The turn of the century is drawing closer. The world of science, politics and the arts respond to the beginning of the next millennium with a certain inner uneasiness, which goes along with new approaches, reorientations and an increased rate of variation in production, also in artistic production. Especially the artists' reactions to the fin-de-siècle mood are most productive, sensitive and unconstrained. Many art works of the 1990s are distinguished by the fact that no field, no media nor any context is excluded. Therefore by way of the fine arts we are able to enter a discourse which science or politics cannot provide in the same way.

Jens Geelhaar is an artist who has opted for an unusual and interdisciplinary way in his education. He has received his PhD in theoretical medicine and a fine arts diploma in "new artistic media." With the seriousness of his artistic work he contradicts an education and a way of working still specialised in different disciplines.

Rather than style-oriented Geelhaar works project-oriented. Artistic experimentation and the presentation of its result in the form of installations characterise his way of production. Central questions Jens Geelhaar asks are this: How can we store and preserve knowledge today? How is it possible to make experiences – that are in principle unobservable – visible in the field of fine arts? How and by which channels do we communicate today?

Geelhaar is curious enough to always utilise the latest technologies such as the internet and the world-wide transmission of live events by video. His working method is not playful, ironical or contra-inductive, like we can observe with many artists today, but analytical. Thus it seems logical that he does not accept ideological or aesthetic limitations in choosing his material. At the same time he does not repeat his topics nor resume earlier works of his. There is no such thing as a recognisable style, instead Geelhaar works in projects. A recognisable red thread through his work is to be found.
in his way of thinking and working. In the age of internet you can often hear of the interactivity of works of art, but most works produced within the new media are quasi inexist-ant without the active participation of the user; Jens Geelhaar's works, however, belong to an area bordering on this - as will be shown in two examples.

Part of the video installation "30 times one minute - encounters" (1993) is an iron partition with a built-in and surface treated glass plate. A small liquid crystal video projector throws faces of different sex and nationality onto the back of this plane. In the short span of one minute one tries to get an initial impression of each person's personality by simply watching the physiognomy and trying to memorise special features. Minimal gestures and the same remaining detail sup-port a concentrated watching. In front of the massive and cold steel wall there is a cozy easy chair: If we accept the invitation and sit down, our face is mirrored in the glass congruent with the projected face the other face on the glass. In a very subtle manner a contact between the two faces is established whereas actually it is the image of one face on the back and of the other on the front of the glass plate. At the same time one feels closeness and distance, identification and otherness. The superimposition of two individuals can be superficial but it can also lead to a better description of the other as well as of oneself. In this installation we keep a comfortable distance, just watching. Changing our position would subsequently change the proportion between the two faces.

In his work "The Archive" Jens Geelhaar also determines the precise position of the visitor. 96 archive-boxes from the University of Heidelberg are stacked up in two steel shelves. Originally they were used to hold doctoral theses, that is: papers, in which the authors have to prove their proficiency of independent scientific work. If one tries to recognise a logical order in the numbered boxes, it becomes clear that this is just an illusion and actually there is an awful disarray. At the same time, when moving closer to the boxes we recognise a faint rustle. It encourages us to draw even closer: some of the boxes contain small speakers murmuring hardly audible "critical quotes concerning the character of the truth of knowledge i.e. annotations by scientists who have changed our view of the world." As applies to the installation "30 times one minute - encounters" we can read and understand this work only if, in spite of a subjective closeness, we manage to obtain an objective distance to the subject-matter.

Hannelore Paflik-Huber, 1996
Enthalte dich der Bohnenspeisen
Hebe nicht auf, was zu Boden gefallen ist
Berühre keinen weißen Hahn
Brich das Brot nicht
Steige über keinen Zaun
Schüre das Feuer nicht mit dem Eisen
lB von keinem ganzen Laib Brot
Pflücke keine Blume von einem Kranz
Setze dich nicht auf Holmaße
IB von keinem Tierherzen
Wandere nicht auf der Landstraße
Laß keine Schwäne unter deinem Dach nisten
Wenn der Topf vom Feuer genommen ist, vertilge seine Spuren in der Asche, streiche sie glatt
Besieh dich nicht im Spiegel mit der Lampe daneben
Wenn du vom Lager aufstehst, rolle das Bettzeug zusammen und gleiche den Abdruck deines Leibes aus
(Russel)

Die Sphäre der Erde ist das Maß für alle anderen. Zeichne ein Dodekaeder um sie! Die diesem Dodekaeder umschriebene Sphäre ist die des Mars. Zeichne jetzt ein Tetraeder um die Marsphäre!
(Kepler, Mysterium Cosmographicum, Universitätsbibliothek, Budapest)