

Flugexperimente / Flight Experiments

Action in a cable car with sound

for: ORTung, public space, Wagrain/Austria 2000 and in: Gallery 5020, Salzburg/Austria 2001

Wagrain in the Salzburg area is nearly only known as a popular holiday destination. I was invited there in the summer of 2000 for a two week artists' symposium. For my project *Flight Experiments (Flugexperimente)* I chose a cable railway as site in order to be able to turn people's attention to social aspects of the region. The cable railway is called *Flying Mozart* (an English name despite the German location) and itself is an element representative of the local tourism.

I asked people living in Wagrain, all of whom were more or less dependent on the tourist trade, about their ideas and dreams regarding the area. These statements, in a shortened and edited form, were then staged in the cable cars of the *Flying Mozart*. I invited locals and tourists to a free trip in the cable railway. They were able to hear the interviewees' statements, like flights of fancy, whilst floating above the tailor-made tourist landscape of Wagrain. For example, the people could see a man-made lake which is used to provide for artificial snow in the winter.

The statements from the local people signify worries and limitations of an existence determined economically by global developments as well as signifying their sadness and longing for an apparently lost way of life. Economic thinking becomes clear when the mountains are seen as a kind of capital which has not yet been fully exploited.

For example a seventy year old ex-landlady tells how as a young girl



**Glide free of cost
in a *Flying Mozart* gondola
and thrive on the mental flights
citizens dream up on Wagrain.**



she often dreamed of floating over Wagrain in her bed, from where she would look down at the town. She spent almost every day of fifty years in the kitchen, and these thoughts were her day-dreams when she was finished. Or the head of the tourism board believes that the *Flying Mozart* will still exist in twenty or thirty years. Then, if you flew over Wagrain in her, you could see to what extent Wagrain had been changed by tourism. There would hardly be any green areas left, just huge car-parks. It would be shocking for the people of Wagrain to see how much they let themselves be taken over by tourism, but on the other hand they had no choice as tourism was always their main source of income.

During *Flight Experiments* the passengers were able to see this holiday town and the role they play in it from a different perspective. Instead of the usual pleasurable holiday experience of a trip in a cable car I was able to represent the relationship with the complexity of everyday life. The formal set up of the event underlined this theme in that the show came to an end once the carriage had returned to its starting point down in Wagrain. *Flight Experiments* provide an exemplary possibility of getting into a cable car without being subject to the logic of tourism.

