

2012-10-05

## Exhibition Seewerk



**FluxChess** – A fascinating combination of chess and art:

Annual exhibition of the SEEWERK in Moers-Kapellen puts the main focus on Fluxus artist **Takako Saito** – organized and displayed by Angelika Petri and Frank Merks.

There was no announcement of this event by the current chess media (print or web), so it was certainly a happy coincidence when I recently heard from our US member Larry List about an exhibition of the Japanese Fluxus artist **Takako Saito** taking place nearly within "spitting" distance from my home (only 20 km away).

At that time the opening of the exhibition – on 08/09/2012 at the Cultural Island NEPIX KULL in the Moers palace garden – was already history, but I had the opportunity to go to Moers on two consecutive Sundays (23 + 30 September) to visit at first the **Music Chess Sets** at Nepix Kull (the island is not open to the public due to the absence of a bridge, for easily comprehensible reasons), and afterwards to admire the artworks of Takako Saito in the SEEWERK on Lake "Silbersee" (Moers-Kapellen).

I had seized a second date in order to meet Takako Saito who should be present on 30 September, and indeed the opportunity arose for a short encounter with the artist who mainly (but not solely) picks chess out as a central theme in her imposing oeuvre: she playfully incorporates chess elements and motifs in her works of art and in this connection completely disregards the competitive nature of chess. In my following selection of photographs I will focus on her artworks, so the works of other artists who exhibit in the Seewerk as well are mainly not considered here.

**The Music Chess Sets at Nepix Kull:**



In chess set No 1 the chessmen consist of short trunks equipped with "sound elements" – the latter generate soft tones when moved by the wind:



Similarly chess set No 2, the chessmen were made of logs equally mounted with sound objects. The small chess tables between the music chess sets are a wine chess and a canapé chess respectively. The white figure hovering between the trees symbolizes the dove of peace whose vesture also constitutes a wind chime.

Enlarged pictures of [Chess Set No 1](#) and [Set No 2](#).

[\\_ Photo by Jörg Parsick-Matthieu © Seewerk \(Takako Saito\)](#)

Poster - click to enlarge!

Performance of Takako Saito, hovering as dove of peace above Lake Silbersee in a heavy-weight costume (of about 30 kg!).

Some works of art on the Seewerk area:

New works by Takako Saito are the **Block chess** ("Klotzschachspiel") and **Chess for mice and squirrels**

– the walnut chessmen of the latter were actually a welcome prey for the squirrels poaching in the surroundings, as I heard from Angelika Petri.



Block Chess





Chess for Mice and Squirrels





• "The sphere and the guardians of becoming" (Die Kugel und die Wächter des Werdens) by Anatol Herzfeld



• Installation "Auf dem See" by Gabriele Fekete: A pontoon with a sitting person swimming on Lake Silbersee.



"Unification of capitalism and freedom" by Pit Bohne: Carrier rocket has struck a Trabi – symbol for the clash between East and West.



The staircase leads to Takako Saito's exhibition in the upper floor, two halls are filled with their works.

I am happy to offer below three snapshots of Takako Saito  
(\*1929, since 1978 resident in Düsseldorf):

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A "Portrait of Takako" which shows her self-deprecating distance.

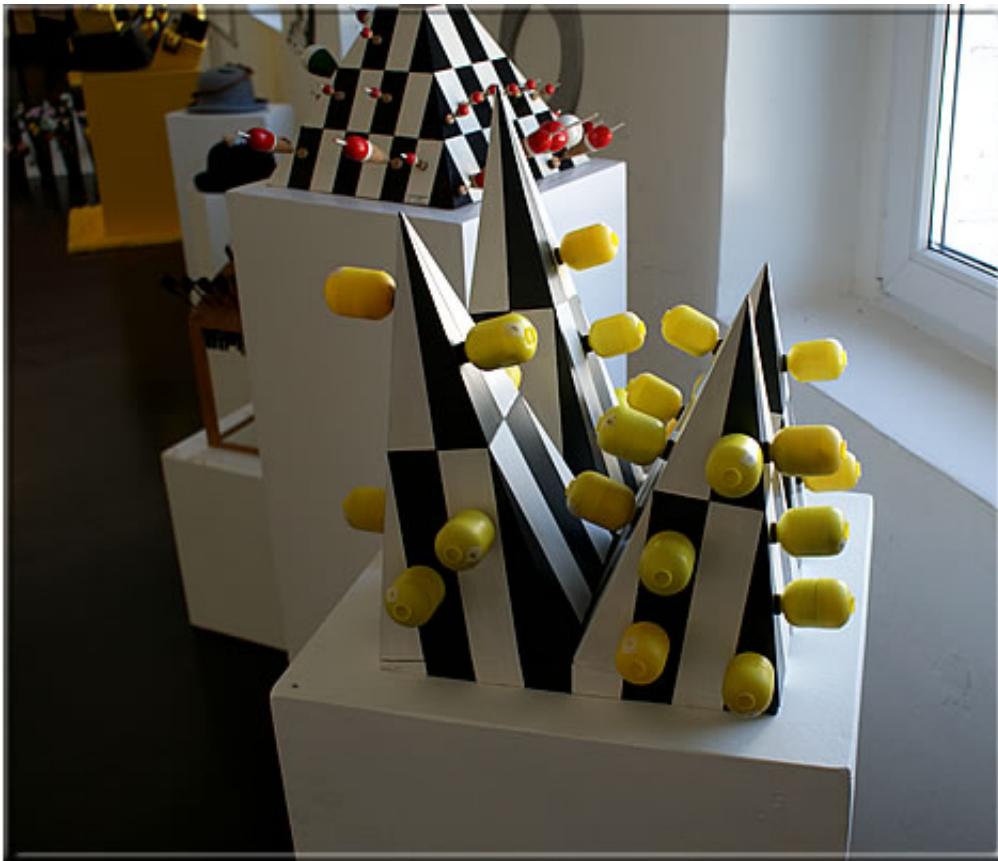




• "Schachspiel im Wald" (Chess in the Forest) - all the chessmen consist of apparently identical little clogs – they distinguish from one another by different notches in the soles (underneath)!



• Another whimsical chess set



Chess pyramids – equipped with yellow "kinder surprise eggs". The latter should be some decades old ...



"Hat chess" – bowlers with spiral chess stair and mini board respectively – highly original!



Book Chess No

1

Book Chess N°1

During the game,  
if a player has  
forgotten which  
figure the  
opponent is  
playing, he asks  
him to name it by  
reading out the  
text. If a player  
wants to exchange  
a figure, he may  
look at the book  
underneath his  
figure and if it is  
of the same kind,  
he may change.

Takako Saito 1984

Edition  
Buchgalerie  
Mergemeier 1999

## Book Chess Nr.2

Instead of reading the signs out loud,  
make a sign for each figure without speaking.

When the opposing player is asked to name  
a figure, silently send a sign.

When a player moves a figure they can move  
it with as many books as they like underneath.



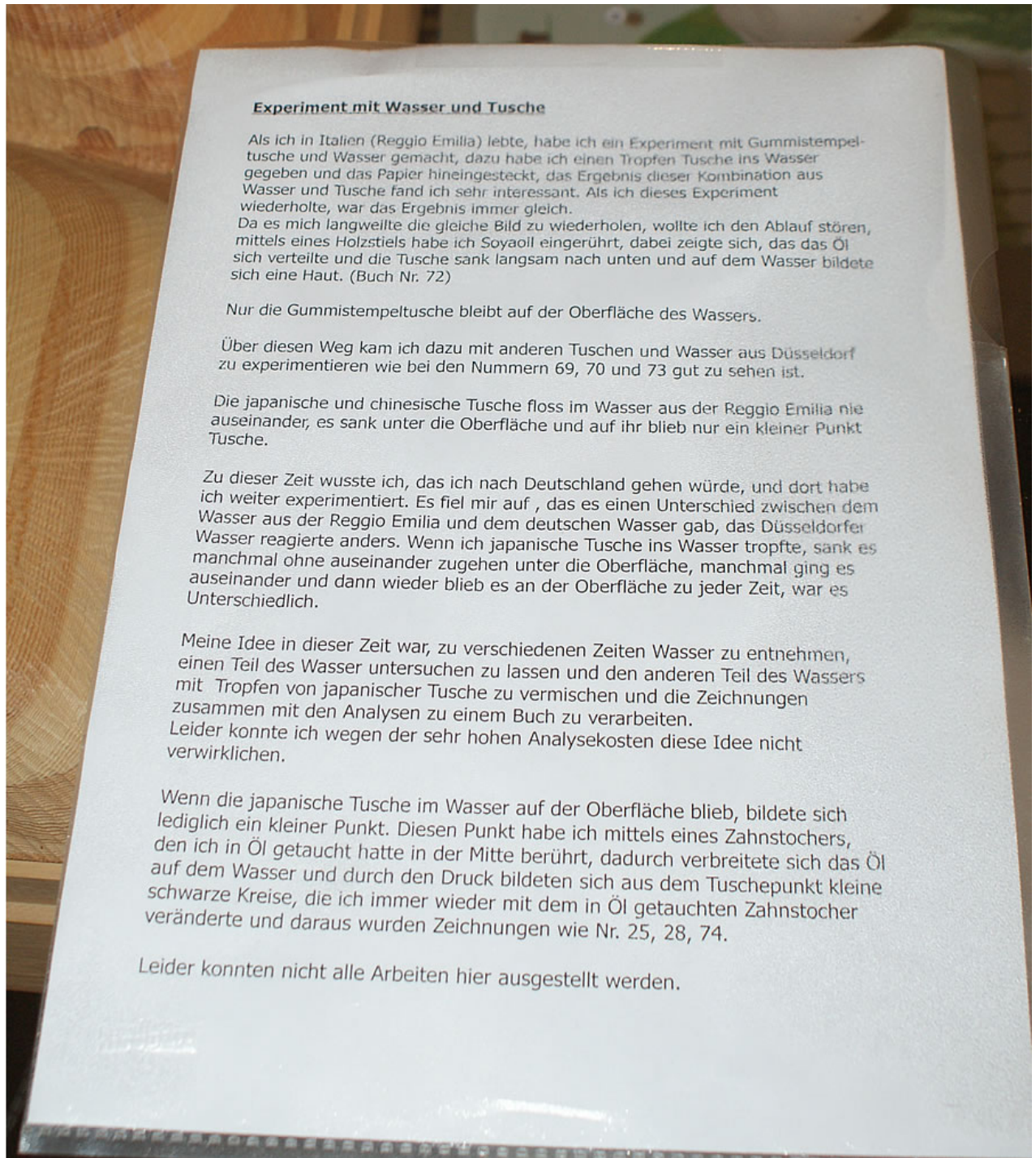
Book Chess

No 2



Experiment with

water and Indian ink



**You will find additional 62 photographs in these picture galleries:**

Gallery [Seewerk I](#) (32 photos) and [Seewerk II](#) (30 photos)

You may read more about Takako Saito and FluxChess on the following pages:

- [Wikipedia Page of Takako Saito](#)
- [Short biography](#)
- [Spice Chess](#)
- [Cold War Games and Postwar Art](#) by Claudia Mesch

Further Links (in German):

- [Das SEEWERK / Press releases](#)
- Anja Katzke: [Die Kunst als Spiel](#) (PDF)
- Anja Katzke: [Die Pyramide als Schachspiel](#)
- [Museumsplattform NRW](#)

Ralf Binnewirtz, 05/10/2012

**PS (11/11/2011):** Meanwhile four YouTube videos have been published on the event:

- [Takako Saito, Seewerk 2012 Indoor](#)
- [Takako meets Taiko](#)
- [Opera, Takako Saito](#)
- [Seewerk 2012](#)