

Thomas Demand - Clip 9

The Space Simulator

The *Space Simulator* is the biggest piece so far I did and it's possibly the most complex structure I ever tried to pull off. It started very humble, in a very humble way. I saw it in a book about astronauts training and astronauts are people who basically did something, ...you know with space travel, which nobody else did before. Even at the same time people wouldn't believe, you know ...it's as famous as trivial to say that, you know, maybe they never went there. So there's this element of hoax in this whole thing as well. But for me it was the object itself, it's weird shape, it's illogical structure. It reminded me very much of deconstructivist architecture as well as elements of cubist painting, cubist sculpture. But also it has this kind of high and low, this super complex form. Also the staircase, which is also very complex but it is very banal. The whole thing is like a huge landscape in a way. So there are so many parts of the picture, which you don't see at first glance. It's so complex that you just look around and you always kind of find new things, what's this and what's that? I wanted to build it life size. I wanted to reconstruct a simulator and the simulator in this case is very much about the backside. So you see the outside of the simulator. You don't see the simulation. But the reason why you would build a simulator in the first place is to simulate an experience, which you could not have on earth. So you wouldn't have it where you have

it and all these kind of tricky things. So we end up with a very similar kind of figure of speech like a rose is a rose is a rose and you know this kind of goes on and on and on and every now and then there's another twist. And...that's what I like quite a lot about the piece. So that's why I started doing that. And then once I'm going, you know, I'm building the thing, it's just...it's quite a big project. You just try to kind of deal with the formal problems in the work but you know the decision to do it is right in the beginning and then it's quite irreversible. If I start working, I always have a camera at one point in an empty studio and then I start building the things for the camera in front of it, which is also quite unusual for photography, which makes me also very inflexible to move the camera...I never, you know, I never change the viewpoint of the camera. I'm trying to achieve this one image, this one shot.

