



Robert Fones - Clip 5

“Three Eszetts”

The third piece “Three Eszetts.” The eszett is a German letterform and it was a letterform that I noticed on a trip to Germany, because it is the only letter in the German alphabet that’s different from the English alphabet. It represents a double ‘s’ sound, so you would find it in a word like “Strasse,” the Eszetts would be in the middle, representing two ‘s’es. And so because it jumped out for me visually, when I was looking at the street signs in Germany, I decided that I wanted to use it, I think because it was more a visual symbol to me, since I didn’t speak German, than it would have been if I had spoken German. In the same way that I can’t look at a letter ‘a’ or ‘b’ and nobody can who speaks English and see them as strictly a pictorial symbol. So I like the fact that I saw it as a pictorial symbol. And I also liked the fact that letterforms tend to come in different weights: light, medium, bold, extra bold, and the fact that letterforms are designed by a designer, they are produced, they are marketed and distributed and that they come in different weights. To me, they made me think of them as if they were a product, a kind of industrial product, that was standardised. So I linked those three letterforms with an image of a woodworking chisel, which is my own chisel and I’ve used it in much in my work. It harkens back in an earlier industrial

period, when tools were handmade, it is a hand-forged chisel. But again, when it was produced it was a standard object, available in different widths, which was manufactured and distributed all over the world. So, like it is a “Insert, Press, Deposit,” you have two different kinds of images from two different historical periods and two different cultures that are combined together. The other thing that I wanted to do in “Three Eszetts” was to use a photographic image that spanned three separate components, because in “Insert, Press, Deposit” and other works that I have done, each element has a separate photograph on it. So I wanted to see what happened when a photographic image spanned three components and continued invisibly between the three components. I wanted that if you looked at it that if you would see the three letter forms first or would you see the photograph first, would one destroy the other or would they be able to coexist at the same time?

