
NOWISWERE

Contemporary Art Magazine
Issue Nr. 2 October 2008



NOWISWERE invites personalities to talk about their creativity with a subjective involvement. The passing of the 'now's and the accumulation of the recent 'now's does not only produce an urge to grasp and evaluate and understand but also to feel the unexpectability of the future. NOWISWERE aims to actively involve in the production of the 'now' through taking each now and then into account.

NOWISWERE is open for submissions. Please contact nowiswere@gmail.com

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THematics: hosting texts up to 1000 words or image material of four pages, focusing on a single theme.

EF Expecting Future: is a sub section of THematics, hosting texts pointing out possibilities of future and positioning the potentials of the to-come-true. As expecting future requires awareness of present, the section will be the gathering of the today's variety of practices, attitudes, tendencies...

AS Artist Specials: hosting evaluations on or interviews with artists.

CC Critics' Corner: hosting reviews on current exhibitions, performances, events, happenings...



Stefano Boeri's Bosco Verticale (copyright: Hines)

The schizophrenia of Stefano Boeri: ironic or pre-emptive?

Schizophrenia *ˌskɪtsəˈfrɛnēə*; *-ˈfrɛnēə* : a long-term mental disorder of a type involving a breakdown in the relation between thought, emotion, and behaviour, leading to faulty perception, inappropriate actions and feelings, withdrawal from reality and personal relationships into fantasy and delusion, and a sense of mental fragmentation.ⁱ

To dissipate any accusations of puerile *ad hominem* attack on the famous geopolitics theorist, I am here referring to a facetious remark, made during the talk given by Stefano Boeri at the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University, on his double practice as cultural practitioner and architectⁱⁱ. It is undoubtedly true that his position as a *Documenta 11*-architect-cum-artist-convert is susceptible to be regarded as a disciplinary hybrid: artist, architect, geopolitical thinker, urban theorist, curator of relational events, lecturer, et cetera. And yet, even the most light-hearted interpretation of the adjective 'schizophrenic' would cast a shadow on his persona. Why, then, such a severe self-portrait?

To shed some light on this puzzling expression, a context must be delineated. When he called his cultural and architectural behaviour as 'schizophrenic', he had been invited to Goldsmiths College to present the gamut of his most recent projects, from Multiplicityⁱⁱⁱ, to his role as editor of *Domus*, the Milanese historic magazine of theory, design and architecture. Describing his activity as a spatial and cultural practitioner, Boeri defined himself as 'a producer of inclusions'^{iv}: designing projects to foster links between themes and to override disciplinary borders.

The malleable material of cultural theories and geopolitical investigations, however, is required to yield its undefined edges when colliding with the solid precepts of architecture. As an architect, explained Boeri, one has to take clean-cut decisions: in lieu of expanding and exploring possibilities, one narrows them down and eventually chooses a single one, drawing a line where many could have been drawn. In this sense, he argues, the architect is necessarily a 'promoter of exclusion'^v, and in this, in a nutshell, lies the explanation grinningly given by Boeri of his 'schizophrenia'.

The allegedly insurmountable dichotomy between exclusion and inclusion, it should be said, was developed particularly in response to a question regarding his involvement with a self-organised art centre called the Isola Art Center (IAC), in Milan. The internationally renowned centre, recently invited by

ⁱ Source : Oxford American Dictionary.

ⁱⁱ Stefano Boeri, minute from Stefano Boeri's seminar On Architecture and Geopolitics, 13 June 2008, Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths College, London.

ⁱⁱⁱ See <http://www.multiplicity.it>

^{iv} Stefano Boeri, minute from Stefano Boeri's seminar On Architecture and Geopolitics.

^v Ibid.

Rirkrit Tiravanija to present its activity at the Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao, can be described as a collective artistic and social platform, centred around an occupied three-story ex-factory in the Isola neighbourhood, not far from the centre of the city.^{vi} The area the abandoned factory lay, left vacant since the Second World War, had been since the year 2000 subjected to a series of controversial development plans led by the city council that have been strongly opposed by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, together with several social and artistic collectives.

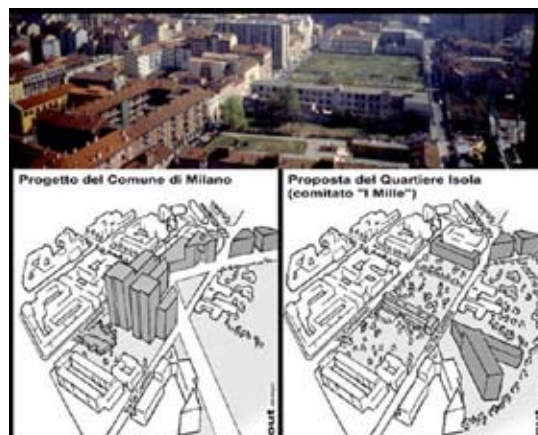
In the following years, the building and its possible future found themselves at the intersection of tangentially opposite desires: on one hand there was a heterogeneous multiplication of artistic, curatorial and spatial experiments and the strengthening of the neighbourhood's legal and political position against the city council. On the other, a mass-media campaign against these self-organised projects and a constant depiction of the occupied area as dangerous and characterised by drug dealing and petty criminality.

On national and regional newspapers, these attacks were accompanied by (strategically) green architectural renderings to champion the massive top-down regeneration plans elaborated by the council for the area, while the many architectural firms and estate agencies involved built even fancier and more glamorous projections of the future Isola, in what has been described by the philosopher Tiziana Villani as 'a mass media's fairytale utilised to mask particularly aggressive techniques of governance'.^{vii} For anyone with a flare for urban regeneration promotional videos, the presentation of Milano Porta Nuova – such is the final name of the maxiplan for the regeneration of the city – offers a particularly bewitching example^{viii}.

To return to Boeri, during the IAC's seven-year long artistic and social experiment, the architect/cultural practitioner could be spotted on the forefront of important debates on public vacant areas and on the possibility of their collectively produced functionality^{ix}. When in 2006 the reins of the development were finally taken by the real estate firm Hines, however, Boeri began to comply with the rhetorics of the council and of the new developer, and to attack the cultural experiments of the Isola and its role of amplifier for the inhabitant's active resistance to the development. From this period are dated articles published in the national newspaper *Repubblica*, in which Boeri confronted the 'professional

rhetoric of authenticity' of those who resisted the developments as a nothing more than a stubborn and anachronistic tirade against 'modernisation'^x.

It came to no surprise, therefore, that shortly after Hines made public its commission to the Boeri Studio to create a 'green project' on those controversial spaces. And so, a series of skyscrapers for luxury dwellings named 'Bosco Verticale' (Vertical Woods) are currently to be built in the place of the (now destroyed) factory and its two surrounding (now fenced off) public gardens.^{xi} As pointed out by Bert Theis of the IAC, Boeri was chosen for his left-wing allure, which enabled to capsize the Milanese professional's opinion about the Isola and its artistic programs^{xii}. Could then his 'schizophrenic' self-critique be a way of paying public penance for the inconsistency of his professional conduct in relation to his previous theoretical stance?



counter proposal (image on the right) of the inhabitant's associations + Isola Art Center

Yet, another, final, clue must be provided. The Isola Art Center and its parallel Office for Urban Transformation (O.U.T.) have based and are still basing their innovative commingling of art, counter-information and participatory urbanism on mechanisms and strategies of transversal participation. In the words of their founders, they are meant as platforms 'to provide the associations working in the Isola neighbourhood with events, images and counter representations, that can be helpful in communicating ongoing urban struggles and transformations. O.U.T. works in order to make possible a x '...the growing presence of inhabitants who accepted to pay a slightly higher price than the one paid by the old residents, to breath 'authenticity', has led to a rise in the renting and purchasing costs. This has created difficulties for the 'authentic' inhabitants (among them many truly indigenous craftsmen and artists) [...] not always the fear of 'modernisation' helps to defend us from speculations. Because not always the nostalgia for the 'authentic' helps to defend the interests of the weaker ones' (my translation). Stefano Boeri, 'Perché l'Isola non è autentica', *Repubblica*, Cronaca Milano, 24 February 2007.

xi See Stefano Boeri's Studio, <http://www.stefanoboeri.net/interface.html>

xii Bert Theis, 'Reds against the wall' - Bad News from Isola, Milan', *Transform*, 25 August 2008, <http://transform.eipcp.net/correspondence/1209130867>

vi See 'http://www.isolartcenter.org', events.

vii 'Une fable médiatique utilisée pour masquer des techniques de gouvernance particulièrement agressives', Tiziana Villani, 'Milan: Conflits autour de la requalification du quartier Isola Garibaldi', trans. by Irene D'Agostino, *Urbanisme*, 358, January/February 2008, p. 38.

viii See Hines' promotional video Milano Porta Nuova <http://www.porta-nuova.com/?id=82>

ix For instance, 10th April 2005, 'Empty public spaces?', public discussion, from the Isola Art Center archive, conferences.

bottom-up urban process, based on three basic principles: to understand, dream and transform the city.^{xiii}

image sources:
www.isolartcenter.org
www.archiportale.com/progetti/schedaprogetto.asp?preview=&IdProg=2125

When asked his opinion about these projects, Boeri candidly admitted how he had always found the connection between architecture and participation risible. There are technical knowledges that a non-professional inhabitant does not possess – such went his explanation – and that simply cannot be subject to a discussion with the average punter.

It is now clear how, from this standpoint, the necessary exclusions performed by any architectural practice become in this context exclusions from the knowledge that would be capable to challenge the existing powers and act towards the elaboration of a different mode of planning and thinking urban life. Addressing his alleged schizophrenia from the angle of power-knowledge struggle reveals something quite different: instead of an act of self-critique, Boeri's schizophrenia offers a pre-emptive excuse to play down inconsistencies and recede from an engagement with the implications of his professional stance.

Admitting a breakdown between thought and behaviour, Boeri is therefore attempting to nullify in advance any criticism, subtracting the very ground on which a critical address could take place. By reducing his practice to a non-debatable matter of pure technocracy, his theoretical involvement too cannot but be seen as reduced to a non-debatable form of marketing: producing fashionable inclusions as long as they do not affect the hard facts of a practice based on the foreclosure of any questioning of the existing power-knowledge dynamics. What was masked as an ironic self-critique was on the contrary an astute move to create a divide between theory and practice, in which neither of the two can be subjected to scrutiny.

The creation of a divide between theory and culture, on one hand, and a professional practice on the other, achieves the result to separate two aspects of one's professional stance that are not dissociable. Boeri as a theorist of spatial practices and geopolitics cannot be approached without acknowledging that he is, simultaneously, an architect. Furthermore, in his technocratic argument against participatory modalities of urban action and against the IAC, could be ultimately read an attack to the very power of knowledge and culture of changing dominant forms of thinking and living.

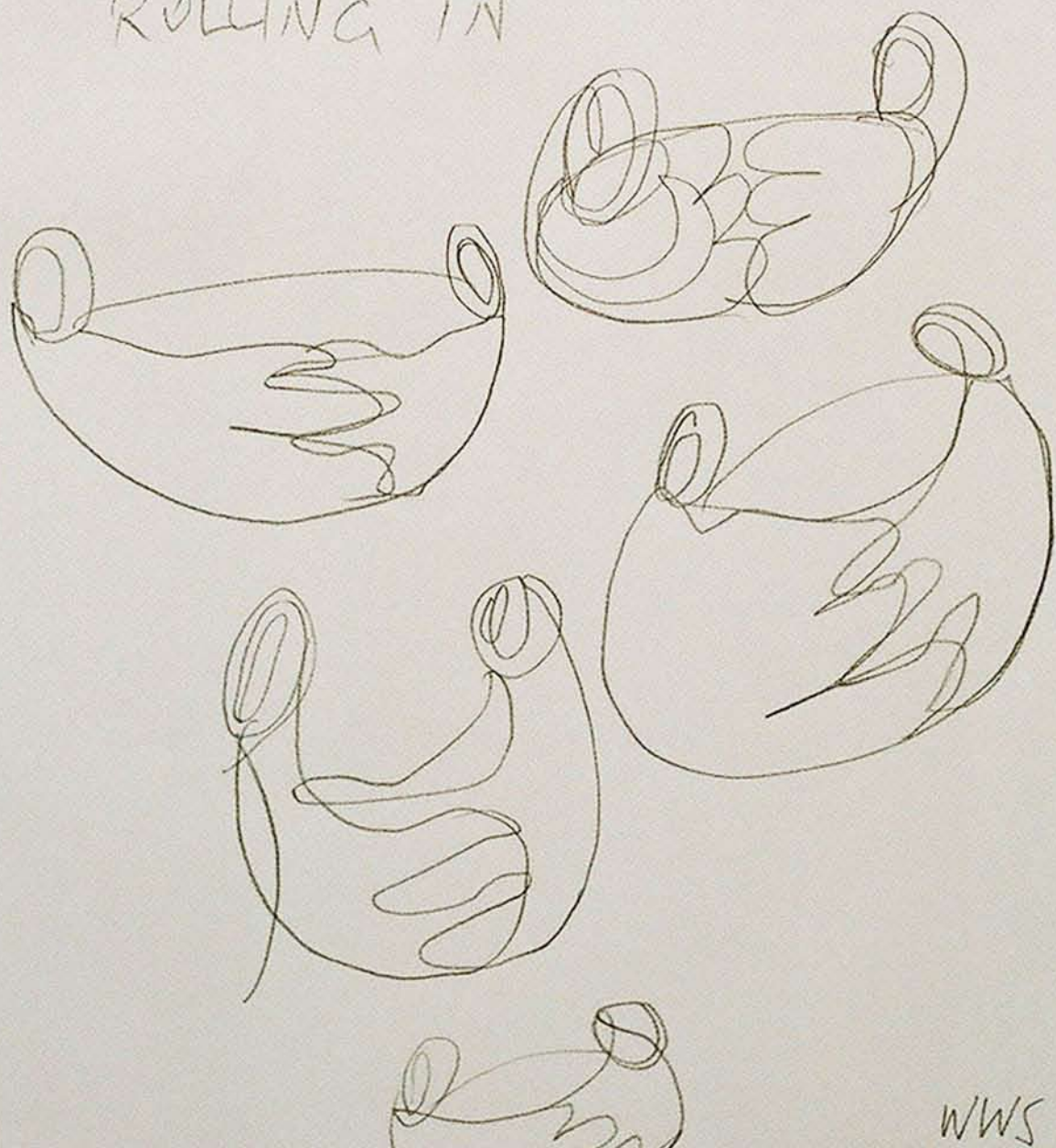
If in ancient times schizophrenics had to have a protector, that would be Janus, the pagan god of passages, doors and gates, usually represented as consisting of two faces pointing in opposite directions. Looking at once backward and forward, his view of reality could only be fragmented and delusional and the Romans, who had understood it well, assimilated his iconography to that of Hermes, the god of eloquence, skill and trading, but also of obscurity, lies and thieving. Janus/Hermes, god of diplomacy and double-talk, remains therefore an extremely ambiguous figure, whose interesting phrases and arguments the ancients recommended to consider only in the light of his actions.

xiii From the archive of the Isola Art Center, OUT, 2002.

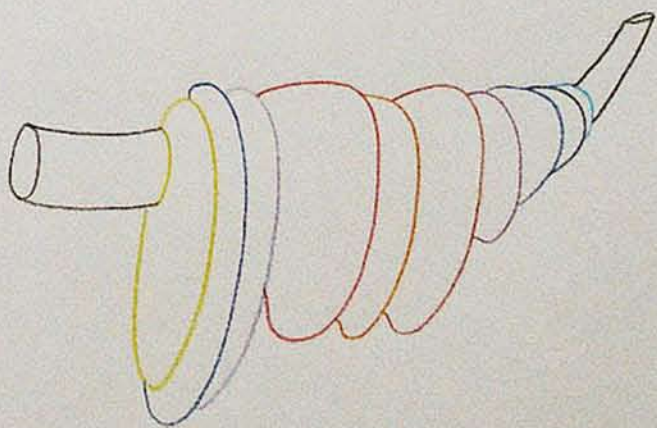
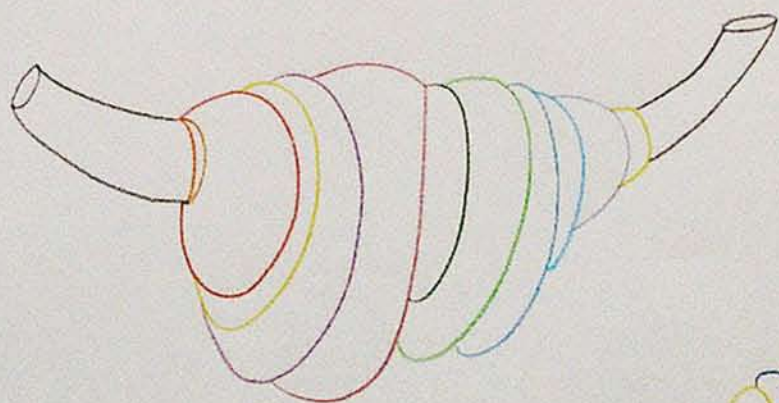
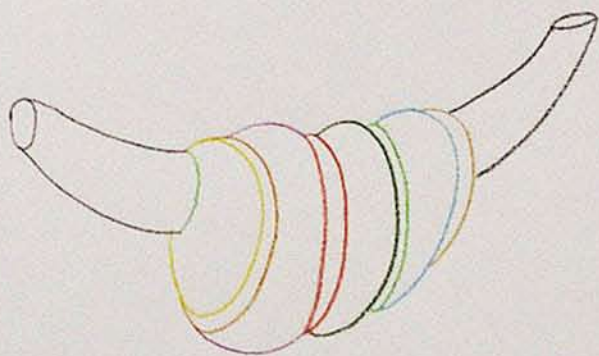
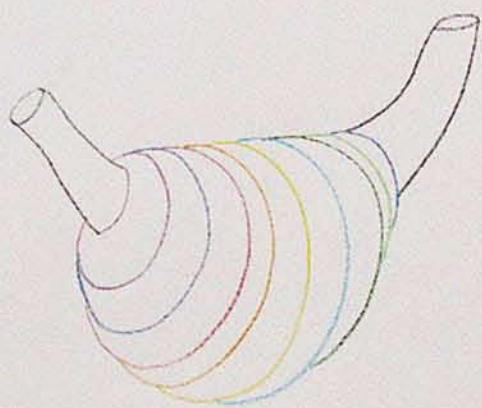
Nicole Miltner
words without songs, 02.05.08

CRYSTALLINE DUST
ON A SANDY BEACH
IS SOMETHING YOU CAN
HARDLY SEE

YOU TOOK ME BY SURPRISE
DID YOU NOTICE
UNCANNY GRIN
AND THE WORDS KEEP
ROLLING IN



WWS 2058



Nicole Miltner
she beat her into sleep 2, 12.05.08

T'ain't What You Do It's the Way That You Do - It

*It is the networking as such that is analytically most novel, rather than what people do with it...*ⁱ

Easily the most exciting spectacle of the thirty different exhibitions, projects and presentations at the recent festival New Life Berlin was the visible mutation of the online artists network 'wooloo.org' to real life, real time art gathering. Wooloo.org, an artist run online network, which provides support for both established and emerging artists by hosting individual profiles and actively seeking out collaborations with institutions and curators. They have, been based in Berlin at the New Life Shop in the Mitte gallery district since 2002, but have recently moved to Copenhagen. Coinciding with the final fortnight of the 5th Berlin Biennale in June 2008, 'New Life Berlin' was organised by directors of wooloo.org, Martin Rosengaard and Sixton Kai Nielsen, involving artists who were already 'nodes' in the online network and the event took place in various spaces across Berlin. Branded as 'participatory', the dynamism of such a large festival lay in the relationship between artists, participants and their online presences. Showcasing projects from both artistic and sociological starting points, 'New Life Berlin' used group participation to explore real-life cultural mobility as a development from an online 'community'. Members of wooloo.org could sign up online to take part in the majority of art projects on offer, as well as willing public participants.

And, I was one of the active and participating 'node' within the festival by taking part in 'Open Dialogues', which was an experimental critical writing project positioned in the swirling centre of all the 'New Life Berlin' activity. I was expected to write reviews of the various participatory projects for the online blog and for a variety of publications and I became increasingly tangled in the processes and mechanics of such an undertaking; disorientated by the turbulent passages between my role as a writer online, a dancing and singing participant in Franck Lebovici's 'Powell Opera', a more passive audience member of Marisa Olson's 'Assisted Living' and contributor to an internet based mapping of Berlin's cultural landscape by two anonymous American artists.

Such journeys between the virtual and real worlds are not new, but 'New Life Berlin's innovation lies in such contrastingly corporeal and situated practices to execute this transformation. Rosengaard and Nielsen chose the majority of the invited artists from their wooloo.org online profiles, which contained information suggesting the most bodily engaged and geographically focused project which could be re-contextualised into real-time and space, while maintaining the open source ethos of their online presence.

ⁱ Felix Stadler (2006) The Theory of the Network Society

Through the emphasis on participation, where members of the public or other 'nodes' in the network are necessary in order to complete the project, has demanded that the audiences become physically implicated in the artworks. I chanted, sang and almost danced when participating in Lebovici's mini-opera, which borrows from Cornelius Cardew's scratch orchestra and reframes a speech by Colin Powell. My throat was dry, my feet were sore and my stomach turned with the idea of singing for an audience – feelings that the non-participating public probably shared. And 'Fictive Days', a two-week long performance initiated by Sergio Zavallos involving 8 participants who live together as their chosen movie character. Zorba the Greek, Reagan from The Exorcist, Queen Elizabeth, and Diane Arbus breathed, ate and slept in a Berlin apartment with its doors wide open to the public. Like Lebovici's 'Powell Opera' the open house full of characters required online applications to participate. These projects, like many of the others skate in and out of cyberspace, extending the online network to a real life network specifically through the physicality of the projects and back again following the festival through documentation and dialogue.

The most distinctive feature of an online network such as wooloo.org is its bodiless and borderless existence. 'New Life Berlin' recognised this fact and only consolidated its dependence on such mechanisms through hosting projects that are born out of a virtual existence and manifested in the physical space. For instance, one of the projects in the event, '30 Days', consisted of the cartographic investigation of galleries and art spaces represented online (wooloo.org/30days) created through the input of information from Berlin residents and the anonymous cartographer's visits to each of the locations. Discussions with the tenants and residents of the spaces resulted in its own physical and virtual network system, feeding on exchanges of information but necessarily anchored to the physical geography of Berlin. Likewise, 'Cabas Unnos' by the collective No Fixed Abode involved the design and construction of a house in one of Berlin's public parks, was a physical manifestation of such online networking commenting specifically on Berlin's unique social geography through a tangible structure. Firmly situated in the capital, No Fixed Abode's project depended entirely on the manual labour of volunteers and participants.

The transposition of the language used online and when discussing open source methodology to real life situations in an art project can be a risk. For example, by writing this very article, I am guilty of focusing on the translation between the two realms of reality at the expense of the artworks themselves. As a result, I have become increasingly dismissive or critical of the artworks, which do not address New Life Berlin's negotiations of the various networks. Nonetheless, it is the exhibitions that do not engage with this discourse that fell flat. The immersive sound and visual



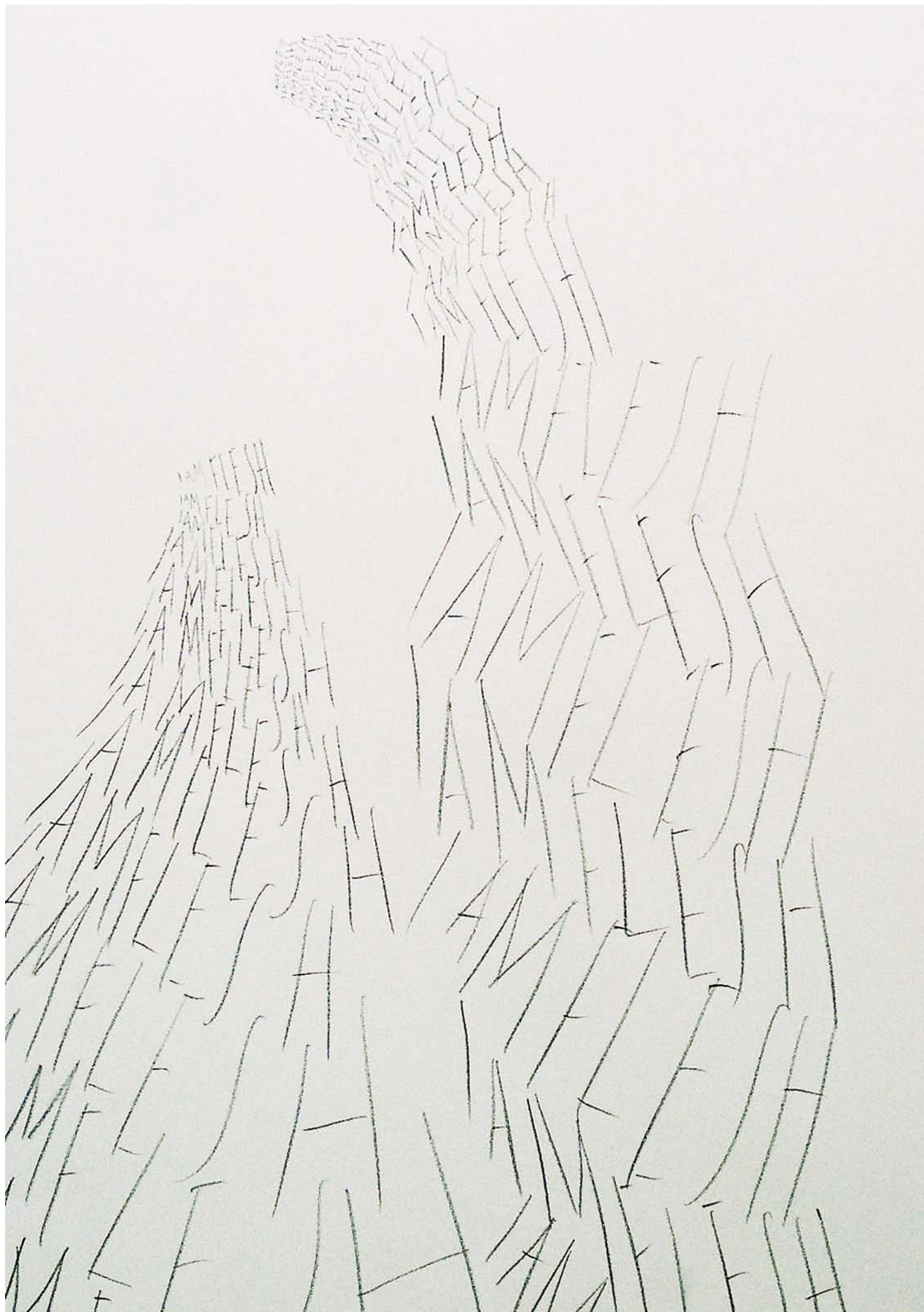
Image by Claire Louise Staunton

installation '+Trans' from artists Erika Matsunami & Antonis Anisseghos and Nathan Peter's 'Eminent Domain' sculpture using found billboard flyers merely served as a representation of the complexities involved rather than instigating any discussion. These projects along with a handful of others were dead-ended, offering little more than a formal deployment of relevant themes. It is unfair of me to dismiss it as poor art, but in relation to the rest of the festival's action it did not offer the potential to activate the tensions between the networking systems and the people who engage with it. Sliding in and out of the faceless social networking sites, 'New Life Berlin' risks bringing up very sticky questions about hierarchies and pretensions of open source activity in the real world. One of the organisers, Nielsen, refused to be labelled a curator, saying, 'we are not really interested in these definitions, what we are really interested in is people and humans'. The organiser's fluidity and his insistence on participation, created the illusion of a democratic and accessible projection of the flattened online network. However, when translated to the streets of Berlin, these utopian imperatives fell away and the levels of power were more exposed than ever, creating even more layers. Now, not only is there a receiving public, but room must be made for the participants, the invited critical writers and the online followers who are each literally led by the artist and their participatory works. Moreover, since the participants determine the outcome of each artwork, and the simultaneous blogged criticism could change a project's direction, the power structures that appear to have levelled out are reinforced and even heightened. An example of this included the controversial 'Flash Job' project by Per Traasdhall who provided work placements for youths in Berlin's poorest neighbourhood, under the auspice of art practice. The 'Open Dialogue' writers challenged these notions and provoked a reaction from Traasdhall who's approach to the project inevitably changed due to such immediate criticism and challenges to his work. It transpired that a number of participants withdrew from the project after feeling uncomfortable with the issues that had been publicly highlighted.

As one of the critical writers, I was in an unstable position between artists works and participants by having the responsibility of documenting the projects through text. But the best of this festival has been its instability, wherein each one of us (nodes) found ourselves performing the network. Everyone who participated during the two weeks in Berlin embodied the wooloo.org network and expanded it even further, bringing others into the fold. More than the particular completed artworks, what was most novel about the festival was its existence using the tools and frameworks set out by the online networks. And, although the 'New Life Berlin' galleries and spaces have shut their doors and the artists have returned to their homes around the world, the virtual festival will continue indefinitely.

This text was developed as part of the Open Dialogues: New Life Berlin critical writing initiative.
<http://www.wooloo.org/opendialogues>.

Nicole Miltner
I am flesh 4, 10.06.08





bankleer, *reale reste*, video 2006, videostill

Who's afraid of the Real?

The following essay is based on a presentation I gave at Tiroler K nstlerschaft in May 2008 in Innsbruck, Austria, at an event introducing the work of artist duo bankleerⁱ (Karin Kasb ck and Christoph Leitner). bankleer often integrates docu-fictional video work into spatial installations, which are typically not presented as self-contained pieces but rather become a process with different stages, involving audiences, their performance, and the reintegration of this performance into the next stage. Presentations like the one in Innsbruck should thus be considered part of the work, rather than about the work, as if there could be a clear division between the work and its presentation or the discourse it generates.

The performatively malleable and discourse-laden figure of the zombie has played a key role in bankleer's artistic practice since 2004 (with the project "raus aus der arbeit, rein mit der realit t" [*'out with work, in with reality'*]). Several of their works—most

i <http://bankleer.org>

recently 'Reale Reste' ('Real Remnants')—interpret the figure of the zombie as the symbolic embodiment of precarious and marginalized lives, as a residuum of the unredeemed potential of solidarity and empathy—and let it loose on the observers and on 'reality' itself.

A bankleer installation usually provides viewers with a number of possibilities for identification, some of which can also be contradictory. The dramaturgy of the video works often calls for the performers to act out these possibilities in an experimental and at times excessive way. Immersing yourself into the zombie persona and its associative field brings to the surface your own experiences of marginalization and the fear that goes with it. But the process of playing and interacting also taps into the suppressed potential of liberation: the intractable desire of the zombies, their moronic fearlessness, and the uncompromising way in which they embody their trauma and their stigma. In this way, artistic practice becomes the experimental ground for processes of self-empowerment.

Reality and the Real

We are surrounded by a world in which fear is collectivized

and commodified, in which fear and the feeling of powerlessness are made use of for monetary and political gain: 'precarity' as a politically desired and administrated uneasiness that ushered in a new level of exploitation; the criminalization of civil liberties in the name of their possible misuse; and an ever more open militarization of political conflicts along with an apparently ever greater acceptance of war as the 'most extreme' means available to 'militant democracies.'

In this political atmosphere, claims about reality come thick and fast, claims about the kind of threat we are facing and reassurances about the strength of the protecting power. A post-utopian 'realism' is propagated, for whom a political ethics is but unnecessary baggage in view of what has to be done. Those who demand 'painful cuts' in the social net, who utter out loud the 'hard truths' about twenty-first-century threats, are seen as troublesome but honest. Those who demand egalitarian and non-violent politics based on solidarity are considered naïve and are often seen as 'living in the past'—as if there was ever a time when we all lived together in peace. But was there? In light of the twentieth century it is hard to shake the question why only our fears have materialized on a global scale, and not our hopes, longings, and utopias. The question is perhaps naïve, but it remains unanswered.

So maybe there never was a happy time of freedom, trust, and solidarity. But how can we explain the nagging feeling that something is being irretrievably lost, right now? Maybe freedom and trust were 'real' in the Lacanian sense, which 'can only be retroactively construed' but nevertheless 'has to be presupposed in order to understand the present situation.'ⁱⁱ The 'return of the real' would then be connected with the hope for the return of what was lost, and resistance strengthened by an awareness of the enormity of the loss. Given the uncertainty about the historical status of freedom and loss this might not, however, mean a return from the past, but, as it were, from the future. This would give the idea of a 'return of the real' a utopian core.

The 'Return of the Real'

A closer look at the 'return of the real' and what has been written about it leaves a very ambivalent impression of what this 'real' could be. Sometimes the real is what was (or had to be) repressed or suppressed; sometimes the real seems as if it itself is what resists, or can become the support for a certain kind of resistance. Sometimes the 'return of the real' has the connotation of an awakening, of a salutary shock or reality check; at others the return of the real is spoken of

ii Slavoj Žižek, *Liebe dein Symptom wie dich selbst!*, Berlin, 1991, p. 129. – All Žižek quotes in this text are taken from this German-language publication by Merve, which differs significantly from the English-language *Enjoy your Symptom!*, available in several different editions. Unfortunately I was not able to locate the original quotes in the time available for writing this essay, which is why they were (re-)translated and the German source referenced throughout the text.

more in terms of resuscitation, a recovery of life and authenticity.

In his book *The Return of the Real*,ⁱⁱⁱ Hal Foster investigates the return of the real in art in the latter sense, as a kind of rerealization or resuscitation of the object. The life that returns to art is, however, a post-traumatic life, and the subject of this art speaks as a survivor of its own trauma. Foster considers the appearance of this post-traumatic subject both in art as well as in political discourse to be one of the core characteristics of postmodernism. Writing in 1996, he points out a marked tendency in contemporary culture to regard the traumatic subject, the excluded and the cast off, the 'abject,' as preordained carriers of truth. According to this view, if we want to know how things stand for us we must turn to the marginalized and their tortured bodies and learn to read them. Foster finds this quite convincing, and argues that the battered body is indeed a witness of a truth, and, in a certain way, is able to give testimony against power. But he also sees a danger in this identification of the wound with truth, which is that our political imagination will become impoverished to the point that we will only be able to distinguish two groups: the oppressed and the oppressors. Foster points to the risk that, in acts of symbolic self-mutilation and helpless solidarity, we will make ourselves into objects of oppression or imagine our own bodies as battered only to avoid being included among the oppressors.

For Lacan, who is frequently evoked when discussing the 'return of the real,' the Real is, as pointed out above, something that we can only ever construe retroactively but that has to be presupposed in order to understand our current situation. This strange displacement, this retroactive or external kind of understanding, makes the Real a perfect object for psychoanalysis. The Real is located in the unconscious; an experience, a trauma, an unfulfilled desire that persistently evades its representation in the symbolic order—in other words, its expression in speech. Lacan warns, however, against using terms like 'repression' or 'denial' as these are already inscribed with the analytic desire for interpretation and disclosure. He suggests instead thinking of the unconscious as subsisting 'in suspense in the area of the unborn,' suspended between real and 'unrealized.'^{iv}

In his *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Lacan makes an interesting comment about the traditional ambitions of his discipline: psychoanalysis is not interested in discovering why the daughter is silent, but in getting her to speak. Lacan concludes that the symptom is, first of all, silence. If the patient speaks, she is obviously cured of this symptom. However, Lacan reminds us, the patient's speech

iii Hal Foster, *The return of the real – The avant-garde at the turn of the century*, Cambridge/London (1996)

iv Cf. Jacques Lacan, *The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis*, London/New York (2004), p.23

says nothing about what led her to speak in the first place'. This stays somewhat in the dark, leading Lacan to wonder about this darkness and whether it is the task of analysis to illuminate it. Does the patient have a right to this darkness? Is it even a pathological condition? Lacan reminds the analyst that in the analytic situation this darkness is, in a certain way, aimed at him, the desire of the analyst.

If we were to generalize the complex relationship between analyst and patient as a paradigmatic power situation—which has perhaps been done far too lightly—, then this would suggest that the real may well be the position from which the subject organizes its relationship to power; and that power is particularly interested in communicating with the subject about the real because it is the paradoxical point where resistance and subjugation are closest together.

Repression and Resistance under Biopolitical Conditions

The notion of repression is as ambiguous as that of the real. The call for a return of the real in the service of resistance or emancipation draws on at least two meanings of the term repression: on the one hand repression in the *political* sense of suppression, in form of an excessive exercise of power or

of unacceptable constraints; on the other, repression in the *psychoanalytic* sense of a shift of what is experienced into the unconscious, in an ongoing process between forgetting and preservation as also surrounds the real.

While psychoanalysis considers repression to fulfill a stabilizing function in the formation of the subject, there seems little reason to question the call to resist political repression. And yet those whose strategies of anti-repressive resistance are accompanied by the rhetoric of liberation from constraint find themselves being reproached today for rebelling against the wrong concept of power. Political philosophers like Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben have developed a concept of power that administers and reproduces life rather than suppressing and constraining it. Foucault introduced the term 'biopower' to describe a form of power that is oriented towards and devoted, in a certain sense, to the life (bios) in its territory; that maintains an interested, parasitical relationship to this life because it reproduces itself in and through it. This does not mean, however, that biopower does not kill. But biopower kills *in order to* reproduce life. The antagonism between 'life and death,' between 'growth and decay,' is no longer the signifier for the supposedly sublime terror of nature. Biopolitics strives to make life and death into operative factors in the wielding of power. Under

v cf. Ibid. p.11



bankleer, reale reste, video 2006, videostill

biopolitical conditions—the conditions under which we live today according to Agamben—the death of some is offset against the life and survival of others.

The ‘big topics’ in today’s political and ethical discourse are *biopolitical* topics: increasingly scarce resources, rising prices for oil and milk, climate change and the resulting migration movements, China’s energy needs, emissions trading, aging populations (in rich countries), euthanasia and birth control, the building of dams requiring the forced resettlement of entire regions. Always at stake in these discussions is the global management of life options and conditions and, in the long-term, the probability and price of survival. Biopower strips the opposition between life and death of its existential meaning in subjective, lived experience: no longer is every single life a ‘life unto death,’ but life and death have become a fundamental distinguishing feature *within* the ‘human biomass.’ What this means in practice is that a few are sold the deluxe version of life, a life that is ever more ‘purified’ of death and mortality, while others are given a life that is entirely marked by death because it is transformed by biopower into the most efficient or the least disruptive—in any case the most optimized—kind of dying.

It is crucial that those of us engaged in resistant and emancipatory practice understand that the forms of repression have radically changed under the conditions of biopower, which maintains an extremely cunning relationship to life. If it is to avoid the risk of playing into the hands of power, the struggle against it can no longer be simply waged ‘against oppression’ or ‘for life.’ The tools of biopower have clearly become more flexible and far-reaching, allowing it to get so close to us that it can profit, at times, from our very practices of resistance. A response to this dilemma could be to turn toward and identify ourselves with the very things that seem to evade and oppose biopolitically optimized life. bankleer’s use of the figure of the zombie seems to me to follow such a strategy. In the videos and performances the actors transform themselves into the horrible phantasm of the living dead, of a life in death, with which biopower openly speculates—and discovers - in this very embodiment of the phantasm its potential for resistance. The emptiness in the gaze and gestures of the zombies and the impossibility of communicating with them signal the refusal of a life in a world where consumed ‘communication’ is an operative value in the calculations of power. Instead of lamenting their suffering and watching even this lament be interpreted in the interest of power or commodified by it, the zombies withdraw into silence, into a pure desire that refuses to bargain. They seem to know that the functionalization of desires is part of the core mechanism of capitalist economies. Their intractability is incommensurable with this reckoning. It is not hard to see in this taciturn obstinacy a kinship with Lacan’s ‘silence as symptom’: a silence that refers to something real the subject must not divulge under any circumstances and that the speech of the patient may conceal more than express.

The Real: The Hard Core of Enjoyment

Žižek, in reference to Lacan, describes ‘the logic of the symbolic process’ as ‘a loop, in which at a certain point (the ‘point de capiton’) there is a retroactive decision about the meaning of the preceding segments.’^{vi} This means that the symbolic order consists of a flexible, indeterminate totality of interdependencies. In periodic instances of closure, however, relations are temporarily fixed and the meaning and position of an individual object or experience in relation to all other objects and experiences is decided. Now the Real, as Žižek understands it from Lacan, defies this exchange of flexibility and fixation. ‘In the case of the Real this logic does not work. The Real stays in its place even if the ‘whole world falls apart.’’^{vii} The ‘Real’ here is a manifestation impervious to any form of relativization that will not budge from its spot, thus becoming a touchstone for the symbolic order (reality). The symbolic order stands or falls with the real, but never against it. This kind of persistence brings the zombies to mind again: a stubborn presence that will not negotiate and to which everyone else is accountable whether they like it or not. Such is what Lacan calls the ‘core of enjoyment,’ an enjoyment that ‘always returns regardless of all attempts to dissolve it by explicating or verbalizing its meaning’ (Žižek^{viii}). Lacan’s French term ‘jouissance’, with its double-meaning of enjoyment and (economic) gain, conveys this idea of a forced/forcing positivity quite precisely: the enjoyment stipulates a final inventory that *must* account for a ‘cum dividend’, a positive interest, *by any means*. The Real is this powerfully biased *must* - to which the symbolic order is left to pay heed to *by any means*.

The Real that returns; the dead that come back to life; zombies that embody the naked core of what we would never give up but do not want to become at any price. One begins to suspect that this kind of enjoyment as the real that ‘stays in its place even if the whole world falls apart’ is imbued with the possibility of resistance and an absolute will to live—but also with the danger that such unconditional enjoyment will extract its toll blindly. Even the most horrific experience of suffering can still appear as enjoyment or as the ‘lesser evil’ once the symbolic order has undergone a thorough revision. All desires, all technologies, all action, repression, rationalization, and justification have their starting point there: if life is not fundamentally aimed at a positive balance, an enjoyment (in which there is a certain degree of ‘idiocy,’ as Žižek rightly points out), then being loses its ‘meaning for itself,’ or, in other words, being becomes alienated from itself. Yet recognizing this real would be traumatic, as its completely independent ‘for-itselfness’ could scarcely be acknowledged as ‘belonging to me,’ let alone as the core that defines and in a certain sense determines me. Such recognition would inevitably destroy enjoyment - again by what would seem

vi Slavoj Žižek, op. cit., p. 19

vii Ibid.

viii Ibid. p.20

to be an alienation of the self from itself. This enjoyment, based upon which we organize our 'reality' and which it would be equally destructive to abandon as to fully recognize, is precisely what the technologies of biopower have set their sights on. This enjoyment, this real that we won't give up for anything, is in fact the very aspect of life that makes power into *biopower*: to preserve life means to preserve this enjoyment and to harness its intractability. This enjoyment becomes the focus of attention because it also marks the point where the absolute will to live can turn into an almost endless capacity for suffering.

The Spanner in the Works of Power

The power of some over others, exploitation, enslavement, and humiliation were most likely always a manipulative game with the will to live of the subjugated, with the intractability of bare life. The 'wise' ruler has to ask himself how much his subjects can tolerate, at what point the oppression and the suffering it causes destroys exploited life—or turns it into resistant life. The question of wise ruling already preoccupied Machiavelli, and in Hegel's famous struggle for recognition, the domination of the one by the other becomes established at the precise moment when the one fighter demonstrates his intractable devotion to life. He who wants to avoid death at all costs becomes the slave, the other the master. The calculations of power have always factored in the will to live of the exploited. Slavery was not abolished because the exploiting states had a moral change of heart, but because industrialization brought forth other forms of exploitation that were more profitable. Slavery was never actually abolished anyway. The insignia of slavery were not the handcuffs and mantraps put on display in today's historical museums, but the ledgers of the ship owners, businessmen, and landowners, and those are still with us. To point this out is to get at the core of all exploitation, at what makes the labor or the life of a person into the property or investment of another: power's grasp at intractable enjoyment, which under conditions of continuous exploitation is reduced to the intractability of bare life.

This extreme point of evading power's grasp at one's own enjoyment—of taking one's own life—remains, of course, a vanishing point for the majority of people. But it is precisely as just such a point that organizes the field from a distance that this conflict in the subject is the place from which the symbolic order is organized. The threat of this conflict is an effective instrument of discipline. It ensures that the symbolic order—the reality of language, exchange conditions, art, etc.—is set up so that it looks as if we are far away from this vanishing point where life touches death in the calculations of power. This, however, is the very point from which we must understand our present situation and organize our resistance.

Translated from German by Millay Hyatt

Proposal for an Imagined Artwork: Shaking a German hand and Shaking a Chinese hand

by Gernot Wieland

Dig a hole through the middle of the Earth. When one jumps into this hole he or she flies, for example, from Berlin to China. Naturally, with gravity, the speed of travel becomes enormous. However, as one flies past the centre of the Earth the speed naturally decreases, with gravity working in the other direction. The speed, according to the calculations published by the Freunde des Physikalischen Instituts, Würzburg, would be enough to allow one to fly out of the other side of the Earth by approximately 50 metres before gravity wins over speed and pulls the subject back in the original direction.

Through gravity a *Perpetuum Mobile* (perpetual motion) would be created; one could fly endlessly from one side to the other, coming out of each hole about 50 metres, flying back, etc. Obviously, two people could jump into the hole from either end, however, there would certainly be the very serious danger that both people would collide exactly in the centre, and the lives, as well as the speed of both, would be ended. Therefore, the hole should have a diameter of at least 15 metres, and it is surely possible that, through international contact, an understanding could be reached about who jumps in when on

which side. One would have to employ some kind of 'hole guard' to prevent people with suicidal tendencies, venturesome people, or people oriented contrary to the agreement between nations jumping into the hole recklessly.

THE BEGINNING :



Then one could proceed without problems and could call out a couple of words in the centre, like 'Hi, how are you?', or 'Have a nice trip!', or 'How's the weather?'. Considering the enormous velocity one should weigh the consequences beforehand, because the communication is probably very limited. As you shoot out at the end of the hole, which for the other side is nothing other than the beginning of the hole, one could for example, build up a 50m high tower on which one could shake hands with the per-

son flying out (and unfortunately, flying in again all too soon), or let him have a bite from a roll, or give him letters and goods of minor weight, which are strongly desired by the other side.

As we know, one flies 50m high when exiting the hole, and that, before flying back, there comes a short inert moment of standstill, known as The Apex Point (see fig. 2) which, it so happens, fosters communication very much. It is now easy to imagine care-free flying, from entrance-to-exit flying, out-of-pure-love-of-flying flying, and at the other end one could utter or push out a short, 'Hu-hu', or 'Hello'.

It would also be important to be clear about jumping head-first into the hole. Otherwise, one would come out of the hole 'feet-first', and then one supposes, if people, or an important delegation is waiting, the flying person could offer them, instead of their hand, only their foot, which would be seen in different cultures as impolite or probably as an insult, and would be anything other than conducive to the agreement between nations because it would not only cause irritation and annoyance, but additionally could possibly lead to diplomatic notes and complications.

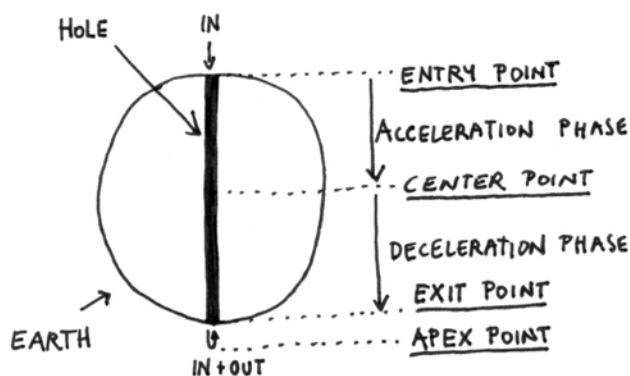
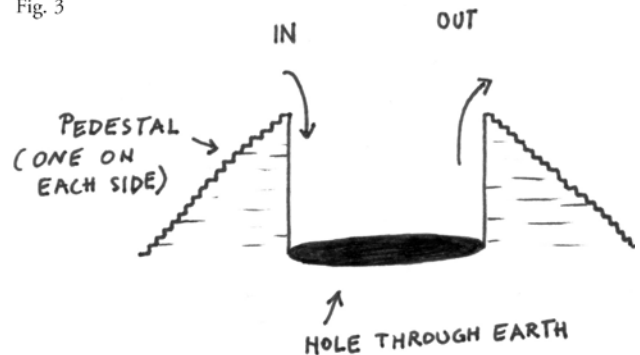


Fig. 2

Also, one should bear in mind that if you would transfer the end (or according to the outlook, the beginning), of the hole to Australia, the Kangaroos living in the wild would see someone jumping 50 metres high in front of their eyes. Perhaps these poor animals would get a shock or become depressed if they would see someone who unmistakably jumps higher than them. Animal psychology would become

an enormous field of activity, but also, probably, would experience values that the whole animal world would get a benefit from. Australia would lead in animal psychology for decades.

Fig. 3



Now, one could, as remarked above, fly endlessly forth and back. If one wants to step out after a journey forth and back, for the contentment of everybody, an exit possibility should be provided. Therefore, a 50m high pedestal installed next to the hole, and a team which catches one, is required. Here, as well, it is about trusting, because if one team forgets, or has a coffee break at the wrong time, the pitiable creature exiting the hole, would once again, embark in the other direction and would have to involuntarily work overtime (assuming it would be an employee and not somebody who jumps out of pure lust).

The required equipment, and here I come to the penultimate point, should be of good quality. One should think as follows: one races at incredible speed through a murky environment for about one and a half hours through a hole (if one doesn't get lost), to come out at the other end for an extraordinarily short moment, in relation to the whole trip. Boredom, or ennui maybe appears, and reading is, because of the murkiness, practically impossible. A sleeping pause is also not recommendable because one could oversleep, and if, as mentioned above, an important delegation welcomes you, one could as a sleeper equally affront them as with the feet-first. It would be inconceivable that somebody would appear in front of an important delegation feet-first and asleep. Serious and possibly fatal complications would be almost entirely unavoidable.

Epilogue

Given the nature of things, after some time the hole will be privatised. One would charge a fee for a jump, and full-time professional hole jumpers will be employed by firms to convey messages and goods. Most certainly, a competition will be advertised to replace the name 'hole-jumper' with a new name, a name radiating trust-worthiness and dynamism, and the anarchy of the early jump years would be forgotten (but, conversely, would be building upon that myth). Very certainly it will lead to Christo and Jeanne-Claude being commissioned to cover over the hole for a month, therefore demonstrate impressively the hole's enormous dynamism and powers of communication through its limited cessation of operation, because who would like to rush with a considerable velocity through a (probably pink-coloured) plastic sheet?





Susan Hiller, *Witness 2000* Installation shot (Photo:W.Wössner)

Susan Hiller

Outlaw Cowgirl and Other Works

Bawag Foundation,
Foundationsquartier Vienna
09.05-17.08.2008

Susan Hiller investigates visual phenomena that are rationally impossible to grasp and commonly devaluated as imagination, hallucination or even superstition. Yet for her those paranormal events are inherent to culture as they reveal fears and desires of society. Her conceptual cross-media works address the enigmatic, mysterious and uncanny as Hiller's recent show in the Foundationsquartier Vienna demonstrated.

Entering the exhibition, the viewer strolls along an installation of archival objects collated by Susan Hiller, titled *From the Freud Museum* (1992-1996). One encounters an assemblage of boxes protected by an illuminated showcase and filled with objects, such as water bottled in ancient tiny flacons, African miniature weapons or the German book on 'Jewish History and Literature' (1935) by Julius Höxter. Masques of Chinese, African and Tibetan origin and a text from the Winnebago 'Medicine Rite' are kept in a box titled 'Occult (hidden)' whereas another box named 'Heimlich (homely)' comprises a photocopy of a skeleton holding a scythe and shovel symbolising death, and a single record of Johnny Ray's 'Look Homeward, Angel'. The box 'Cowgirl (KOU' GURL)' contains a photograph of American outlaw Jennie Metcalf as well as two white milk-jugs in the form of cows. Relationships between these artefacts and materials arise although the items subsist as enigmatic fragments.

Susan Hiller collates these mysterious elements from all over the world and assembles them in a personal collection and archive, like trajectories of a travel log. The mode of representation of the archive (boxes) recalls museological methods but scrutinizes aspects of historiography. The nearby photographs show a part of Sigmund Freud's selected collection of curiosities. As Susan Hiller explains in the interview displayed in the show, Freud was a collector of art and antiquities and owned hundreds of tiny objects. Both look at the everyday and the unconsciousness through collecting, analysing, juxtaposing and presenting and Hiller points further towards the vicinity of surrealistic issues and working methods. As she points out: digging up (things) is a mode of operation in archaeology but also a process inherent to psychoanalyses, which brings us back to Freud.

Initially, this installation was entitled *At the Freud Museum* and first installed in a showcase at Freud's apartment, which later became the Freud Museum in London. This presentation demonstrated her conceptual way of inhabiting the historic museum additionally to the act of collecting. This strong serial working method with peculiarly charged objects nevertheless reveals the antagonism of irrationality and uncanniness. Freud in his essay 'The Uncanny' (1919) defines the uncanny as something familiar yet disconcerting trigger-

ing a feeling of being uncomfortable strange. Freud extends explanations, that the uncanny derived from an intellectual uncertainty and traces it as something, which is kept secretly in the homely and domestic, but also as insane or hysterical aspects in people's behaviour. These analyses led him to instances of animistic mental activities and magical powers and society's relation to dead bodies, revenants, and ghosts. Susan Hiller's archive orchestrates signifying objects of occultist rituals and visionary loaded items. They appear as a source of imagination enabling to pass the threshold to another dimension: a phantasmal interim. This archive circulates around items and alludes to disconcerting structures in other communities.

Witness, 2000 marks another instance of the enigmatic and mysterious. An endless number of small silver loudspeakers radially arranged on the ceiling generate an indefinable murmur that sounds the dark exhibition space. The centre of the installation is mysteriously illuminated by a beam of light, which reflects and amplifies the glittery effect of the loudspeaker cables. Their shadows recall an invasion of hovering objects. The transcendental ambience of *Witness* points also to the stories about UFO landings that sound the installation in a multitude of languages and voices. An archive informed by the stories of hundreds of witnesses who testify the supernal reality of UFO's and address issues beyond veracity and perception, blurring reality and fiction, the visual with the visionary. Images of paranormal events find their way through various canals into the everyday and affect patterns of perception. This imagery affects consciousness as well as the subconsciousness *Witness* hence not only requests one's own positioning within the installation, interacting with these multiple voices, but a finding of one's own voice.

Hiller's video *The Last Silent Movie* (2007), echoes a sequence of 25 voices and in doing so opens another of the artist's archives; sound recordings of extinct and endangered languages are assembled in a composition of voices subtitled in German and projected onto a black screen. It is not a 'silent' but rather a 'nonpictorial' movie. As the recordings date back to the 1930s the inclusion of dead people's voices triggers the idea of haunting ghosts. The notion of the 'cultural Other' to which Hiller's film clearly refers, has been introduced to signify and elaborate on processes of exclusion and subordination. Once this Other becomes voiceless, processes of disappearance commence and as the loss of a language embraces the loss of its speaker's knowledge, stories and understanding, their remaining traces become illegible and enigmatic. Yet Susan Hiller's archive transgresses modes of lamentation about this cultural tragedy by acting as a platform that gives voice. Trained as an anthropologist, Susan Hiller uses her artistic language to take cultural and political responsibility by addressing the marginal and the overlooked. Her conceptual artistic practice recalls Hal Foster's notion of the artist as ethnographer and its integral

¹ Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. London: Penguin Books, 2003 p 123-162, p. 125.



Susan Hiller, *From the Freud Museum*, 1991-96 Installation shot (Photo:W.Wössner)



Susan Hiller, *Outlaw Cowgirl*, 2004-05 Installation shot (Photo:W.Wössner)
image source: www.bawag-foundation.at

danger of 'ideological patronage.'ⁱⁱ The danger according to Foster stems from the split between the artist and the other, which consequently leads to the image of the artist as native informant. On the other side, her artistic practice of collecting, archiving, and exhibiting provides the recipient with tools for remembering and forgetting, reading and rereading, thinking and rethinking. Her rational methodology, the generated archive, with its implemented notion of the uncanny and mysterious, provide the viewer with instruments to include the irrational in the everyday, as a 'were of the now', without feeling the urge of its devaluation.

ii Foster, Hal. *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996 p. 173f.

SCHINDLERTRYANGELES

by Eldine Heep, Oona Peyrer-Heimstätt, and
Paul Peyrer-Heimstätt

Schindler House, Los Angeles 2008

Every Year, the Museum for Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna announces the international 'MAK Schindler Scholarship Program' at the Mackey Apartment House, Los Angeles. This stipend allows 8 young artists and architects, to spend 6 months in Los Angeles. During the residency, the servants are provided with a monthly pocket money as well as a quarter in one of the five museum-like 'Mackey Apartments' in Los Angeles. The stipend ends with an exhibition in the so called 'Kings Road House' or 'Schindler House' or 'MAK Center for Art and Architecture, L.A.', the former home of the Viennese architect Rudolf Schindler, which is now used as office and exhibition space of the American branch of the MAK Vienna. With 'schindlertryangeles' my brother Paul, his friend Eldine and myself won the scholarship this year.

'schindlertryangeles' is a geometrical re-interpretation of the Schindler House. Elements of the building - floor, wall, and ceiling - are transformed into segments of triangles, meaning they are forced into a triangulated raster. The procedure of 'triangulation' originally derives from geodesy and in this case describes a method, which imposes such a raster on an object or a landscape in order to analyse their surface. In this method, particularly distinctive points of an object (highs and lows) are sketched and then connected through straight lines. The result of the triangulation is an abstract description of the original object through triangular surfaces, which automatically arise after the connection of points with straight lines. 'schindlertryangeles' is an applied structure which subordinates the common morphology of the Schindler House to such an analytic raster, the triangulation. The structure serves as a measurement tool or as an analysis of the historically valuable architecture. In fact, the triangulated raster dilutes the view of the building. At this point, two different, interfering geometrical structures collide: the architectural proportions of the original house and the standardised raster imposed on it.

While designing the Kings Road House in 1921, Rudolf Schindler developed his own grid system, which henceforth he used as an orientation for the planning and implementation of his architectural projects.

The construction of the Kings Road House is based on a square 4-foot-module system. Breakdowns of $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of this system constitute all the measurements of the house. Hence, the supporting beams of the house run along the upper edge of the doors at 6 ft. Horizontal divisions below alter between 1 ft, 2 ft, and 4 ft. Wooden studs at intervals of 2 ft divide the building vertically. The concrete walls are 4 ft wide, etc.

Quoting Schindler:

I have found that the four-foot unit will satisfactorily fulfil all specifications outlined above. To show its application:

Human height = $1\frac{1}{2}$ units = 60

Standard door height = $1\frac{2}{3}$ units = 68

Standard room height = 2 units = 80

Fractions: $\frac{1}{2}$ units = 20

$\frac{1}{3}$ units = 16'

$\frac{1}{4}$ units = 12'

These three fractions plus small multiples of the four-foot unit will give all the dimensions necessary for the architect.

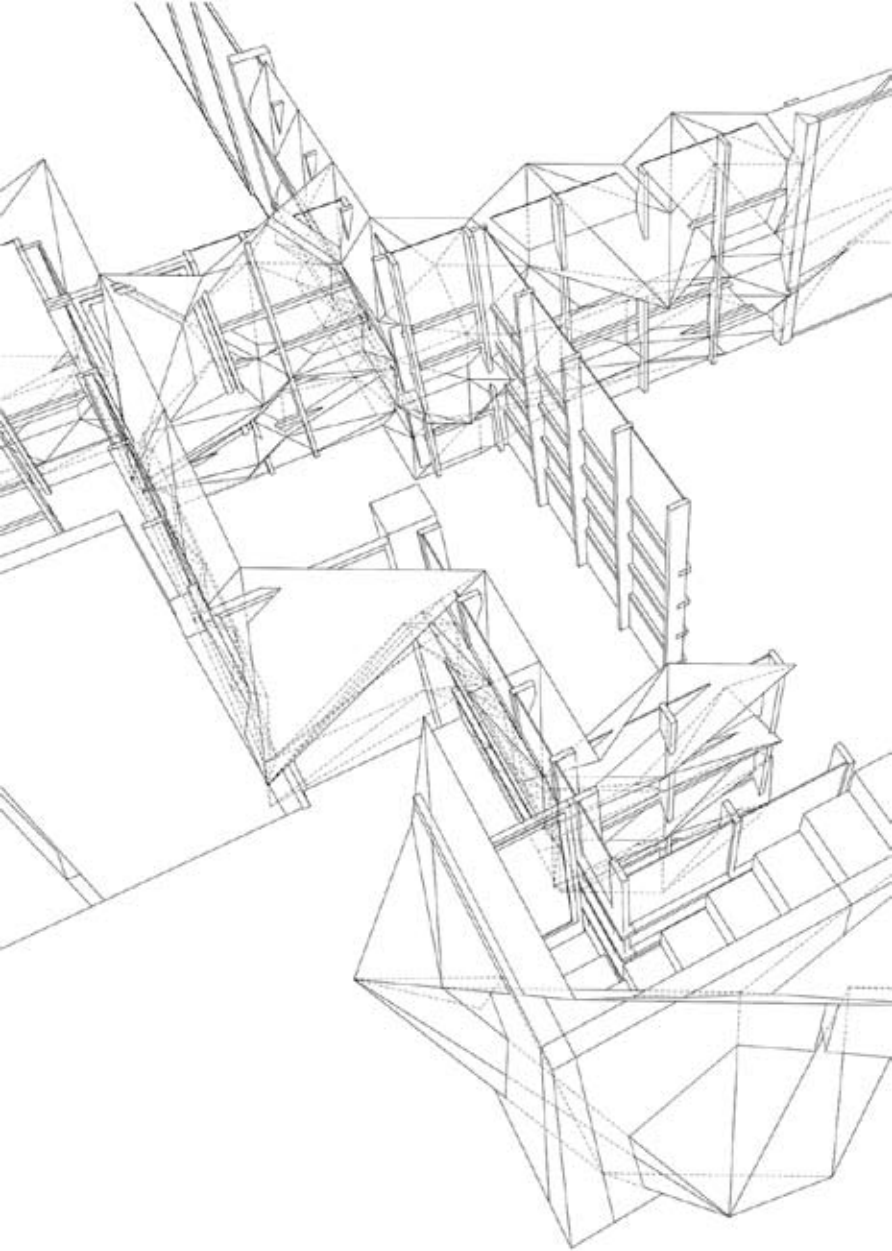
In his article 'Reference Frames in Space', published in 1946, Rudolf Schindler explains his standardised grid system, which he applied for 26 years. He suggests this system to be applied by all architects as an officially acknowledged instrument. This would facilitate the working method for the architect as well as for the craftsman, since tedious measuring processes would not be necessary anymore. The underlying pattern directs the architect through a predetermined rhythm of lengths, but does not constrain him in his spatial intentions and plans.ⁱ

'schindlertryangeles' derives from the idea of attaching a second, very different classification system, the triangulation, to this sophisticated and somewhat extreme pattern, the 4-foot-grid. An analysis of the Kings Road House is thereby less important than pointing out the endless possibilities of geometrical observations, which at the end just confuse the viewer more than they clarify things due to their multiplicity and contradictoriness.

i Schindler, R.M.: Reference Frames in Space. In: Architect and Engineer 165, 1946.

ii Only the architect devoid of feeling can fail to respond to the rhythmic undertone which the standard equal spacing of joists and studs gives the building, and only coarseness allows him to break that rhythm by introducing arbitrary unrelated dimensions into his layout. We human beings are unable to understand both time and space without a rhythmic key, which the architect should provide in his plans. Rhythm is a relationship. It cannot be achieved by an arithmetical repetition of the same part but must be maintained by related spacings of parts whether they are similar or not.

Schindler, R.M.: Reference Frames in Space. In: Architect and Engineer 165, 1946.



schindlertryangeles, 2008

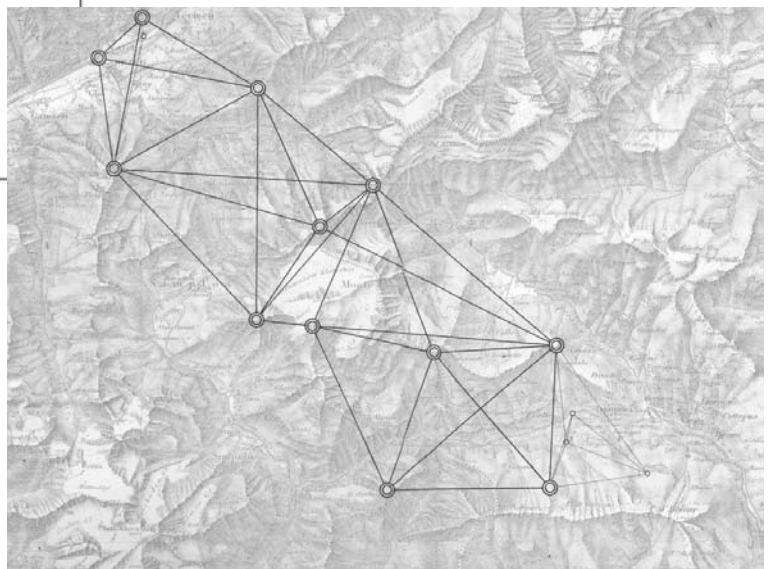


schindlertryangeles, 2008 installation shot

<p><i>A rod is 16½ feet.</i> <i>A chain is 66 feet or 4 rods.</i> <i>A mile is 320 rods, 80 chains or 5,280 ft.</i> <i>A square rod is 272¼ square feet.</i> <i>An acre contains 43,560 square feet.</i> <i>" " " 160 square rods.</i> <i>" " is about 208¼ feet square.</i> <i>" " is 8 rods wide by 20 rods long,</i> <i>or any two numbers (of rods) whose</i> <i>product is 160.</i> <i>25x125 feet equals .0717 of an acre.</i></p>		<p>80 rods.</p>	<p>10 chains.</p>	<p>320 ft.</p>	<p>8 acres. 8 acres.</p>
			<p>30 acres.</p>		<p>8 ch. 30 rods.</p>
				<p>up to 10 acres.</p>	<p>400 feet.</p>
		<p>80 acres.</p>	<p>660 feet.</p>	<p>10 chains.</p>	
			<p>40 acres.</p>		<p>80 rods.</p>
		<p>OF 30 chains.</p>	<p>1,320 feet.</p>		

Sectional Map of a Township with adjoining Sections.									
36	31	32	33	34	35	36	31		
1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6		
12	7	8	9	10	11	12	7		
13	18	17	16	15	14	13	18		
24	19	20	21	22	23	24	19		
25	30	29	28	27	26	25	30		
36	31	32	33	34	35	36	31		
1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6		

160 acres.
40 chains, 160 rods or 2,560 feet.



The possibility of approaching the house and to study it from various angles and resolutions confirms the suspicion that human perception can never apprehend a complete notion of reality. A limited visual field as well as the relative scale of contemplation overburdens the beholder while analysing the object since due to these restraints the study always remains insufficient. Thus, the interference of the triangulation on the one hand refuses the perfect legibility of the object which it structures; on the other hand it makes the legibility of its own characteristic possible: the infinity of analytic views, like the attempt and will of a comprehensive study of each object. The tension results from oscillating between a way of reading, which was once safe (when the house was still visible as a whole), but became uncertain after the interference of the subject, the triangulation, since from now on various possibilities of confrontation with the object became possible.

The application of the structure is especially interesting in an American city like L.A. as this is where grids are applied to city planning in particular.

Already at the time of occupation of the New World through Spanish conquerors from 1530 to 1600 A.D. the grid plan served as an obligatory basis for colonial town planning. The decree of the Royal Instrucción General from 1523 was later approved through the Leyes de los reinos de Indias (Laws of the Indies) in 1573. All Spanish towns dating back to the colonial times, therefore, are structured similarly: a square Plaza in the centre or at the shore and vertical as well as horizontal streets of houses going out from there which can be extended if necessary.ⁱⁱⁱ In 1785, a new concept for land surveying was introduced. It was heavily influenced by the Leyes de los Indias. The Land Ordinance, a rectangular grid system developed under Thomas Jefferson, now served as the legal basis for exploitation and parcelling of areas not yet surveyed. This was to guarantee controlled disposal of newly acquired land.^{iv} This law required the land to be divided into square townships of 36 square miles from north to south and from east to west. In 1812, the General Land Office was established. To this day, this institution measures and sells public lands according to the specifications of the Department of Internal Affairs.^v

iii After Aristotle it was Hippodamos of Miletus who applied the scheme of order for the first time, when he resurrected his hometown after its destruction by the Persians. The grid hereby served as a medium for idealistic city planning, which tried to display philosophical ideals directly through the layout of the city. The catholic kings of the 16th century followed this role model to ensure their respective acquisitions.

iv María Carolina Gierich – Carvajal: Die Rezeption der Antike in Spanisch-Amerika und ihre Bedeutung für die Staatsbildung
Geschichts- und Gesellschaftswissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Buenos Aires 2005

v Hans Boesch: Amerikanische Landschaft in: NGZ-Neujahrsblatt 1955, Nr. 157 > <http://www.ngzh.ch/Neuj1955.html>

To this date, the strict geometric partition of the land is displayed in the straight lines of borders.

Regardless of natural boundaries, it dissects the land into properties of equal size and form. Large real estate firms invest in suburban residential areas and create a carpet of homogeneous nucleous family houses, with which they cover the land.

In 1887, Harvey Wilcox drew a plan for part of a city, today known as Hollywood, which would determine the morphology of everything that would come after.

Through the rationality of geometry city planners were able to create intelligible plans on paper and assign so-called appropriate living space. This continues to control the way people lead their lives today.

Translation from German by Eldine Heep, Peter Rüscher

www.mak.at // www.makcenter.org

Sehgal versus Darwin On de-hermetization

ICA space versus Galapago Islands

After three years of journeying with a scientific expedition on HMS Beagle ship, Charles Darwin had alighted on the gloriously alive yet isolated islands that were known as Galapagos. He was particularly fascinated by the Galapagos birds: they were all finches, and yet all differed slightly from one another.

At Tino Sehgal's construct a child greets you. He shakes your hand and takes you into an empty white space. 'I am here to make this work a success' he says.

Engage / not to engage

Sehgal says he definitely has a lot of anxiety around this work. He thinks that this action/reaction model which he presents gives us something specific. It addresses and envelopes us. Art work is dependant on its involvement.

Am I here to make this work a failure or a success? Do I or does the artwork fail?
Hermetic museum environment Versus Galapagos Islands

Evolution is more apparent in places such as the Galapagos because the environment is stripped bare. Later the British cruise liner *Discovery* was responsible for a rat, litter and graffiti found on the Galapagos Islands after the liner's first visit last year.

Introduced species enter the Galapagos Islands or the surrounding marine reserve with the help, voluntarily or involuntarily, of humans. Invasive species are those introduced species that have a demonstrated negative impact on the ecosystems of Galapagos.

Sehgal seems to believe that because **response is a function of art**, it is of no real importance what that response happens to be.

Could I mention here attacking rats again? What are conventions of intervention?



Artist – viewer – player

Tino says there's no possibility not to act. Everything you do, even if it doesn't seem like acting, produces an effect.

How can the viewer break into the hermetic ecosystem of art environment?

There are many artists I respect. I must be influenced by all of them. I must be influenced by Picasso also although I've never really looked at his work.

Are Galapagos Islands real without an outside intervention?

No area on earth of comparable size has inspired more fundamental changes in man's perspective of himself and his environment than the Galapagos Islands.

So when you enter my work, you are also constructing it. I do think that the exhibition format is the most contemporary format we have, because it addresses the individual. No other ritual in any other culture addresses the individual.

Does Sehgal wonder where the limits of the museum space and his work are? And as well how does the individual choose to participate or not in your created situation?

Local tour operators were forced to land large boats on fragile shorelines because elderly cruise passengers were unable to scramble in and out of rubber dinghies.

Sehgal believes in evolution of needs saying: When, at other times, we focused on churches, today we focus on museums. Obviously, the museum must be the ritual space of our time.

As well as rats and insects, environmentalists say the *Discovery's* previous visit left the islands covered in litter, dropped by wealthy tourists who "have no idea where they are or the impact their visit may have." Graffiti was scrawled at the visitor centre and one passenger reportedly asked where the local Starbucks was.

Don't you think you create rules in rule-less situations? You show us modes of behavior in museums that can be disrupted?

We are now so civilized and so contained that we can actually afford ourselves the luxury of being loud and of having these kinds of experiences in a museum setting.

Rat flood on the islands did the same. Destruction caused by feral animals such as goats, pigs, cats and rats.

Hermetic life and actions in museum space.

If Sehgal wonders whether it is the museum that makes the work or the work that makes the museum, could rats and other intruders be the ones that make islands hermetic?

Just minutes after visitors scramble on to the black volcanic beach on Santiago Island in the Galapagos, they face vivid evidence of how humans have transformed this archipelago - even though the island is uninhabited. The weathered skull of a goat hangs on a tall pole, bearing witness to the many alien species that now threaten Charles Darwin's legacy.

Why was all that action in the white cube taken? Wasn't it rather an authoritarian nature of the whole scenario that was forcing to do something?

Manager of the *Discovery* tour declared that: All our people [passengers] are given a lecture before they go ashore and we know they pay attention to it.

image source: www.galapagos.org/photos

Martina Steckholzer

Das Schicksal des Unsichtbaren

First Manifesto

Misled by Deluded People?

Questioning the X

pages: 37, 39, 41 and 42

pigment on cotton

courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna



Martina Steckholzer

Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

September, 2008

If you could never see these paintings, how would I retell them to you? Perhaps by not offering you another image, but a feeling for the sense of it instead.

Imagine walking along a corridor by commuting from one side to the other: to your right a merry-go-round. To your left the grey and brown branches of a tree. You stop and turn. Walk back and look again: to your left the blue flag upon the whitish background. To your right red, green, and blue dots on silver. Some themes recur, while you walk through the hall, as if the merry-go-round would move around the viewer, while she tries to stabilize her position in the exhibition space. There appears the impression that one has seen this colour, outline, shape, structure before. Imagine the sense of déjà vu triggered by a familiar motif.

Martina Steckholzer's conceptual paintings transfer what is momentarily internationally displayed in form and content into fractured painterly gestures and surfaces. To look at her paintings means on the one hand to look at what is currently fetched from archives and studios for exhibitions in museums, galleries and fairs. On the other, it means that one is exposed to her subjective perception, which adapts the documented motives in an often brute exploration of painterly gesture.

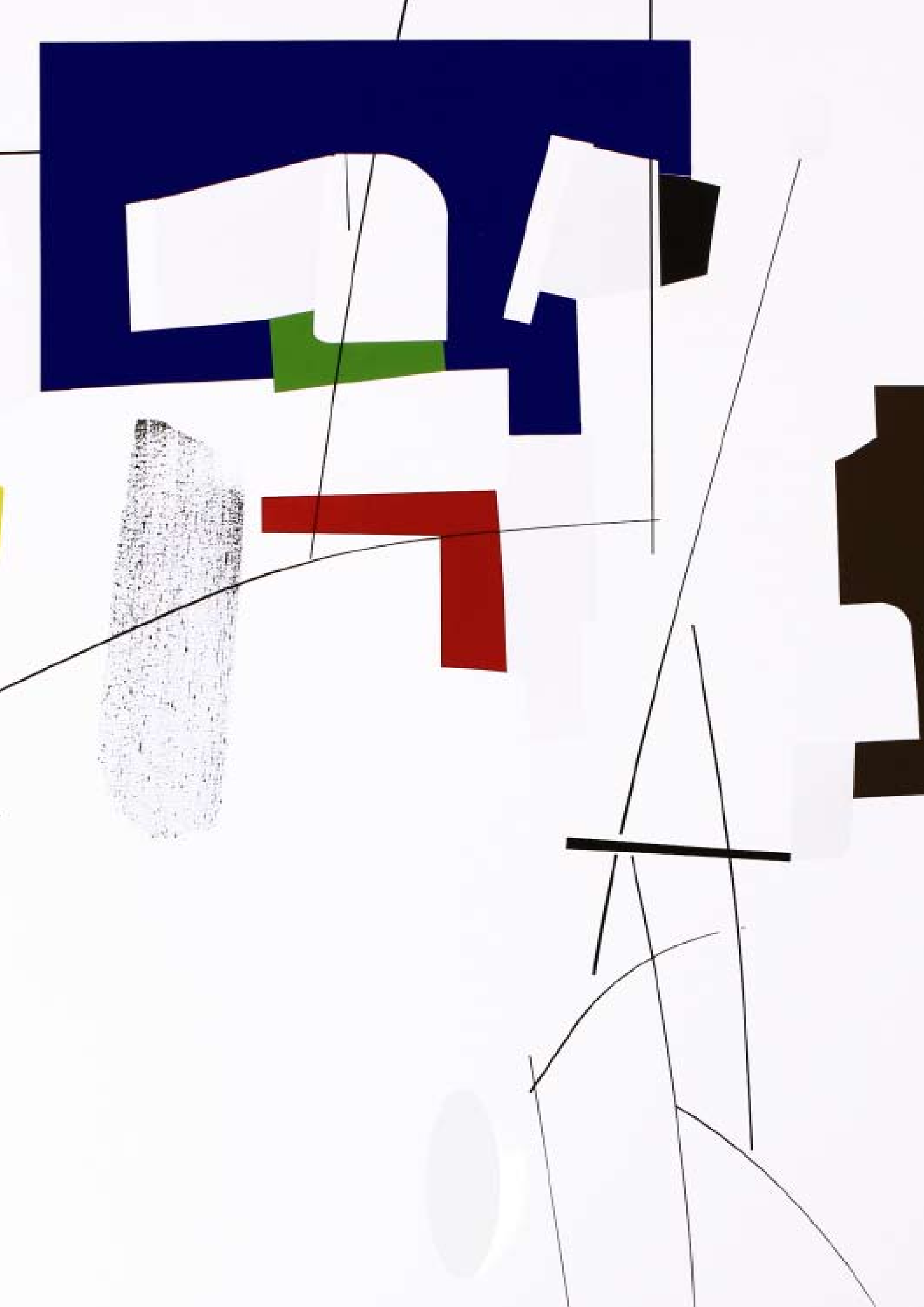
So, although a déjà vu effect might creep up in the viewer, there equally discloses an unmistakable void in the encounter with her paintings. No matter how fully painted a surface appears, or how fully painted it is discovered after zooming into its detailed structure: there is some frictional resistance in Steckholzer's way of painting, deriving from a dual approach. While her painting is on the one hand carefully planned it on the other suggests to have been left behind half open. This friction recurs not only in the single image space, but also in the serial. A seesaw opens up in a territory for perception that could verbally be expressed by one of the image titles: *I know that you know that I know*. While an acknowledgment of acknowledgment takes place between the two participants, it remains unclear what is actually known by the speaker.

Steckholzer argues that her paintings are not windows, functioning as facilitators, to look at something. As she approaches her motifs in a both documental and fictional mode of memorising, she renders them in perspective and detailed view almost unrecognisable. Consequently representation fails (as if it was meant to make smoothly legible the one represented).

This is primarily, because she is not so much interested to represent the motifs appropriated in a new setting, but to

use them and the display situation, in which the encounter with the object originally took place, as an informing impact to explore a new potentiality of conceptual painting.

Walk again, to your left and to your right. Have a close look or alternatively let your attention be diverted from what lies ahead of you. Watch me as I watch you watching me.







Europe – A Grand Narrative

I have been working on this text over and over and started to rewrite every time I felt the need of saying and stating more. Europe and Europeaness and to become a European, to be part of such gathering and to be a member of such state of belonging evoke many fields of understanding. This has been the challenge of this text and the excitement of the process.

Avrupa-lı-las-tı-r-abil-di-k-leri-m-iz-de-n-mi-sin-iz? (Are you one of among whom we were able to make to become European) is a collaborative work by Özlem Günyol and Mustafa Kunt, which has been realised as an installation in Frankfurt am Main, in 2007. The work's location was specially chosen by the artists to be nearby the train station, in an overly active and crowded area, populated by people from various countries and social backgrounds. The economic background similarity brings these groups to live together in the same quarter. The work was installed on a façade of a modernist building in that neighbourhood and was an attraction for the passer-bys especially for the Turkish (reading) community. The question asked in Turkish was posed to the Turkish community living in the area, hence specifying its subject matter or content of the piece. On the other hand, it could be grasped as some text related to Europe, or as an advertisement campaign. Günyol and Kunt have solved this confusion by placing the second part of the work in their solo exhibition 'Be-cause' at Basis accompanied by an explanatory text. The installation in Turkish displays the production of the word step by step, which becomes a sentence in its translation to other Latin based languages. The word in its syllables, which are actually the suffixes, proposes a timely question starting from the root of the word: Europe.

In Turkish the production of words is a process of construction. Starting with the source/root one can add annexes, suffixes and prefixes to produce new words in the related field of the root. For instance göz means eye and gözlük is produced by adding the '-lik' means glasses and gözlükçü is the person who produces glasses and trades them. The structure is also founded on putting the vowels in rhyme and in relation to the requirements of the procedure of producing words. In accordance with this example, Turkish enables to produce long words with annexes, suffixes and prefixes. Throughout elementary school years, one gets to learn how to read and write, how to make up words with suffixes and to deconstruct them into the smallest possible syllables or to add as many syllables as possible to make up a meaningful complex word. The competitions of making the longest word mostly end up with a word related to a country and its citizenship. Thus the longest possible word is mostly related with the norms of belonging and participation, on a nationalist level.* Günyol and Kunt take this word-play into account and position 'Europe', where the plain word game becomes a political output, and investigate the norms of belonging and participation as a European. Their positioning of the word-play is taken further to a continent rather than staying

with a country and its national aspects. The juxtaposition reflects on their background of receiving Western culture and becomes a projection of a grand narrative. Hence, they bring back the notion of grand narrative, announced today in its decay by post-modern discourse. Thus Günyol and Kunt mark the existence of such narratives and such scales of reception that are taking place today.

The piece produced in Turkish indicates certain tendencies that have taken place in Turkey about Europe and Western World. In other words, Turkey and its relation to modernity and Westernisation have been marked with European means of development and living. Turkey, founded in the 20th century, as a country with fresh breathes, with an urge to catch up with what is happening next, has been (mainly) fulfilled with tendencies of becoming a modern country. The questions of 'where to go' and 'what to follow' have shaped the development strategies from the beginning of its foundation, and Europe has been received as the source of development: cultural and technological castle of the new, the better, and the best of all that happens. The lateness of starting up anew, from the beginning of founding every single aspect of production and living has caused both a certain anxiety and excitement to evolve into something different. West became the object of desire for Turkey: it would always move further and stay ungraspable. Within the rapid urge of development in Turkey, came the melancholy of the train that is missed and will never be caught. (The feeling of sitting at the train station, looking after the missed train on its track...**) The national declaration of facing towards the West and employing the notions of Western development has resulted in the in-between state of belonging, where on the one side stood history and traditions and on the other side development and modernisation. Today, the pattern is prolonged by European Union and Turkey's candidate position. Since 2001, the integration of European requirements has reshaped the country and its legislation as well as its social structures. The change that is introduced as a must is on productive and challenging levels. The required change shall be a rapid and an effective one in order to fulfil the expectations of the capacity of 'self-realisation' in liberal sense. It is also a continuation of the modernist tendencies in so far as becoming a member of European Union will be the legalisation of Turkey's 'modern' social state. The membership will stand as a proof of eventually being there, having caught the train. The question is in which part of the train will Turkey be travelling and with what?

Yet, the modernisation strategies held in Turkey are related to today and to this work also by the fact that, the fragmented state of being has been marked by rebirth of grand narratives and in this particular case Europe and its aspects of belonging and defining the social sphere. Recently, the Lisbon treaty has marked the discussions about the European Union. The Lisbon treaty is mainly about producing a unified constitution that will be valid in all member countries of Europe with an assigned chairman in charge of the whole structure. This is still in discussion and has recently received



Images by Ozlem Gunyol & Mustafa Kunt

a rejection from Ireland. Acceptance is still unclear but if so it will be a redefinition of the unification and togetherness. The effects of the unification will possibly lead to more of a standardisation of living styles and normalisation of rituals and customs of each minority and majority groups. If we define society in the realms of minority and majority and encapsulate the norms of regulation, the following stage will be a homogenous society where minorities are integrated into a normality.

Hence, what has become of Europe today is not what it has resembled in the 80's or in neither the 70's nor 60's. Europe, with its union, tending to have a strong political stance in the world politics is employing norms of hygienisation, normalisation and othering. The policies of standardising the living, controlling the social behaviour and solidifying the borders have been shaping the conditions of being a citizen of a European country. The economic and social flow is defined in narrower terms, every day. The other becomes the excluded, the untouched and unrelated. In other words, the other becomes the outsider who shall stay outside. The exclusion of variety and difference increases with the rising of the right-wing governments and nationalist anthems. Europe, a fortress of its own, is being guarded by conservatism and dismissal. The question of investigating participation in such a context: Are you one of the among whom we were able to make to become European? is not only positioning the notion of nation in a continent-base but also the remarkable aspects of that nation, of that citizenship.

Günyol and Kunt's question investigates the change that has taken place throughout the years of living in Europe, being part of a western civilisation. The 'becoming'*** marks

alteration, a differing of what one was and what one has become. The over signified Western civilisation and Europeaness is indicated by its contemporary state in the eye of the beholder: The people who have been living in Europe, in this case in Germany for almost 50 years, and have been experiencing what the people they left behind (in Turkey) are longing for. And what is the real picture? Are you, could you become European? Could that process be managed well and what does it mean? Where does it stand? Where will it lead us? Will there be a 'we' that is based on autonomous participation? Can we imagine that 'we'? What will the future society be like? Are you/will you become one of them? Could you be managed to become normal? How will that feel? How does it feel now?

*For instance, Czech Republic is the country with the longest name in Turkish, and is the most regarded longest word with syllables when made into 'are you among the ones who we were able to make to become Czech'.

** Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar has keyed the term 'missed train' in regard to the contemporary conditions of 50's Turkey. Tanpınar was one of the influencing prominent writers in Turkey.

*** The wording of becoming is used in reference to the conceptualisation of Gilles Deleuze. For Deleuze becoming is a continuous ontological procedure where the real and the construction of real is in a state of flux, or differentiation. In this perspective I claim that, the Europeanification of Europe is being defined by the continuous introduction of concepts of social aspects in order to perform the desired entity.

Avrupa-lı-laş-tı-r-abil-di-k-leri-m-i-z-de-n-mi-sin-iz ?

europa

europa

become europa

he/she became europa

make him/her europa

be able to make him/her europa

he/she was able to make him/her europa

we were able to make him/her europa

the ones they were able to make europa

the ones I was able to make europa

the ones I was able to make europa (in accusative form)

the ones we were able to make europa

also the ones we were able to make europa

from the ones we were able to make europa

is she/he from the ones we were able to make europa?

are you from the ones we were able to make europa ? (singular)

are you from the ones we were able to make europa ? (plural)

Art in Armenia, between survival and expansion

A group of young curators from all over the world came together in Yerevan for two weeks in late July and the first few days of August 2008. For the third time, AICA-Armenia (International Association of Art Critics) hosted the International Summer Seminars for Art Curators with quite an intense program of seminars, workshops and presentations under the general title Post-Socialism and Media Condition: Strategies of Representation. As one of the participants of the seminars, I find it hard to be able to summarize or give the highlights of these two weeks, not only because of the wide range of issues discussed and different practices of artists and art institutions we have been introduced to, but also the whole experience of being in Armenia, a country on the east of Turkey, with a peculiar history that has strong unresolved conflicts and connections with Turkey and a culture both very familiar and also very different to its culture where I come from. Given the physical conditions we have encountered during our stay, together with the hot summer days of Yerevan and language barriers in daily life, the journey sometimes became an issue of survival we had to ride out. Nevertheless the experience was worth it. The seminars focused on the issues of art and representation in Post-Socialist conditions since the early 1990s, mainly during lectures by Russian curator and critic Olesya Turkina who discussed significant artists and exhibitions such as *After the Wall*, *Russia!*, *Dream Factory of Communism*, *Moscow-Berlin* as examples of artistic strategies and attempts of rethinking the recent past, analysing the ideology and its relation to art and everyday life after the collapse of Grand Narratives. With this background information and the situation in Armenia itself, a former republic of the Soviet Union, the seminar program was functioning more like a space for a group of people to come together and reflect on recent art practices while providing them a different context to see things differently than their usual circumstances. The intensive daily program of the school was supplemented by visits to art institutions, galleries and artist studios in Yerevan and presentations by Armenian artists, representatives of art institutions. As a small country suffering from economic difficulties, there is no government support for contemporary art, while the diaspora seems to be a big force behind the art scene. The population of Armenia is around 3 million as opposed to 8 million of diaspora living in different parts of the world. As in many other sectors of the economy, diaspora is also an important source of support and investment in art. The recent initiative for the establishment of The Gerard L. Cafesjian Museum of Art is the biggest art investment made so far. It will be constructed on the upper end of the Cascades, a monumental Soviet structure built in the 1970s as a propaganda of Soviet ideology rising on a hill overlooking the city of Yerevan. Unfinished at its time, now

this structure is privately owned and about to become the venue for The Cafesjian Center for the Arts and the museum which will be constructed on the hill as an extension of the Cascades. With a specially designed building, the Cafesjian Museum will be the home to Gerard L. Cafesjian Collection of Art which features mainly famous western artists of the modern periods and also present various large scale travelling exhibitions. The museum, ambitious to bring the best of the world to Armenia and become the center for art for the surrounding region, will however become an attractive ostentatious place for art while promising no real connections with the local art scene in Yerevan. Ironically, the museum will dominantly rise over the city against the view of mount Ararat, the symbol of Armenia, a living memory and source of inspiration for Armenians of all generations. Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art is another institution founded and run by diaspora Armenians since 1992. Operating now as a private foundation, the ACCEA mostly represents Armenian artists and is responsible for Armenian participation in the Venice Biennial. The huge exhibition space in its current building has a great potential for various art events and exhibitions. When we visited the gallery, the exhibition *Portrait in Between Modernism and Innovation* was on, presenting a selection of works by 19 Armenian artists working in old and new media from the 90s to recent years. The exhibition was a little bit confusing with its ambitious title and the selected works, yet was a nice introduction to Armenian art and the different artistic strategies against recent political and social events. Use of body and self image, a rather uneasy, disturbed mood and highly political direct statements were common characteristics of the works. The driving force of the Armenian art scene on the other hand, mainly comes from some small independent local initiatives like AICA Armenia, the organizer of this seminar program. There are attempts of having a more critical approach to local conditions and art practices as well as more connections with the international art world. Gyumri Biennial, started by a group of independent artists and already celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2008, is the oldest biennial in the ex Soviet Union territory and the biggest art event in Armenia. While the capital city Yerevan functions also as the main center for art in Armenia, Gyumri, the second largest city that is 6-7 times smaller than Yerevan, strives to regain its role as the cultural center that it used to have before the earthquake in 1988 which destroyed all industry and soviet buildings taking lives of 25.000 people. Our visit to Gyumri was short but enough to realise the difficulties of organising an international biennial in a city that still suffers from the consequences of the earthquake with very little infrastructure, no resource and spaces for art and artists. Still a few initiatives are struggling to survive, such as the 5th Floor Alternative Art Group or Studio 15, a small space -as I remember one of the metallic bungalows called domiks given to people who lost their homes in the earthquake - where a group of artists come together to discuss or do

collaborative works. In such a context the fact that 5th Gyumri Biennial could host 199 participants from 20 countries in 2006, looks promising for bringing in the possibilities of further contacts and interaction with the international art scene, which is very important especially for an isolated place such as Armenia that has closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan, and with its other two neighbours Iran and Georgia where the situation looks difficult at the moment. Utopiana Association is an active organization in Yerevan organizing exhibitions, seminars, and collaborative projects with artists mainly on gender and identity related issues. In the house that Utopiana shares with Women's Research Center, we were introduced to the works of WOW (Women Oriented Women) Collective of lesbian, straight and bisexual women artists and activists working mainly on the issues of queer women and their experiences. The first exhibition of the WOW group was opened in the garden of the same house on the 2nd of August. Coming to you not to be with you as part of an ongoing project Self-Mapping: Queering the City. The exhibition presented a variety of works including photographs, videos, painting and installation. Rather an exploration of the self, and self within the city through a look of queer women, the exhibition looked more like a small presentation of a bigger process of researching and discussion of the queer agenda in Yerevan. Yet the Utopiana Association and WOW group were impressive in their activeness and enthusiasm about bringing new, hardly discussed issues in the Armenian agenda. Personally, the most surprising issue that I encountered in Armenia was the strong connections with the past, be it the strong memory of the lost homeland after 1915, or the Soviet past, or many

other pieces of history that was not easy to grasp in such a short stay. Though as an outsider it was really difficult to relate to, this made me think that in Armenia history is more like an unresolved issue, even a burden that everyone has to struggle with, rather than an experience to gain from, something to carry on into the future. This was also visible in many artist works; even the 6th Gyumri Biennial's theme Transformations of History or Parallel Histories curated by the artist Azad Sargsyan suggests this kind of a concern for the past. What WOW suggested on the other hand was more about today, a different reading of the present and imagining possible ways of changing it into the future. Walking around Yerevan, one can easily see how the city is still struggling to adapt to the new economy. Recently constructed Northern Avenue happens to be part of the original plan of the city in early 20th century by architect Alexander Tamanyan, yet creates a sense of alienation with its tall empty buildings with shops already taken by big names of fashion industry creating a big contrast with the nearby old neighbourhoods and poor districts on the outskirts. It is also the venue for protests of a political event in March 2008 when 10 people were killed by the police at a demonstration against the elections that brought the current president and the Republican Party in power. It is where post Soviet economy and politics come into the arena. From these high rise structures of this highly commercial street my mind jumps again to the Cafesjian Museum which will soon rise over the city. It seems there is still a lot to think on art's survival strategies in Armenia. As the Russian critic and curator Victor Misiano suggests art will have to exist "without a system".



image by Rana Ozturk

