

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.

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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 Böhne: 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.



Narrow side of the sculpture.



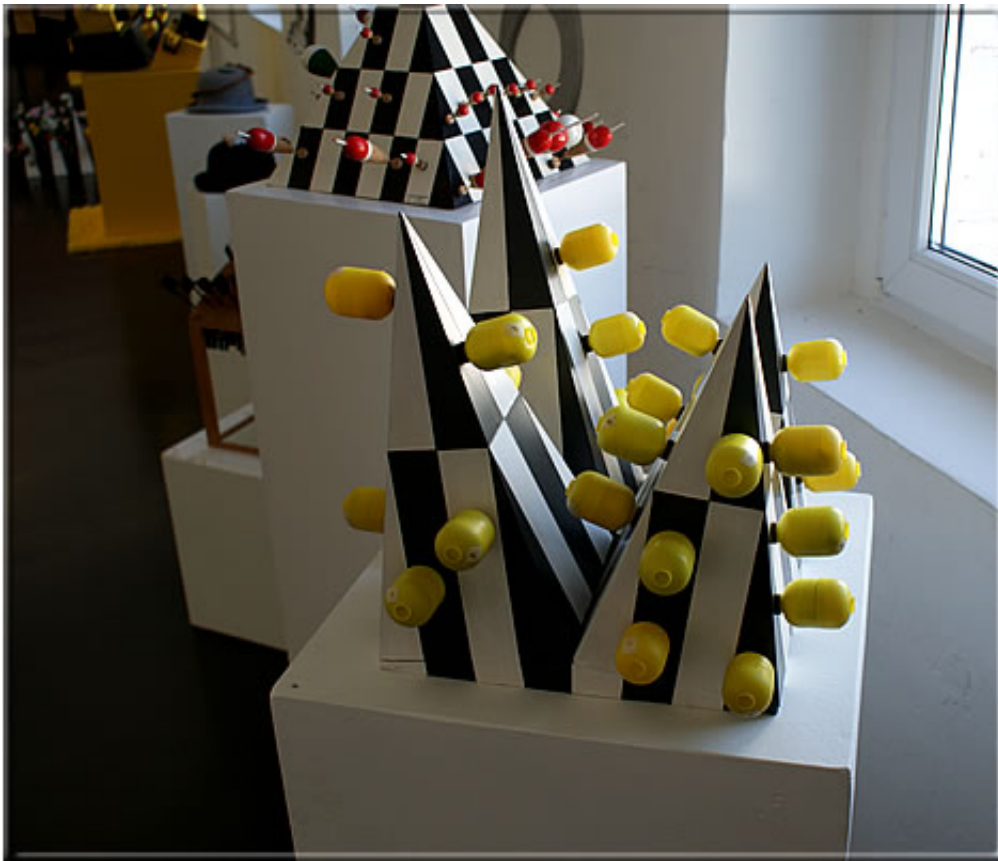
A three-dimensional chess with 8 tiers reminds me of the efforts of Ferdinand Maack in the early 20th century to popularize a space chess with eight 8 x 8 boards.



"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 ...

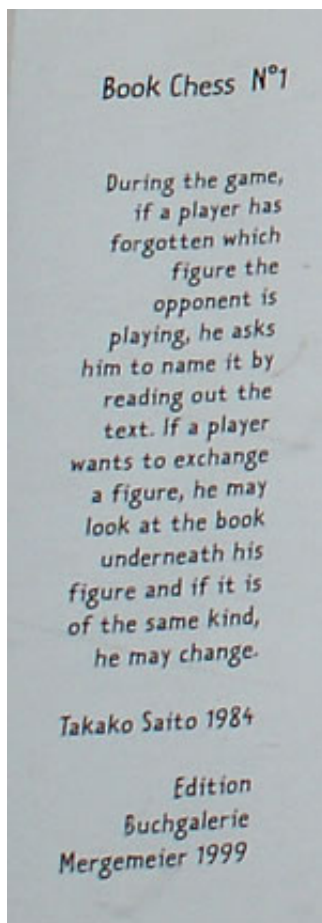


"Hat chess" – bowlers with spiral chess stair and mini board respectively – highly original!



Book Chess No

1



Book Chess 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.



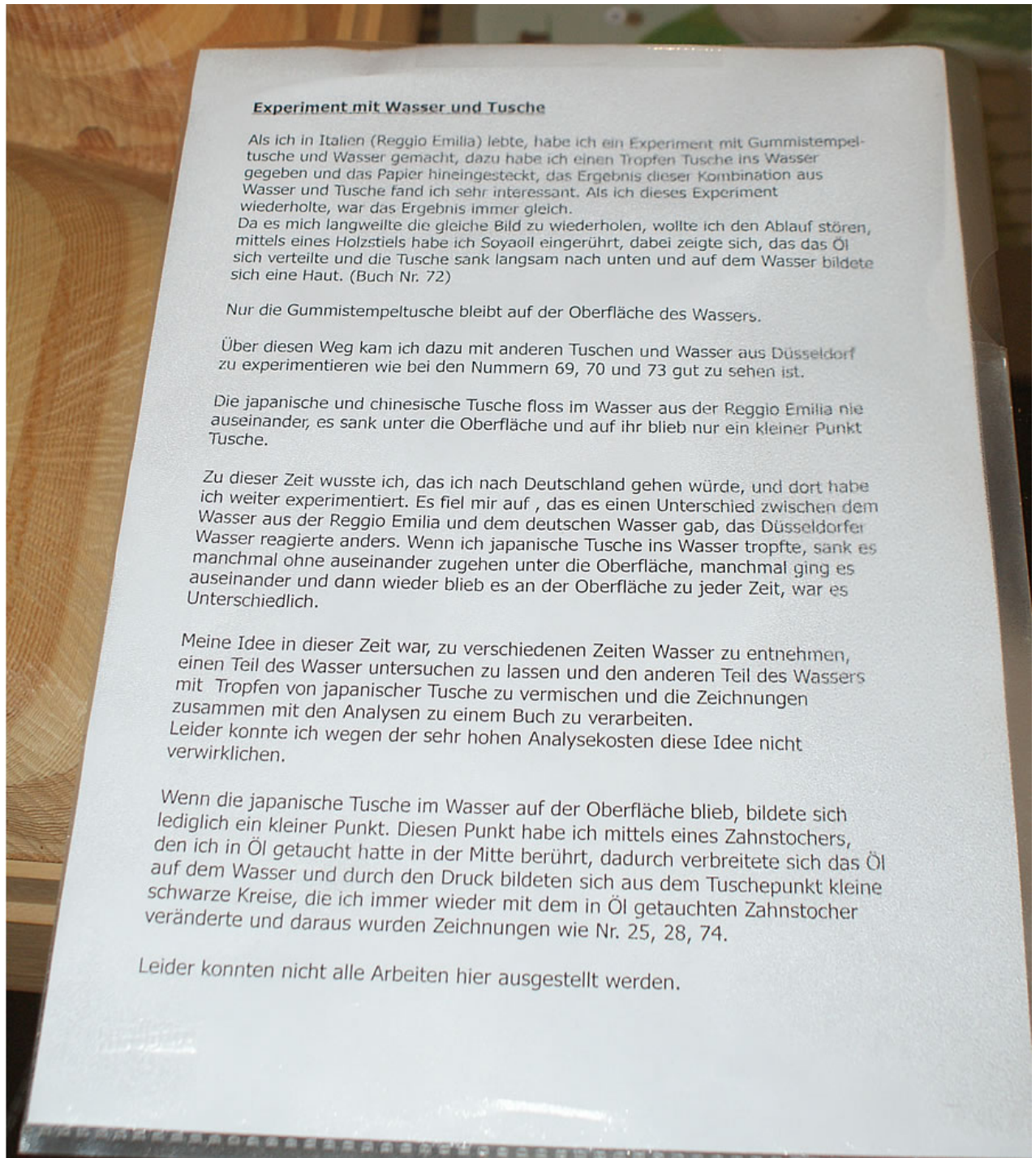
Book Chess

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](#)