

## The Mercedes Trilogy

Prologue	The historic Grand Tour - when travelling still was a work of art in itself
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### The Work of Art

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Epilogue

## **The Work of Art**

## The Work of Art

People change, travelling changes, cars change, museums change, and art changes. Nothing persists. The momentariness of the art object reflects the impermanence and transience of all being.

This work of art is in the center of an art history and wants the beholder to witness its maturation process. Alteration and changes are part of the art object's creation process. The colorful brilliance of the beginning will fade. The gummy bears will assimilate, blend in, and amalgamate, thus giving the art object a completely different appearance. At the end of their life cycle, the gummy bears are all white, transparent, and even somewhat lucent.

It is not an easy task to find the appropriate material for this work of art, that represents both the life cycle of rich and of poor men alike. Gummy bears, a candy especially popular with children of affluent countries, are a symbol for richness, peace, and the protection of children's rights, which, however, most children in the world are deprived of.

If properly protected, as the historical traveller by the "bear- leaders", gummy bears have an endurance of up to 100 years, i.e. they 'live' about as long as children growing up in the Western hemisphere. However, most children are deprived of this kind of all-embracing protection. They are surrounded by war, poverty, and violence. The brightness of their birth is quickly followed by a colorless and miserable life in darkness and distress.

People change, travelling changes, cars change, museums change, and art changes. Nothing persists. Hopefully, this will apply to those children, who have been bilked of a life in dignity, too. To them I'd like to dedicate this work of art.

















In 2005, a 33 years old Mercedes 200 / 8 has been turned into an art object. The body of the vintage car has been pasted up with more than 35.000 gummy bears (fruit gums), only coated by a special kind of varnish.

Following a strictly symmetrical pattern, they have been arranged into more than thousand quadrangles, all sorted by color and recurring in a periodic manner.





Gummy bears are made up of sugar and gelatine. In warm eather conditions, they start to melt. When they get wet, they start to soak and swell. And shortly after, they run to seed.

Gummy bears contain different fungi and microorganisms causing the fruit gums to alter in the course of time. Their colorful brilliance gradually fades and the different colors all blend in and become similar. They lose humidity and their texture more and more solidifies.





Gummy bears are a popular candy, especially popular with children growing up in rich Western countries. However, children growing up in the developing world do not know these favored candies.



## **The Work of Art**

The modern Grand Tour - when travelling became a work of art again

## **The modern Grand Tour**

„Travelling in an art object to various art objects turns travelling into a work of art in itself“. True to this motto, on September 20, 2007 started the modern Grand Tour.

### The idea:

Travelling in an art object to art exhibitions in order to combine past and modernity of art history.

### The inspiration:

Following the original idea of the historic Grand Tour when travelling was a work of art in itself.

### The aim:

Travelling to the historic places of the Grand Tour as well as to its epoche making and contemporary buildings and artworks.

### The special case:

On my way, I made a stop at the most important exhibitions of contemporary art in 2007 as well as at the world's largest motor exhibition. It occurs only once in 10 years, that the three world famous art exhibitions take place in the same year.

**documenta 12 - skulptur projekte münster 07 - 52. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte de La Biennale di Venezia**

### Something special:

The art Mercedes is the first art object to be displayed at all these famous exhibitions, thus establishing a link between these important exhibitions of modern art.

Though it is simply a cooperation for organizational purposes with no artistic intention at all, it is most interesting that event promoters and organizers of the different exhibitions jointly promote their cultural highlights as the 'Grand Tour of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' ([www.grandtour2007.com](http://www.grandtour2007.com)).

## The destinations of the modern Grand Tour



### The modern Grand Tour in historic footprints \*

(New York) – London – Dover – Calais – Paris – Cologne – Heidelberg – Basel – Lucerne / St. Gotthard Pass – Milan – Venice – Naples (Pompeji) – Rome – Florence – Verona – Brenner Pass – Munich – Paris – Calais – Dover – London – (New York)

\* the cities marked in red have not been visited yet





## The art exhibitions along the modern Grand Tour

Heidelberg – Frankfurt on the Main (IAA) – Cassel\* – Muenster\* –  
Cologne – Freiburg – Basel – Lucerne / St. Gotthard Pass – Milan –  
Padua – Venice\* – Verona – Bolzano / Brenner Pass – Munich

\* documenta 12, Cassel

\* sculpture projects muenster 07, Muenster

\* 52. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte de La Biennale di Venezia, Venice



## The modern Grand Tour in historic footprints



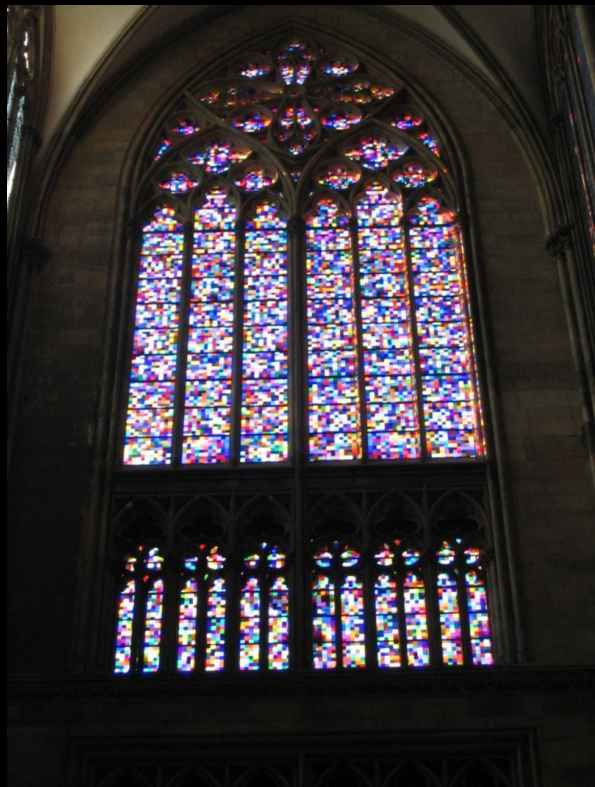
Heidelberg, in the background the famous historic castle



The romantic palace garden with its splendid view on the river Neckar and the Old Town of Heidelberg



Cologne, in front of the Cathedral and the famous "Südquerhausfenster"



This beautiful stained-glass window was designed by the famous German artist Gerhard Richter. It is a work of art made for eternity. The quads have exactly the same size as the quads on the art Mercedes. Yet, their number exceeds that of the car many times over.





Basel, in front of the Museum of History (Barfüsserkerche)



Built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Gothic **Barfüsserkerche** has been rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when it was made a museum of history. Today, it contains a collection of cultural heritage artifacts from the renaissance and baroque eras.



Lucerne, in front of the arts and convention centre KKL



The KKL Lucerne was designed by the famous architect Jean Nouvel and is one of the most popular arts centers in Europe





On the St. Gotthard Pass crossing the Alps



At the border between Switzerland and Italy

It was not only a single „bear-leader“ who accompanied me during the Grand Tour, instead a whole army took care of my security





Milan, Piazza del Duomo



Milan, in front of the Cathedral, one of the most popular gothic buildings in the world



Venice, Piazza of San Marco, Doge's Palace and Campanile;  
one of the most spectacular places in the history of art

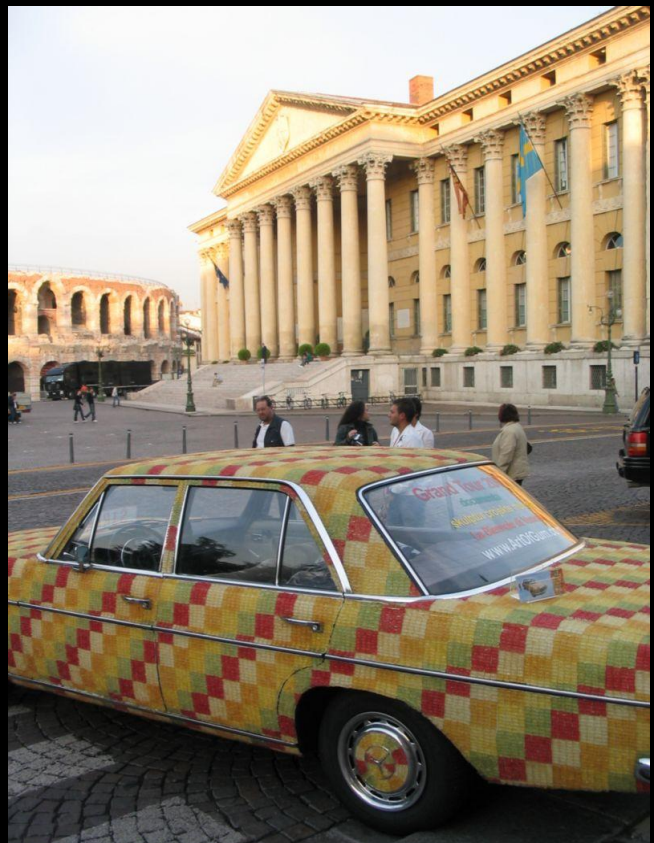


Venice, Lido; in the background the first facade in Europe that, in the 19<sup>th</sup>  
century, was clad by a majolica siding— an Italian Art Nouveau masterpiece





Verona, amphitheater and city hall



Verona, amphitheater, in front of the world's most famous open air opera





On the Brenner Pass crossing the Alps



„For your historic antecessors on the Grand Tour it was much more difficult to cross the Alps“. (**Art historian from Bolzano**)



Munich, in front of the city hall



Munich, in front of the Pinakothek der Moderne

"It is really impressing what a single person can achieve all on his own". (Prof. Dr. Florian Hufnagl, Director of the Neue Sammlung. Art and Design)



## The art exhibitions along the modern Grand Tour

documenta 12. Cassel



In the center of the famous art exhibition.



Hans Eichel, Germany's former treasury secretary, in front of the art car





„C'est magnifique, une oeuvre d'art.“ „Superbe idée, vraiment originale, bravo pour votre ingéniosité. Il faut passer par la France.“ „Que bonita. Me le comerse toda.“ ‘It's great, what a masterpiece!’ ‘Wonderful, great idea, exciting, beautiful.....  
(Visitors reactions)



‘That's art’ (14 year old boy) ‘Make sure to go to Biennale to win an award.’ ‘Why are you here for a day, only? You should stay much longer.’ (Visitors reactions)



skulptur projekte münster 07 (sculpture projects muenster 07)



On the *Prinzipalmarkt*, the historic principal marketplace of Muenster



‘I thought they are glass beads’ ‘A diamond’ ‘A precious stone’ ‘Congratulations, it’s absolutely great’ ‘Fabulous car! Very unusual finish!’ (**Visitors reactions**)





In the center of the exhibition



‘Go to the Biennale in Venice, it’s absolute great!’ (statement of an Italian artist)

Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte de La Biennale di Venezia, Venice



Venice, Piazzale Roma



Venedig, Lido; „Simpatico“, „Bella Originale“, „Fantastico“....“Art for everybody, even those who are not interested in the arts yet.’ We met you in Münster and today once more in Venice. That’s fantastic.’  
(Visitors reactions)





Venice, two art cars at the open art exhibition



Venice, in the background the Piazza of San Marco  
 „If you come to Venice again, we'll bring your artwork to San Marco.”  
 (Venetian art lover)

## **The work of art – when travelling became a work of art again**

I have just completed the art journey to the historical Grand Tour places and the contemporary art exhibitions. Encounters with multicultural life in modern times and its historical background have left its mark:

For two weeks I was travelling on dirty highways and through cities suffocating in traffic. I went over snow-covered mountains and passed through dreamy landscapes, dusty road tunnels and crystal clear lagoons.

The gummy bears only once had to withstand a twenty minute cloudburst which they survived quite well. Of course they shed some of their colour during travelling but at the same time stirred up a lot of dust. It stuck to the bears pretty good just as they did themselves. Not even 35 pieces were lost over 2500 kilometres which is hardly 0,1 percent.

I visited important European centres of art and monuments of ancient and medieval times and renaissance.

I had the opportunity to exhibit my art work in front of epochal and important contemporary buildings and art. Most of the time the Mercedes stood in restricted areas within the historical centers. Only two times it had to be removed and one time a ticket was issued - to my surprise in my hometown Munich, only two hours prior to completing the Grand Tour.

Thousands of enthusiastic reactions in the streets and at the exhibition places were signs of respect given to me for my art work.

The Mercedes was admired, praised, hugged, almost loved and provoked something wonderful: It united people. Whether in cities, on the road or at famous sites in Cassel, Milan or Venice; people met it with joy, interest and communication. The art audience was interested in it as well as passing by pedestrians. Old people as much as the younger ones. Drivers passed by shooting photographs, laughing and giving compliments.

There had never been a moment for me to imagine such a brought approval for my art work. Various stories could be told that I experienced with people from different cultures; the stories all sound unbelievable and you would believe that it happened only in my dreams.



For me the Grand Tour also was a helpful confrontation of the known with the different, the familiar with the unexpected, just as it must have been for the historical travellers.

I cannot tell whether this contributed to my human maturity as it did for my precursors. Nevertheless I felt mentally and physical renewed.

At the end of my journey I asked myself whether the modern Grand Tour actually was an adventure, a journey of discovery or an educational trip. Also it could have been a city trip, a fairy-tale adventure or a trip to the past. It has been a bit of everything in the end and therefore finally an art journey.

I am sure that the historical predecessors would have enjoyed it very much!

## **The Work of Art**

The visionary Grand Tour – when travelling perfects the work of art



## **The visionary Grand Tour**

“Travelling in an art object to various art objects turns the work of art into a completed work of art“. True to this motto the visionary Grand Tour is going to start in summer 2013.

### The idea:

Travelling in an art object to art exhibitions in order to combine past and modernity of art history.

### The inspiration:

Following the original idea of the historic Grand Tour when travelling was a work of art in itself.

### The aim:

Travelling to the historic places of the Grand Tour as well as to its epoche making and contemporary buildings and artworks to complete the historical Grand Tour Route.

**Centre Pompidou – Louvre (Paris) – Tate Modern – National Gallery (London) – New Museum of Contemporary Art – Solomon Guggenheim Museum – Museum of Modern Art – Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)**

### Something special:

The art Mercedes is put on public display by eight of the most important museums in the world.

### The vision:

At the end of the tour the work of art shall support children, who grow up in an environment of war, poverty, and violence.

All earnings created during the course of the visionary Grand Tour and the sale of the work of art will be donated to charities which aim at ending the recruitment and the use of child soldiers and work for their rehabilitation.

## Destinations of the visionary Grand Tour



## The visionary Grand Tour in historic footprints

New York – London – Dover – Calais – Paris – Cologne – Heidelberg –  
 Basel – Lucerne / St. Gotthard Pass – Milan – Venice – **Naples (Pompeji)**  
 – **Rome** – **Florence** – Verona – Brenner Pass – Munich – Paris – Calais  
 – Dover – London – New York

\* cities visited during the visionary Grand Tour

\* cities visited during the modern Grand Tour

\* cities not visited





### The visionary Grand Tour

Munich – Paris – Calais – Dover – London – New York

## The visionary Grand Tour in historic footprints



Munich, in front of Pinakothek der Moderne



Munich, between Old Pinakothek and Pinakothek der Moderne  
Once again “bear-leader” for 35000 bears – but who takes care about whose security?





Paris, Arc de Triomphe



Paris, Centre Pompidou

‘Come to Paris. The French are going to adore you.’  
**(Three French artists at the documenta)**





Paris, Eiffel Tower



Paris, Louvre

Dominique Baron de Denon, Grand Tour traveller and director of the Louvre, probably would not have expected that 200 years later an artist once again uses the historical Grand Tour to make his art work public.





London, Tower Bridge



London, Tate Modern

Just go to London and offer your art work to Tate or Saatchi Gallery” (English travellers in Venice)





London, Westminster Palace

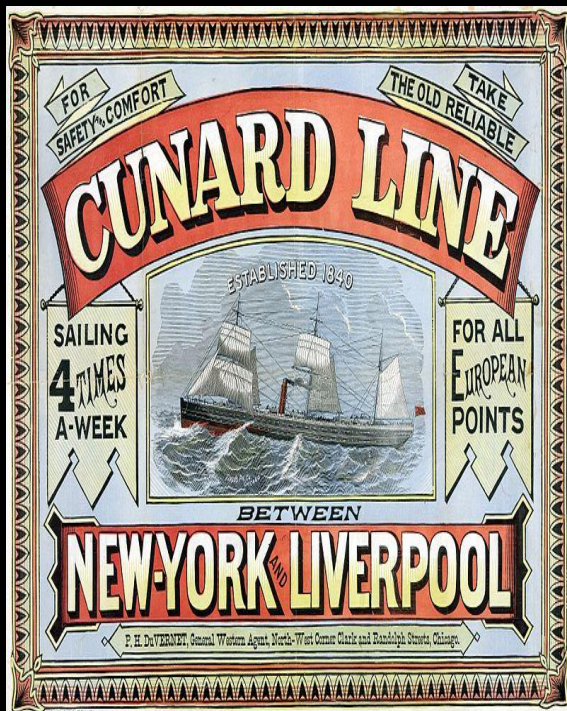


London, National Gallery  
Canaletto, Lorrain, Marieschi, Guardi, Batoni.... The Grand Tour  
produced magnificent art work



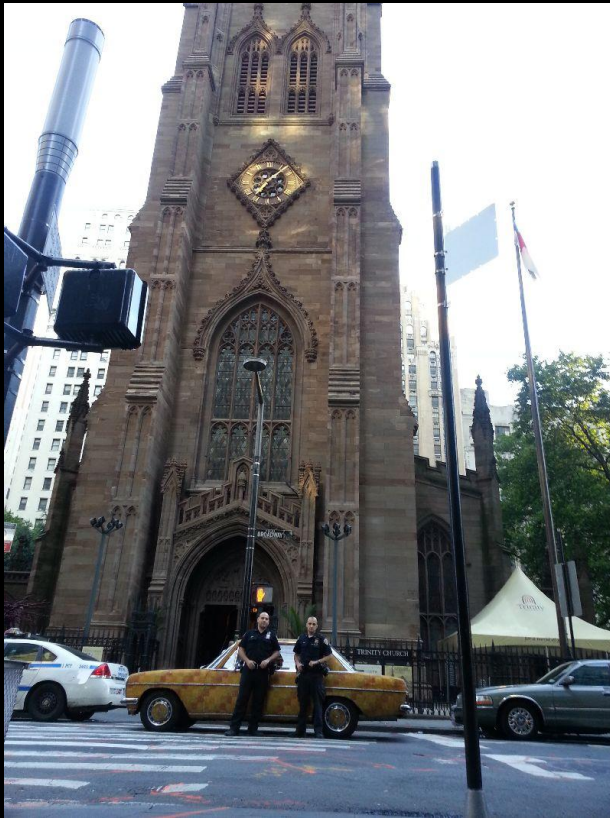


New York, Queen Mary;  
For artist and art work the flagship of the Cunard Line is not affordable,  
but there are alternatives



John Bartelstone Photography Hamburg Süd ©

Entry at New York  
While it took Mark Twain 6 weeks to cross the Atlantic, I should arrive in  
New York after 14 days.



New York, Trinity Church



New York, New Museum of Contemporary Art

A relatively new temple for contemporary art however some years younger than the Mercedes; nonetheless enjoying highest reputation as one of the museums of present times. Could it be an appropriate place for its retirement?





New York, United Nations



New York, Solomon Guggenheim Museum

„We enjoyed learning about your gummy candy technique. However, while we appreciate your considering the Guggenheim, we regret that we are not currently in a position to pursue an acquisition or exhibition of this work. Nonetheless, we thank you for thinking of the Guggenheim Museum, and wish you the best of luck in your professional pursuits.”

Very nice rejection. Should a personal introduction of the 35000 bears make a difference to that?



New York, Central Park



New York, Museum of Modern Art

Already I received an invitation to participate in the “Artist Viewing Program”.





New York, Empire State und Flatiron Building



New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

“Why don’t you come over to the United States. We live in New York and there are a lot of fantastic museums for your Mercedes.”

**(American travellers in Venice)**



## The visionary Grand Tour in front of eight famous museums

### Paris, Centre Pompidou



Unbelievable how many compliments I get on the two days of exhibition.



“Fantastic, super, crazy, unique, great, hot, incredible...”





“Your idea is so crazy. We love your artwork and courage very much.”



“You and your artwork are so wonderful. We will bring you some food tomorrow to the Louvre.”



## Paris, Louvre



Early in the morning... almost all on my own I enjoy my place of exhibition.



When I come back in the afternoon, this changes. Next to the “old masters” in the Louvre, a contemporary Grand Tour traveler together with his art object attracts just as much attention.





What a spectacular place for an exhibition...



... which is cleared by the police two hours later, due to orders by the managers of the museum.



## London, Tate Modern



I tried intensively to get a permit, but I was prohibited from driving onto the area of Tate Modern. Crossing lines without having planned for doing so poses recurring challenges for me during the Grand Tour...



...and the people thank me with real interest and undisguised happiness. Again and again I am showered in praise.





The emotional exhibition directly in front of Tate Modern lasts more than three hours...



...until I am checked by a dozen security guards and escorted from the area.

## London, National Gallery



On my way in London, early in the morning: The only possibility for taking pictures in front of the National Gallery.



At the beginning the police prevent me from getting close to the National Gallery with my car...





... but on the following day the passion of the Grand Tour traveler once again breaks through...



...and he exhibits his art object close to Canaletto, Lorrain, Marieschi, Guardi and Batoni for an hour.

## New York, New Museum of Contemporary Art



I have reached my first art goal in New York...



...and stand in front of a noticeable, architectural building of the modern time.





Filled with joy I present my art object...



... until employees of the museum come outside and tell me not only how thrilled they are, but also give me the telephone number of their curator.

New York, Solomon Guggenheim Museum



My favorite museum in New York...



...in front of which I have half a dozen exhibitions in two months.





Everywhere in New York the reactions of the people are so overwhelming...



...that I cannot possibly find the right words.



New York, Museum of Modern Art



“Are you not famous? With an artwork like this you have to be...”



“Wonderful, fantastic, exciting, beautiful, awesome, marvellous...”





“Unbelievable story, your artwork should go into a famous museum.”



“Magnificent, Exciting, Fantastic, Brilliant! Does anyone in the MOMA knows about your artwork”?



## New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art



The eighth exhibition in front of a spectacular museum...



...and once again the police allow it. There is no person I meet in New York who can explain why I only get one fine during all my time in New York, even though I park my car in prohibited places all the time. Mysterious! I thank the New York police.





“Fabulous artwork! Congratulations, it’s absolutely brilliant! Amazing idea, It’s unbelievable only! What an idea!...



The exhibition in front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art completes the visionary Grand Tour. The Mercedes Trilogy is completed. The Grand Tour traveler has reached the heaven of art.

## **The Work of Art - when travelling perfects the work of art**

*In spring 2013.. before the visionary Grand Tour*

“Travelling in an art object to various art objects turns the work of art into a completed work of art“.

True to this motto the visionary Grand Tour is going to start in summer 2013. It is the last act of the Mercedes trilogy. I have planned approximately 80 days for the journey. The actual duration of the Grand Tour is still unknown.

In the 18th century, Lord Chesterfield, an English poet and statesman, asked his son, who had to continue on foot after his carriage broke down, to keep in mind:

“The Grand Tour with all its efforts and delights actually is only a metaphor for the journey of life. It is an art to be performed with diligence, prudence and dedication from the beginning to the end.”

I will take his words to heart. Although it is unlikely that I will continue on foot.



## **What happened before the visionary Grand Tour**

For three years I tried to organize a trip that was considered to be simply impracticable. Everybody, really everybody, who I asked for support thought it was impossible to carry it out. That is why I am not surprised that the visionary Grand Tour was to be the most impressive time of my life so far.

The logistic challenges before the trip were just as high as the challenge which the visionary Grand Tour would be for the art object:

The idea of being allowed to enter the USA with a 40 year old Oldtimer, stuck all over with food, and of finding a cargo ship which would bring the art object together with its artist over the Atlantic Ocean was considered as being impracticable. (Among others I received the following answers from shipping companies: “It is easier to import a used vehicle into North Korea and receive a driving license there without re-equipping the vehicle. And in addition you have food on the body work of the vehicle. You must be joking.” “It’s out of the question that when loading about 5000 containers you can count on bringing the car to the harbor and then let it be loaded onto the same cargo ship that you intend to board a few days later in order to cross the Atlantic Ocean.”

Nobody wanted to imagine how the gummy bears might change in a container possibly heated up to 100 degrees Celsius and the resulting consequences by the American customs authority.

Two weeks before the final envisaged starting date, July 26<sup>th</sup> 2013, I had achieved getting consent on driving the Oldtimer into the United States under certain conditions; I had also received an oral assurance that I could take the gummy bears with me as well.

Around the same time, after three years of futile searches, I had found a haulage company that was willing to try and load the art-Mercedes onto the same cargo ship on which I had booked one of the popular places for myself two months earlier. I had one week left to get the export authorization, confirmation of cover and a registration address for the USA.

It was a hot day when I came back from the inspection of the art object by the German customs authority in Munich. The gummy bears had been in the sun for an hour. When I parked the car in the garage I didn’t trust my eyes: On the hood,

as well as on the front of the car, a considerable number of gummy bears had melted. At that moment the worstcase-scenario, with which I had not been counting anymore, came true. (During the modern Grand Tour, even high solar radiation had not led to the melting of the gummy bears.)

In bewilderment I ended all thoughts of being able to go on the visionary Grand Tour. Under these conditions, how should a trip in Europe be able to take place? A trip over the Ocean, possibly even in a boiling hot container, that was now just an illusion.

Two days later the unbelievable happened: The reactions of my friends after I spread the word that I would not be able to go on the trip raised the last spark of passion in me. This was ultimately enough to push open the door for the visionary Grand Tour:

In the hope of yet finding a solution to my problem I decided to contact experts in varnish all over Germany. In the end it was not the committed employees of the German Museum in Munich, the Varnish Museum in Münster or the employees of BASF, but a varnish master from Munich who had the bright idea: His idea was to seal up the art object for a second time, using a special polyester varnish and thus protect it like with a coating of sugar.



## **The Work of Art - when travelling perfects the work of art**

The art trip to the historic cities of the Grand Tour, as well as to eight of the most famous museums in the world, lies behind me. It was an adventure which I could not have imagined in my boldest dreams.

### The Grand Tour to Paris

On the way to Paris a stuttering motor and recurring rain awaited me. Both led to constant interruptions of my trip, but not to its end. Upon arrival in Paris early in the morning, a radiator hose bursts. The temperature rises. The motor is not being cooled down enough. I am losing water and my nerves as well. When my navigation system also starts to strike, I am driving around in the traffic of a big city with the fear of destroying the motor of my art object. But the Parisians help me out of my fix. With containers of water and navigation by Parisians I find a Mercedes workshop which replaces the hose for free and even invites me to coffee and cake.

It is afternoon when my first exhibition officially starts. The Parisians are incredible: Be it in front of the numerous sights or the famous museums, in Parisian traffic or at night in the urban pub areas, their esteem for the art object and for the story is enormous. For three days all my wishes are fulfilled. And the police allow me, without complaints, to use every place that I want to for my exhibition. Only in front of the Louvre I have to leave after two hours.

During the two exhibitions in front of the Centre Pompidou I encounter the peak of affection given to my art object, but to me as its artist as well. What I encountered there I cannot describe in words, so I will not even try to do so. Just this much I can say: Only at the „documenta“ have I encountered something comparable till now.

After three days, sadly, I have to leave Paris. With a detour to Versailles I get on my way towards London. The trip to Calais and from there by ferry to Dover goes by without problems. Upon leaving the ferry my art object makes troubles again. I assume that the Diesel filter is blocked and that air has gotten into the pipes - a problem which I had repaired after the modern Grand Tour. I don't have time to go to a workshop to have it repaired. So I chug along with 80km/h. Every 15min the motor switches off. Thank God I can get it to start again after trying several times.

Until now the air in the Diesel pipes had only caused problems when driving faster than 60km/h. So I hope that somehow I can make it to New York. Shortly before midnight I reach the greater area of London. I have enough time left to take a shower, have something to eat and take a three-hour nap. Then I am back on my way. In order to exhibit my art object in London and take pictures of it, I have to use the early hours of morning. I have no choice.

### The Grand Tour to London

Shortly before 5am I reach the city center. Buckingham Palace, National Gallery, Houses of Parliament, Westminster Palace - these are the first places on my list for exhibiting my art object. Already at the very beginning I notice that the British police are a lot less tolerant towards my art object than the French police had been. As soon as I am seen at a prohibited place, I get a reprimand. The weather is not good either; it is cloudy and it's drizzling. Stressed out I go in search of a dry accommodation for my art object. After it stops raining I take a detour to Wembley. Back in London I get into a traffic jam which I use as a welcome place for an exhibition. The other car drivers show their interest in my art object. Their reactions are more reserved than those in other countries, but just as friendly. Also in England I get thumbs-up or an attentive hoot of the horn as feedback. Upon reaching Notting Hill, half a football team of 12-year-old boys comes running from a car: "This the coolest car I have ever seen!" A statement which I will hear over and over again in the next few weeks.

On the next morning, the second part of the photo-shooting takes place. I perceive an almost one-hour exhibition directly in front of the National Gallery as peak of my stay in London for the time being. I am really happy that the police do not take any notice of me. The Londoners, however, don't take notice of me either: 6am is just too early to reach people. So I make my way to further sights where I can take pictures with my art object. Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, St. Paul's Cathedral, The Shard – my once again functioning navigation system helps me a lot.

When crossing the Tower Bridge I take up position on the free walkway and enjoy the historic place for a while. Afterwards I decide to drive to Tate Modern in the hope of being able to exhibit my art object in front of the second famous museum, this time with a larger audience. After noticing that I can only reach the museum if crossing a small pedestrian bridge, I hesitate.



I decide to go into the museum and ask for a permit. The head of the museum whom I had informed of my trip before the Grand Tour is not in, so I have to get the permission of his deputy. But neither she herself, nor the head of security of the museum she called, are willing to give me the permit. The assistant tries to understand me, but she cannot agree to an exhibition, nor to a photo-shooting. And I? I try to understand her; she is not in the position to carry the responsibility. Back outside some tears trickle from my eyes.

Is it really possible that the exhibition or even just a photo-shooting in front of Tate Modern will be denied? This would be the only famous museum on my trip where I failed. Emotionally shaken I walk around the building in order to find a way. After 20 minutes I come back to my car, without success. There is just one way to get to Tate Modern – across the walkway. Once again I am challenged to put my passion behind my reasoning. But, I don't: With my hazard warning lights turned on I cross the bridge. The pedestrians readily make way for me, while they start taking pictures of my art object.

Shortly later I stand directly in front of Tate Modern and wait for the things to come. I have already taken a number of pictures when more and more visitors of the museum gather around my art object. The exhibition has started. And it is the same as on all public places before: The people are curious, they take pictures and give me many compliments. I enjoy the exhibition and make friends with Raul, a street musician from Portugal. When he hears my story he tells me that he has written a song for child soldiers. It is the most emotional moment of my exhibition that has already been lasting for three hours when he starts to sing the song. Soon after the last sound is to be heard, a good dozen of security- and police officials from Tate Modern come towards me.

They search my art object for explosives. I have to explain what I am doing. It is easy for me because I assume that they have already seen my prohibited exhibition for a while. Of course I apologize and point out how special my art project is. After a telling-off by the head of security I am lead away from the grounds by half a dozen of policemen. At the end I am sent on my way with a firm handshake and a blinking of the eyes by the head of security. My previous assumption that they had been observing me for a while was confirmed.

It is already evening when I set off to Dover. I have to go back to Calais. From there I want to travel to Belgium, then through the Netherlands back to Germany. I am under time pressure, so I drive through the night without stopping. Luckily the art object doesn't cause me any problems, so I reach the harbor in Bremerhaven in the afternoon. There I receive a pleasant message: The

container with my art object can really be booked onto the same cargo boat as the artist.

I am so happy. And I am even happier when I hear that the container will be stored on the floor of the ship, where the temperatures are quite bearable.

An hour before I check in on the ship I am sent the necessary papers from the American car insurance. At that moment I don't care about the still missing registration of art object and artist for the USA; even though when looking into the future this would still bring me lots of troubles and fines.

### The Grand Tour to New York

Two weeks later the time has come. My cargo boat has reached the harbor of New Jersey. Eight days later I receive my art object. The customs authority has allowed me to bring the car into the country without any problems. A small number of the gummy bears have changed – they have turned white. Probably this is due to the heat in the container while it was standing at the harbor waiting to be dealt with. These won't be the last visual changes, so they don't bother me. After driving for an hour I reach New York. After I discover the skyline of New York I get goose bumps; upon reaching the city I am overpowered by my feelings. Without a destination and disoriented I let myself be drifted through the streets. At once I notice that the appearance in New York will be more than the crowning glory of the visionary Grand Tour. The attention I get from the pedestrians is enormous.

Four weeks – that's how much time I have to show my art object. After that the visionary Grand Tour is over and I will travel back to Europe the same way I had come to the States. That was the plan.

On the first days I have problems exhibiting my art object. Almost everywhere it is forbidden to stop for even a few minutes. The few parking lots are occupied. The fines are harsh - \$185 for a normal parking sin is the minimum. A towed car with following trial is nothing extraordinary. The horror messages that I have heard about the strict actions taken by the New York police do not leave me indifferent.

A radical change of behavior takes place when I enter the prohibited zone of Ground Zero. Immediately a dozen of heavy-weighted policemen gather around me. They are cold, they want me to leave the place at once. Unexpectedly, however, they give me the chance to tell them my story. Afterwards their reactions change completely. I am allowed to stay, I am allowed to take pictures



of them together with my art object. For fun they stick a parking ticket on my window pane and put on the warning lights on two police cars. After 20 minutes they ask me to go. Their boss has given them orders to do so. At the end they encourage me to exhibit my art object everywhere, where it does not bother someone. And that's exactly what I do. Wherever I park my art object in the next few weeks, I get to feel the normal consequences of parking in prohibited places. Almost every day I am on tour for 10 hours: I exhibit my art object in famous places, stop spontaneously and lie on the floor in order to take pictures of it together with one of the most admirable skyscrapers. And nobody stops me. When I park it on a parking space in front of the UN reserved for diplomats and disappear within the German embassy for an hour, I am told afterwards that several policemen came without having it towed. A comment was: How can I give this beautiful car a ticket?

In 95 per cent of the cases I exhibit my car in prohibited places during the next few weeks. However, I receive only a single fine! The people of New York nor I can explain why this is so. All of New York is monitored by closed-circuit TV. I know that since being there I am officially being kept under surveillance. So I try to behave as well as I can. The fact that I become more known with my car and my art trip every day most probably helps a bit; of course my endless trust in God helps as well. When ABC reports about me in the news, police men come and talk to me. At times I get into trouble; about half a dozen times this happens. However, this is only the case when I am on my way in the greater area around New York. The trouble then is considerable: I am reproached for my missing registration and the consequently not-existent driving permit. Sometimes I get a fine or the demand not to move my car. Due to my persuasiveness and the mentioning that more than a million people have seen my art object, the fact that the Grand Tour is promoted on the webpages of the Foreign Office and the fact that even the UN is informed, I am successful in winning over even the strictest custodians of law.

I had planned to stay in New York for four weeks, but in the end I stayed for two months. The reactions of the people in New York are unbelievable. Every day I am showered with praise. It doesn't play a role where I park my car. Be it in Manhattan or in the Bronx, on Staten Island, in Queens or in Brooklyn; be it in places where I meet large crowds of people or in quiet side streets, be it rich or poor people of New York: Wherever I go, my art object is admired and photographed. It is given esteem that in my boldest dreams I could never have imagined.

After four weeks I have not reached the artistic aims of the visionary Grand Tour. It was the time when I had planned to finish the tour. But I cannot. The enthusiasm of the people prevents the planned end. An artist cannot wish for anything more than seeing happy people around his art object all the time and receiving compliments from them.

In the following weeks I try to bring the part of the story about the child soldiers more into the focus. I pursue offers of Late Night Shows, movie makers, UN employees, New York Times editors and TV channels just as much as suggestions by helpful pedestrians or employees of famous museums. Unfortunately I am not successful in getting the necessary attention for the story by the news. My personal wish, to be able to leave the art object in a famous museum in New York or Paris, is not fulfilled at the time. (New York or Paris because the people there showed such a great sympathy towards the art object that I never encountered anywhere else.)

After two months I finish the visionary Grand Tour overjoyed. At the beginning of October I sit on the airplane back to Europe and think about which event of the last month will stay in my memory as the most remarkable one.

Were it the happy faces, the spectacular places, the unbelievable reactions or the individual encounters I had? (A warm hug from a 4-year-old mongoloid girl and a special compliment by Paul McCartney remain in my memory on behalf of hundreds more.)

At the beginning I am surprised that an encounter with the proprietor of an art gallery, Janet Lehr, comes into my mind as the answer to my question. In her galleries the most significant contemporary artists of the last centuries can be found.

When I enter one of her galleries I meet her. I tell her that I am standing on the road with an art object, I give her my flyer which describes the Mercedes Trilogy as well as the historic story of the Grand Tour. I then ask her if she would have time to take a look at the art object. In a reserved manner she tells me that maybe in 10 minutes she would come out onto the road to have a look. When she comes outside her look hasn't changed. Almost fossilized she stands in front of the art-Mercedes, which shows its most attractive side due to the sunlight. I walk towards her and ask her if I can tell her the story of the Grand Tour. She indicates that she knows the historic Grand Tour and I am allowed to tell her something about my story. When I finish speaking she gives me the following response: „I am really impressed. What a story! Where did you get so



much passion. I am very sorry. This is not an artwork for a gallery. It's an artwork for a famous museum."

Mid November I travel to Bremerhaven, Germany. My art object has arrived there from New York a couple of days ago. It had changed a bit in New York. The heat had caused the gummy bears to melt in several places. When I arrive at the harbor I am encountered with an artistic earthquake. The art object had not been brought to a sheltered place after it was taken out of the cargo boat, even though this is what I had arranged for. It had been standing next to other vehicles on a parking lot for the last five days. The gummy bears are completely soaked. Some have taken the form of ice bears. A transparent layer of gelatin covers the whole art object.

Once again I go through the whole range of emotions and at the end I reach the conclusion that every change is part of the extraordinary story.

## **Final remarks:**

The Mercedes Trilogy as story of art is completed. With the Grand Tour of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a historic story, from the beginning of art and travelling, was transferred to today's time and retold. The fact that I have been successful in combining the modern and visionary of art and travelling with its history through my art object is, seen from an artistic view, the biggest success I could have had. The fact that the art object is still changing and developing reminds me that a last goal is still open: see epilogue.

When this is reached, the spiritual story will be completed as well.

People change, travelling changes, cars change, museums change, and art changes. Nothing persists. Hopefully, this will apply to those children, who have been bilked of a life in dignity, too. To them I'd like to dedicate this work of art.