds a place in the film.

To art historical aspects and related subjects not only the artist expresses himself, but Dr. Christoph Vögele, curator of the Kunstmuseum Solothurn and Dr. Ulrike Lorenz, Director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim.



## Statements of the Director

«I saw Gunter Frentzel as a tightrope walker, exploring his boundaries with his sculptures. He was a sculptor who said goodbye to the statue. In a sense, the statue in Gunter Frentzel's entire artistic work has descended from its pedestal, so that the remaining space can be perceived in a completely new way.

I wanted to travel cinematically in the subjective 'Gunter Frentzel perspective' and open his intellectual interior spaces, as well as the space around him. No classical portrait should emerge, but a composition of images and sounds that creates spheres. I wanted to put the 'emptiness' in the vacant space of the already dismantled pedestal and celebrate it.

Gunter Frentzel's art can sometimes be difficult to understand. The emptiness of a space can leave the observer with a certain helplessness. I pursued this field of tension and tried to capture it in sounds, tones and pictures. The mystery of Frentzel should by no means be intellectually decoded, but become sensually more tangible.»



*«The more you have found your own language,  
the more lonely you become.»*

*«Actually, I do nomad art. My biggest  
problem is: Where do I put my tent?»*

## How did Gunter Frentzel find his 'language'?

His seemingly stable, but still very fragile sculptures captivate with their lightness. In the work of Gunter Frentzel, static laws are exhausted to its limits. The individual bars are only placed and stratified at exact intervals and keep themselves in balance. Nothing is left to chance

*«Waiting for the moment where your work tells you it's done is a great art.  
And you can never be sure when it will happen.»*  
Gunter Frentzel

What is the idea behind this statement? It clearly shows that Gunter Frentzel's objects and the space surrounding them are closely intertwined.

His installations are characterized by the nature of their blueprint and the simultaneously highly complex effect. The constructions sometimes seem disconcertingly unstable and often their construction principle, is – despite the strongly reduced use of materials – not comprehensible from the position of the viewer or the layman in statics.

In the silence of his studio – he called it the 'White Art Box' – Gunter Frentzel sat for hours. He concentrated – searching – leaving space and staffs affect him. He laid the first bars, began layering. In order to keep strictly to the spacing, he always uses a solid wood.



## Staff, funding institutions

Contributors  
Gunter Frentzel, Uli Frentzel  
Dr. Ulrike Lorenz, Dr. Christoph Vögele

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Stadt Solothurn  
Gemeinde Rüttenen  
Rentsch Stiftung  
Jubiläumsstiftung der Schweizerischen  
Mobilien Genossenschaft

## Technical information

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|-------------------|---|
| Production format | HD-Cam, C300 Canon  |
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| Contact           | Insertfilm AG<br>Film- und Fernsehproduktion<br>Weissensteinstrasse 81<br>CH-4500 Solothurn<br>+41 32 625 70 00<br>info@insertfilm.ch |
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| DVD               | <a href="http://www.insertfilm.ch/shop">www.insertfilm.ch/shop</a>  |



# Gunter Frentzel

Gunter Frentzel lived and worked in his home on the edge of the forest in Rüttenen (SO). Behind his house lies the Jura range of mountains, in front of his house opens a spectacular distant vision on the Swiss Midlands. The winner of the Canton Solothurn Art Award (1999) achieved great successes in Germany and in Switzerland.

His preferred materials were square bars made of iron or chrome steel. He stacked the brittle, standardized industrial metal rods in various variations or leaned them against each other erected. This created closed objects in the space.

His sculptures are in the possession of international art collections, and his works are placed in public spaces and in museums in various cities – for example in Paris, Bern, Mannheim, Cologne, Lisbon, Joao Pessoa (BR) and also in Solothurn.

Gunter Frentzel finished an impressive exhibition at the «Haus der Kunst» in Solothurn. In December 2011, a large solo exhibition was dedicated to him in the Kunstmuseum Solothurn.

Born in Berlin in 1935, Gunter Frentzel was the eldest of four siblings. In order not to experience the end of war in Berlin, his family flees to southern Germany. There, Gunter experiences the end of World War II and his 10th birthday. His father Waldemar was a movie salesman, his mother a housewife and office clerk.

After the first chaotic post-war years, the family establishes itself in Wiesbaden. From 1952, Gunter studied sculpture at the Kunstschule Wiesbaden. He promised his father to learn a trade after completing his diploma, because he could not imagine that one could make a living out of art. Gunter did so and was able to complete his training as a stonemason after only one year.

In 1955, he met Ulrike, who was studying fashion graphics at Art School. Four years later they got married and drove on their honeymoon to Switzerland in a Volkswagen borrowed from Gunter's brother! The 'Ländle', undamaged by the war, with its agricultural diversity in a small space impresses the young couple. Here they want to start from scratch, even though in Germany the post-war economic miracle is just beginning.

You can search and find a specialist magazine for the most suitable 'Steinmetz' (masonry) company in Solothurn. For the first two years, Gunter and Uli live in Biberist, in an apartment with a wonderful view of the Jura range of mountains, and then in a small farmhouse below the Weissenstein, where they spend the next 19 years with their two sons. In 1981, they moved to their own farmhouse, about 100 m below their first house.

With the wide and distant view of the Mittelland and the Alps in front of his house, Gunter's interest in the space begins.

For twelve years, Gunter works as artistic director for the stonemason company. There is little time left for his art. This is why he started his own business in 1972 –with a compensation of 3000 Swiss Francs and a contract for building a well. This was was and still is a big existential risk. So he learns that the risk is a faithful companion of the artist.

Uli supports his decision and dedicates herself to the household, the office work and the garden.

For his artistic work in the studio, Gunter takes on the restoration of protected stone buildings. The company «ARGE SOLOTHURNERSTEIN» founded by him with independent stone craftsmen, now gives him greater freedom to be able to divide time between art and craft more freely. Restoration has the advantage that he rarely has to completely renew, but in most cases complete an existing work. His work forces him to empathize with the style epochs. As a result, he can also gather valuable information for his artistic language. For example, the question of how space was dealt with in earlier epochs. Therefore, this balance between the classic and the modern had a fruitful content effect on Gunter Frentzel's art. Only the balancing act between the two types of professions often left him to push the limit of his capacity.





The cooperation with the historic preservation was very enriching for both sides: Gunter always saw the landmarked buildings from the perspective of the artist.

Added to this were the positive and very creative discussions with competent, flexibly thinking conservationists and architects. In this sense, large buildings such as the Waldegg, Castle the monastery in Bellelay, the Jesuit Church and the St. Ursen Cathedral in Solothurn have been restored.

In 1979, Gunter Frentzel realized his first solo exhibition in the prestigious gallery of Lydia Megert in Bern. He secures the family financially but continues to work as a restorer. The naturalization of the Frentzel family also falls into this period. From then on, Gunter concentrates on public works and realizes further exhibitions at home and abroad.

In 1986, he used the laser beam in Sion as an additional design element for the first time. The laser technology was already known in medicine, but was completely foreign and new as an element for art installations. Even today, a laser installation can be seen in the city of Solothurn.

Asked if there are no nasty surprises when he builds the sculpture himself in the actual exhibition space, Gunter Frentzel replies:

«Barely. On the contrary! Galleries and museum people who do not yet know my way of working sometimes get red heads: Two days before the opening about one and a half tons of metal bars are delivered from a local metal shop to the exhibition room... and there is still no sign of the exhibition! But the installation, the exhibition is already in my head. On time, as announced, the opening reception begins.

*«Without Ulrike, I would not have dared.  
It is not at all guilt, but at the very essence.  
She gave me strength and confidence.»*

*«I had a smooth transition from the  
secure professional life to become a freelance artist.»*


*«I want to work with materials,  
which cost almost nothing.»*





*«For me it is a meditative aspect to throw laser beams in a clear structure and with clear references to the sky. It creates a new room or a roof, where there can be none.»*

*«I have to suck in the space and burn it in my brain. Only in this way can I retrieve the room in the 'White Art Box' as a precise reminder.»*



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