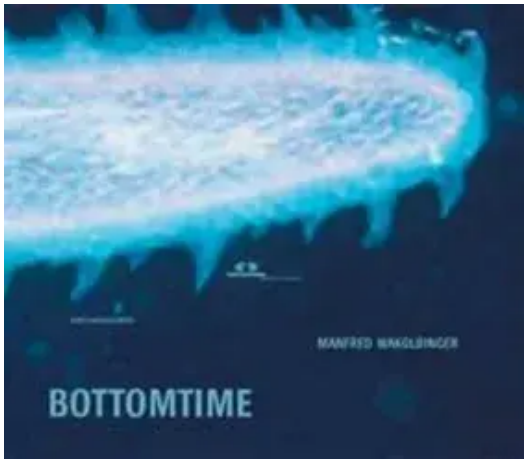
# Manfred Wakolbinger
# Bottomtime

Edited by Peter Noever, MAK Wien

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Texts by David Espinosa, Elisabeth Schlebrügge
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For many years, the austrian sculptor Manfred Wakolbinger has been working underwater, with the camera as a tool, in the Indian Ocean, in the south-east Asian seas and in the Pacific. Wakolbinger is also at work there as a sculptor and artist, with his eye for volume, space, material and colour. Wakolbinger creates pictures of the creatures and organisms—the fish, crab and smaller sea creatures which populate the sea close to the surface—in the very different spaces of their natural habitat, in their assimilation and complementarity which make complete sense in their circumstances but also appear hybrid and grotesque. Wakolbinger's eye settles on the transformations from inanimate structures to living organisms, in the diffuse area of underwater fauna, in which sexuality and singularity only first begin to differentiate.
However, if this position of the artist floating in a submarine microcosm is translated into categories of social life, Wakolbinger's anti-pathos becomes evident: in that he understands and shows that it is the cooperation, cohabitation, border crossings, mixings, parasitism, improvisation, role playing, mimetic talent and inventiveness of these creatures which bring alive and make up the wealth of this environment which begins just under the surface of the water.

*Bottomtime* in diving jargon, the total elapsed time from the beginning of a diver's descent to the beginning of a direct ascent to the surface.

This publication is published on the occasion of exhibition *Manfred Walkolbinger. Bottomtime* at the MAK Vienna, December 03, 2003 - February 22, 2004