

ARTLABORATORYBERLIN

About us:

ART LABORATORY BERLIN, a non-profit organisation, was founded in Autumn 2006 as Art Laboratory Berlin e.V. by an international team of art historians and artists. As a non-commercial art space, ART LABORATORY BERLIN was established as a platform for projects concentrating on the border between visual arts and related artistic and scholarly fields.

The main focus of interest is the exhibition and placement of contemporary visual art that interacts with other creative areas, already realized in such exhibition series as "Art and Music", "Art and Text", "Art and Science" and "Art and Law". Each of these points of interaction is represented by a series of three or four diverse exhibitions. Our goal is to explore the manifold approaches of interaction and interconnection between these genres.

ART LABORATORY BERLIN is also interested in supporting contact between artists and the public as part of our exhibitions. To improve a better understanding of emerging and experimental art, we include public discussions with artists and curators. Additionally our program provides lectures, film screenings, curator's talks, and workshops.

ART LABORATORY BERLIN is currently run by Christian de Lutz and Regine Rapp.
For more information please contact [**presse@artlaboratory-berlin.org**](mailto:presse@artlaboratory-berlin.org)

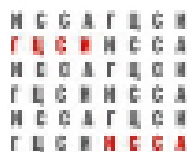
The current directors of Art Laboratory Berlin are:

Christian de Lutz, visual artist from New York, working in photography, new media, video and installation. His artworks deal with social, political and cultural themes, particularly in Europe, and especially the themes of migration and cultural borderlines. He has collaborated with artists and institutions in Germany, Spain and Southeast Europe as well as exhibiting in Europe, the USA and Japan.

Regine Rapp is an art historian and curator, with specific research in 20th and 21st century art – installation art, artist books and art & science collaborations. She worked as Assistant Professor for Art History at the Burg Giebichenstein Art Academy Halle until 2013. She is co-director of Art Laboratory Berlin (co-founded in 2006) and has curated over 30 shows (e.g. Time and Technology), published several books and developed several international conferences: *Sol LeWitt_Symposium* (2011), *Synaesthesia. Discussing a phenomenon in the arts, humanities and (neuro-)science* (2013). Her new publication *[macro]biologies & [micro]biologies. Art and the Biological Sublime in the 21st Century* (2015) reflects theoretically on the 2013-15 programme.

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28.11.2009 - 07.02.2010

Art and Law IV

Creative Rights. On Appropriation, Copyright and Copyleft

The exhibiton investigates questions concerning the use, re-use and mis-use of images and information in the contemporary art world from artistic, legal, political and philosophical viewpoints, with artworks by Azin Feizabadi, Gilbert & George, Christian de Lutz, and the curatorial collective Triple Candie. Additionally there is the Creative Rights Library with documentation on Shepard Fairey vs AP, Richard Prince vs Patrick Cariou, Creative Commons, The Fair Use Projekt, Piratpartiet, etc.

Azin Feizabadi, Gilbert & George, Christian de Lutz, Triple Candie



Azin Feizabadi



Christian de Lutz



Workshop with Andreas Lichtenhahn



Creative Rights Library, Shepard Fairey (background)

Art and Law IV

Creative Rights. On Appropriation, Copyright and Copyleft

The exhibition Creative Rights. On Appropriation, Copyright and Copyleft investigates questions concerning the use, re-use and misuse of images and information in the contemporary art world from artistic, legal, political and philosophical viewpoints.

Since the late 1970s appropriation of images and information by such artists as Sherrie Levine and Richard Prince has become a common and accepted technique, part and parcel of postmodernism's critical approach. Indeed it follows a tradition that goes back through pop art and nouveau réalisme to Dada and cubist collage. Not without ethical, aesthetic and legal controversy, a number of law cases involving appropriation seems to have increased in recent years involving artists such as Jeff Koons, Richard Prince and Shepard Fairey.

The exhibition Creative Rights consists of three parts: The exhibition with four artistic positions, the Creative Rights Library with extensive material on the presented artists and other recent law cases as well as a workshop on the theme of copyright.

The exhibition shows four positions offering unique views on appropriation, fair use (a term defining legal use of images outside of copyright restrictions) and 'copyleft' (the decision of the artist to forego the protections of copyright).

Triple Candie (curatorial duo Shelly Bancroft and Peter Nesbett) provoked controversy in 2006 with their exhibition David Hammons: The Unauthorized Retrospective in which they exhibited color and black and white copies from books, brochures, catalogues and websites documenting the work of the American artist David Hammons. The resulting exhibition, part of which is on display in Creative Rights as a curatorial quotation, cast a unique critical light on both Hammons work and art world traditions, and was both highly praised and criticised.

Repetitions-Revolutions-Rituals by the Iranian-German artist Azin Feizabadi documents a project started by the artist in 2004 when he sprayed an image of a woman in a headscarf using a stencil throughout the Kreuzberg district of Berlin. The work was initially an homage to his mother, the artist Farkhondeh Shahroudi, who as an 18 year old during the Iranian Revolution, sprayed left wing graffiti in Tehran. In 2006 the German glossy newsweekly Focus used a photograph of the image for its cover, with the words 'The Multi-cultural Lie' stamped over it. Feizabadi has chosen to 're-appropriate' the image by signing the magazine and displaying it as an artwork. His accompanying text contrasts the work's original context with the magazine's altered (and in the artist's view mis) use of the image. The work also refers to the fact that German copyright law allows use of images from the public space regardless to the original artist's wishes or intent (as part of the so called 'panorama freedom' clause).

Christian de Lutz's work The Copyright Piece (2009) situates itself on the border between infringement and fair use, making reference to this legal gray area, as well as functioning as a critique of both the current financial and art markets. The artwork consists of a CD with a sound piece which the artist created by substantially altering a piece of music. In addition to the CD there is an artist text and a contract, which offers the work, at no cost, to a collector who will then assume all rights (and attendant responsibilities, 'legal and otherwise') to the work, with a provision licensing back limited exhibition usage by the artist. This contract replaces capital with risk, a nod to the current financial crisis.

Planed (2007) by Gilbert & George, the Italian-British artist duo, is featured in the exhibition as an example of 'copyleft', a chosen alternative to traditional copyright. The artists offered the work as 9 files for download, in cooperation with the BBC and Guardian newspaper. The work was offered for free to the general public, without any stated restrictions.

In addition to the exhibition there is the Creative Rights Library, a collection of articles, manifestos and documents covering a number of topics pertaining to copyright and 'copyleft'.

It features two current cases of artists in copyright disputes. The American artist Shepard Fairey, known for his now famous Obama campaign posters, is currently in a legal dispute with the Associated Press (AP). Both the artist and the AP recognize that the image Fairey used for the posters was based on photographs taken by an AP photographer. The dispute is whether Fairey's usage, altered and in a new context is covered by 'fair use' provisions. The other case is that between Richard Prince and the photographer Patrick Cariou. Richard Prince, long famous for his appropriations of 'Marlboro cowboys' and biker magazine 'girlfriends', used photographs from Cariou's book Yes Rasta in his recent series of collages 'Canal Zone'. Earlier this year Cariou filed a lawsuit for copyright infringement.

Additionally the library will have materials on the artists in the exhibition as well as material on both US and German copyright law, Creative Commons, the Stanford University Fair Use Project as well as

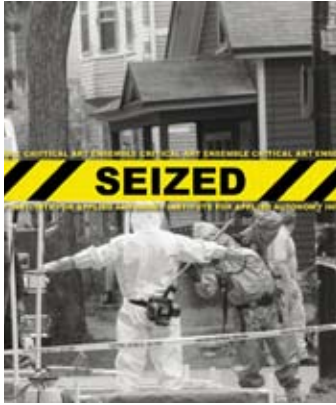


Triple Candie

material on both US and German copyright law, Creative Commons, the Stanford University Fair Use Project as well as the Swedish and German Pirate Parties. The goal is to provide a wide range of information and viewpoints on the topics involved.

As a third part of Creative Rights on Saturday, 28 November at 3 PM Art Laboratory Berlin will also present a workshop on Copyright and Related Themes for Artists, Musicians, Filmmakers and other Creative Professionals, in German, with the Berlin based lawyer Andreas Lichtenhahn.

Regine Rapp



02.10.2009 - 15.11.2009
Art and Law III
SEIZED.
Critical Art Ensemble &
Institute for Applied Autonomy

The exhibition Seized documents the FBI raid on the house of CAE member Prof. Steve Kurtz in May 2004, following the death of his wife Hope. In the weeks prior to the raid Steve and Hope Kurtz had been preparing for an exhibition examining GM agriculture at Mass. MOCA.



Art and Law III

SEIZED.

Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) & Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA)



Art Laboratory Berlin is pleased to announce the exhibition *Seized* (October 3 – November 15, 2009) by Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) and the Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA) as the third part of our series *Art and Law*:

The opening of our exhibition *SEIZED* takes place in an artistically and politically frenetic time. Berlin has just been energized by the Artforum and other art fairs, we are asked to elect a new Bundestag (national elections are taking place) and the public ceremonies of the German Unification Day are upcoming. Our project fits into this area of tension: As an art exhibition it brings up questions about artistic freedom of expression and governmental repression, reflects about the interdependency between politics and business and presents artistic strategies, which try to undercut this. America, country of freedom, was the setting for the events which underlie this exhibition. It shows that it is not self-evident for artists, even in a democracy, to criticize the structures of power and to publicly take a firm stand.

The exhibition *SEIZED* deals with the FBI raid on the home of CAE member and art professor Steve Kurtz in Spring 2004 and the four year law case that followed. In May 2004 Steve's wife Hope died entirely unexpectedly because of an undiagnosed heart defect. Emergency responders from the Fire Department who answered Kurtz's call saw a chemistry laboratory, which was part of preparations for an upcoming show, in the couple's house. The Fire Department found this suspicious and informed the FBI. During the three-day-raid the authorities not only confiscated Kurtz's computers, archives, artworks and a set of books he was using for research on his upcoming book project, but also his wife's corpse. Steve himself was interrogated for 22 hours with the aim of charging him with "bioterrorism" and even murder. Later the charges were changed to "wire and mail fraud", which finally, in 2008, was dropped due to all evidence of a crime being "insufficient on its face." In their installation *Body of Evidence* the artists turn the perpetrator-victim-relationship upside-down. As the FBI had stolen their artistic material, they, in return, confiscated the debris left behind on Steve Kurtz's lawn by the FBI agents - pizza boxes, Gatorade bottles, hazmat suits and biological sample bags, as well as written notes and a single cigar butt. The exhibition's curators Regine Rapp and Christian de Lutz write about this in the exhibition catalogue:

„The display of the notes and papers which the federal agents wrote during their raid resembles a strategy of counter-appropriation in which CAE and IAA convert those objects left behind as "evidence" for their own investigation. All in all, this turns the 'case' inside out and subverts the power structure. The items confiscated are exchanged for items left behind, which in turn form the basis for the exhibition. In a strange act of reciprocity, the artists are able to invert the whole investigator/perpetrator system. The blank space created by the seizure of CAE's artworks is filled by the debris of the state; and with this the absence of the seized objects is made more tangible."

Besides the complex installation *Body of Evidence* the exhibition documents works and performances by CAE, on which Steve and Hope were working just before the raid, such as *Free Range Grain* (2003-2004)

or Molecular Invasion (2002-2003). In addition, Art Laboratory Berlin, in collaboration with the arsenal – institut für film und videokunst e.v, will present the film *Strange Culture* by Lynn Hershman Leeson, at the Arsenal Cinema on November 2, at 7.30 PM, followed by a panel discussion. The film documents the events of May 2004 and their aftermath.

An exhibition catalogue was published.

Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) is a collective of tactical media practitioners of various specializations including computer graphics, software, wetware, film/video, photography, book art and performance. CAE was founded in 1987 and has produced a wide variety of projects for an international audience at diverse venues ranging from the street, to the museum, to the Internet.

CAE is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2007 Andy Warhol Foundation Wynn Kramarsky Freedom of Artistic Expression Grant honoring two decades of distinguished work, and has been invited to exhibit and perform in many of the world's cultural institutions-including the Whitney Museum and the New Museum in NYC; the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington, DC; the London Museum of Natural History; the ICA, London; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; der Volksbühne, Berlin; ZKM, Karlsruhe; El Matadero, Madrid; Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Museo de Arte Carrilo Gil, Mexico City and many more.

The Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA) was founded in 1998 as an anonymous collective of engineers, designers, artists and activists united by the cause of individual and collective self-determination. Toward this end, the IAA has produced numerous projects under its flagship initiative, Contestational Robotics. These include several tele-operated robotic graffiti writers; I-See, which gained worldwide media attention as a web-based navigation service to help users avoid surveillance; and Terminal Air, an installation and website that visualizes the movements of airplanes believed to have been used in the CIA's "Extraordinary Rendition" program.

The IAA has won numerous awards for its work, including the 2000 Prix Ars Electronica Award of Distinction and several Prix Ars Electronica Honorable Mentions; and a Rhizome New Media Fellowship. The collective's work has been exhibited in museums, galleries, and public spaces internationally, including ZKM, Karlsruhe; the World Information Organization, Amsterdam; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; the Australian Centre for the Moving Image; and Mass MoCA among others.

Strange Culture documents the surreal nightmare of internationally-acclaimed artist and professor Steve Kurtz which began when his wife Hope died in her sleep of heart failure. Police who responded to Kurtz's 911 call deemed Kurtz's art suspicious and called the FBI. Within hours the artist was detained as a suspected "bioterrorist" as dozens of federal agents in Hazmat suits sifted through his work and impounded his computers, manuscripts, books, his cat, and even his wife's body. The film *Strange Culture* stars Tilda Swinton, Peter Coyote, Thomas Jay Ryan, Josh Kornbluth and Steve Kurtz, and was shown in the 2007 Berlin Film Festival.

Lynn Hershmann Leeson is a filmmaker and new media artist who has been awarded the Siemens-Medienkunstpreis award from the ZKM, Karlsruhe, as well as the Golden Nica Prize at the 1999 Ars Electronica.



Catalog

SEIZED. Critical Art Ensemble & Institute for Applied Autonomy. Ed. by Regine Rapp und Christian de Lutz for Art Laboratory Berlin. Berlin 2009
44 p., color, text in English and German
ISBN: 978-3-9813234-0-5
9,00 EUR

This exhibition and the catalogue were made possible by an anonymous donor whose wish it is to support projects in the defence of democracy.

02.10.09

Film Screening: *Strange Culture*

Followed by a Round Table. A discussion of the case of Steve Kurtz from legal, cultural-political and curatorial perspectives: Eberhard Schultz (lawyer), Mark C. Donfried (Institute for Cultural Diplomacy) and Christian de Lutz (Art Laboratory Berlin); Moderated by Regine Rapp (Art Laboratory Berlin)

Kino Arsenal, Potsdamer Platz 2, 10785 Berlin



Strange Culture

D: Lynn Hershman Leeson, 2007

Kino Arsenal, Potsdamer Platz 2, 10785 Berlin

The film documents the surreal nightmare of internationally-acclaimed artist and professor Steve Kurtz which began when his wife Hope died in her sleep of heart failure. Police who responded to Kurtz's 911 call deemed Kurtz's art suspicious and called the FBI. Within hours the artist was detained as a suspected "bioterrorist" as dozens of federal agents in Hazmat suits sifted through his work and impounded his computers, manuscripts, books, his cat, and even his wife's body. The film *Strange Culture* stars Tilda Swinton, Peter Coyote, Thomas Jay Ryan, Josh Kornbluth and Steve Kurtz, and was shown in the 2007 Berlin Film Festival.

Lynn Hershmann Leeson is a filmmaker and new media artist who has been awarded the Siemens-Medienkunstpreis award from the ZKM, Karlsruhe, as well as the Golden Nica Prize at the 1999 Ars Electronica.

After the film screening there was a round table. The case of Steve Kurtz was discussed from legal, cultural-political and curatorial perspectives:

Eberhard Schultz (lawyer),
Mark C. Donfried (Institute for Cultural Diplomacy) and
Christian de Lutz (Art Laboratory Berlin)

Moderated by Regine Rapp (Art Laboratory Berlin).

30.08.09

Artists in Dialog: Alex Toland***Personal Dispersal Mechanisms, an Interactive Urban Exploration***

Natural distribution mechanisms of plant species are often severely obstructed in the city. Tree sponsorship is a popular and effective way of re-greening city parks and streets. Individual sponsors become personally linked to individual trees while beautifying the neighborhood and creating new habitats for birds, mammals and insects.

Artist Alex Toland takes this idea a step further by creating species partnerships for a day and encouraging personal interspecies relationships as a potential distribution mechanism. As part of the series Artists in Dialog at ART LABORATORY BERLIN the artist will realize a collaborative walk and installation project by leading a group of Berlin residents through part of the green corridor along the Panke and make personal introductions between individual people and plants. part of the green corridor along the Panke and make personal introductions between individual people and plants.

Each participant will volunteer his/her name, short biography and an on the spot (Polaroid) picture in exchange for a receptacle containing one sample cutting of a riparian species, a printed card and description of that species' unique qualities, ecological value and historical uses. Along the walk each participant will "adopt" a species for the day, which will hopefully lead to a longer friendship between man and weed, future recognition of the species and further interest and communication with others about the value of urban nature.

At the end of the walk the human portraits will be installed alongside the plant receptacles and descriptions at ART LABORATORY BERLIN, visually linking human diversity to plant biodiversity as a cultural asset. The walk will begin with an artist talk at ART LABORATORY BERLIN on Prinzenallee and end at the same place with the completion of the installation. It will take about an hour and is open to all ages.



Environmental artist Alexandra Toland was born in Boston, MA in 1975, received her BA in 1997 from the UW-Madison, MFA in 2001 from the Dutch Art Institute in Enschede, Holland. She is currently completing an engineering degree in landscape architecture and environmental planning at the Berlin University of Technology and works as a teaching assistant in the Dept. of Soil Protection at the TU-Berlin and as a design researcher at the Wriezener Open Space Lab (Wriezener Freiraum Labor).

Her main interests include sustainable art, environmental ethics, urban ecosystems, soil conservation, plant population ecology, ethno-botany, landscape architecture and urban planning. She has exhibited artwork in Europe and the United States.

22.07.09

Strike Anywhere

Screening of a new video by Benj Gerdes and Jennifer Hayashida

An event at Artillerie, Berlin, organised in cooperation with Art Laboratory Berlin

Introduction by Christian de Lutz, Art Laboratory Berlin

Followed by a discussion with the artists

artillerie and Art Laboratory Berlin are pleased to present *Strike Anywhere* for the first time to a Berlin audience, following screenings at the Luleå Art Biennial in Sweden and the Kran>>Film Space in Brussels. The latest collaborative work by the experimental filmmaker Benj Gerdes and the poet Jennifer Hayashida, *Strike Anywhere* is a video essay that takes as its point of departure Swedish "Match King" Ivar Kreuger, whose privatization of financial crisis management strategies bears a direct relation to late-twentieth century policies implemented by the IMF and WTO.

Between 1917 and 1932, Kreuger capitalised on shifts in global financial markets to control over 200 companies and establish matchstick monopolies in at least 34 countries. At the height of his success, Ivar Kreuger was worth approximately 30 million Swedish kronor (the equivalent of 100 billion USD today). The project is both a pre-history of neoliberal economics and an allegory about social relations and desire in the wake of global capitalist expansion and excess.

Visually, *Strike Anywhere* incorporates previously unseen archival photographs, corporate charts and documents, and documentary sequences staged for the camera or observed during research and everyday life. The sequence of the piece is organised loosely as a passage between different spaces and the conflictual meanings these spaces produce—including the Swedish National Archives, the former company headquarters (still known today as the "Match Palace"), and two match factories continuously in operation since the early 1900s. The project juxtaposes footage of these factories with interviews with two Kreuger researchers. Both men espouse views, accumulated over years of unrecognised research, that differ from the popular histories of Kreuger in Sweden or the United States. Through a juxtaposition of these interviews with the present-day match manufacturing process, the film depicts the extant factories as carryovers from an older form of industrial capitalism. The factories have persisted while the world around them has shifted, in part due to financiers similar to Kreuger.

Conceptually, *Strike Anywhere* is a spatio-temporal diagram where visual and linguistic articulations of power point to the instability between archival document and event, iconography and cultural memory, present tense and historical remove. These structures of depicting and interpreting the world – charts, testimonies, and photographs alike – stand as subjective, deliber-

ate, and equally susceptible to attempts at ideological revision. In realizing the layered structure of *Strike Anywhere*, Gerdes and Hayashida are interested in provoking a counter-historical dialogue about collective rethinking of economic and political possibilities in the present.





30.05.2009 - 28.06.2009
Art and Law II
Ztohoven - *Media Reality*

The Prague based artist collective Ztohoven use their work, often interventions in public space, to scrutinise the creditability of mass media and advertising.

Besides showing the work *Media Reality* and related court documents, Art Laboratory Berlin presents the German premiere of the film *On Media Reality*, which documents the legal and artistic aftermath of the action.



Art and Law II

Ztohoven - *Media Reality*

In their work, for the most part interventions in public space, the Prague based artist collective Ztohoven (a wordplay from the Czech *z toho ven* - get out of it, but also *sto hoven* - a hundred piles of shit) question the credibility of mass media and advertising. Among their better known works, they covered the pedestrian figures on Prague traffic lights with stencils showing limping, reclining, drinking or urinating figures.

In their action *Media Reality*, which is shown in original form at Art Laboratory Berlin, Ztohoven added images of an atomic explosion to a live broadcast of a panoramic landscape from the Krkonoše Mountains on the Czech weather channel CT 2. The purpose was to initiate a debate on the manipulation of television images. The channel pressed charges of malicious dissemination of false information for the purpose of damaging the public peace as well as destruction of property. In two separate cases during 2008 and 2009 the artist collective was acquitted of the charge of causing a public panic. The prosecutor had sought a penalty of 200 hours public service against the accused; the highest sentence could have been three years in prison. In her judgment the judge noted that the action caused public amusement, not public panic. Despite the acquittal several members of Ztohoven had to pay a fine to the radio and television authorities for unauthorized interference in a public broadcast.

At the same time as the first court case Ztohoven received the 2007 Prize for New Art (NG333) from the Prague National Gallery for *Media Reality*, the first time the new prize was awarded. The president of the National Gallery, Milan Knížák, explained the decision for Ztohoven: "They have broken out of the regular scripted art space into the public sphere with the goal of confronting society in a provocative way." (<http://www.culturecuts.net/shortlist/2008/02/media-reality-by-ztohoven.html>). This clearly shows the range of perceptions that judged the action from juvenile prank to constructive and provocative art action. Ztohoven clearly cite the influence of Orson Wells 1938 radio play of H.G. Wells *War of the Worlds* (1898). In the novel extraterrestrials attack the United Kingdom. In the radio play the location was changed to New Jersey and caused considerable confusion among the populace due to use of what appeared to be live reportage of an actual alien attack.

Ztohoven themselves explain their action as inspired by the 1938 radio play of *War of the Worlds* in the following terms: "We are not a terrorist or political group, our purpose is not to intimidate or manipulate society in the very same way as we witness in everyday real life or media. Regardless of the intentions, whether political or those of market, companies, or global corporations which secretly manipulate and exert pressure on their products and ideas through every channel possible upon the human subconsciousness. Even the slightest intrusion into this system or appeal on pure human intellect, and its ability not to be worked upon, is in our opinion harmless in a democratic country. For this reason the artist group Ztohoven intruded on the public premises of our capital, Prague, a few years ago and managed to poach this advertisement territory in principle as well as the advertisement itself.

On the June 17, 2007 our group invaded the media and television territory and intruded and poached its truthfulness as well as its credibility. We pointed out the possible confusion of the media presented picture of our world for the real one. Is everything that our media such as newspapers, television, internet offer on daily basis real truth or reality? It is this idea that our project introduces to general public; as a sort of reminder to everyone. We truly believe that the independent territory of television, governed by public law, is the kind of media which can handle such a thing even at the cost of self impeachment. Let it be this kind of appeal for our future and reminder to all forms of media that the truth must be presented at any cost. We are grateful for an independent media and an independent territory for society." (http://www.ztohoven.com/cz/medialni_realita).

As well as the actual video *Media Reality* showing the television footage altered with an atomic explosion and court documents, Art Laboratory Berlin will present the German premiere of the film *On Media Reality* (45', Czech with English subtitles) by Vladimír Turner, a documentary about the legal and artistic aftermath of the action with until now unshown images and interviews with representatives from Czech television, journalists, scholars as well as members of Ztohoven.

Sandra Frimmel

24.04.09

Artists in Dialog. Presentation by Paola Yacoub

Paola Yacoub's Presentation is the first of Art Laboratory Berlin's new series of artists talks, presentations, performances and events: Artists in Dialog.

Paola Yacoub will present a running thread through various works, mainly photographs and montages, produced in different geographical areas ranging from Southern Lebanon to Berlin via Sweden and China. The common point is skepticism as it was introduced in visual arts in the U.S.A. at the beginning of the 20th century. In a fast food restaurant 'Beautifull Heart' in Shenzhen, China, a flat screen continuously transmits news and entertainment channels. Information becomes like decoration. One looks at the screen only from time to time, often not at all, and rarely with attention. We do not know if we agree on postures in front of the screen and on what we see.

"A dialogical encounter between two video clips of the same screen in the same fast food restaurant but at different moments were made by Paola Yacoub and by Yao Zhiyan. These plasma screens in fast food restaurants and cafés show the social modality of a contemporary gaze".

-Paola Yacoub



Paola Yacoub is a graduate of the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, and currently a PHD candidate in visual arts at Goldsmith's college, London. Among other venues she has exhibited in the 2002 Sao Paulo Biennale, the 2003 Venice Biennale and was part of the DAAD artists program in 2004/2005 in collaboration with Michel Lasserre. She lives and works in Berlin.





21.02.2009 - 29.03.2009

**Art and Law I:
CAT. Monstration**



The CAT (Contemporary Art Terrorism) collective from Novosibirsk creates situations in public space, which lay bare the absurdity of the way in which political power functions. Unprepared passers-by were drawn into the process of creating critical artistic statements. For organizing a May Day monstration - a counterpart to a classical May Day demonstration - in which marchers carried individual banners with apolitical, often poetic or non-rational slogans, the artists were sentenced to pay a fine. The exhibition Monstration shows video works and documents of the public reaction by means of legal documents and mass media reviews.



Art and Law I: CAT. *Monstration*

The actions of the group CAT (Contemporary Art Terrorism) founded in Novosibirsk in 2003 by Maksim Neroda, Ekaterina Drobyševa and Artem Loskutov and active until 2006) could be understood as interventions in urban space. These actions were supposed to reclaim urban space as a platform for artistic and political expression- a new and topical strategy compared to the Soviet Union where public space was reserved solely for official political propaganda and artistic actions took place either in private space or in nature.

Their art sought to be 'timely' (russ. CBOeBPeMeHHO), as opposed to 'contemporary' (russ. COBPeMeHHO, this pun functions in Russian through the switching of a few letters). "Timely art has no author. Its body is the communication between members inside the group", as it is described in the Statement about Timely Art: "Its work is the external results of this communication. Artworks of 'timely art' have no material value, but are made up of the information which the viewer is given about alternative functional mechanisms in society [...]. [...] 'Timely art' is political art. [...] 'Timely art' elevates claims to its presence and to its involvement in the art of shaping people's lives." (Dekret über die rechtzeitige Kunst (A Statement about Timely Art). In: http://www.cat-group.info/dekret_deu.html).

An example of an action which is 'timely art' is a humorous protest action against the introduction of student fees in 2004. A banner with the slogan "Learn, learn and keep learning," a quote from Lenin, was placed before the base of the Lenin memorial in Novosibirsk. The police removed the banner and arrested the artists on a charge of disturbing public order. When asked who was the initiator of the action, CAT replied that it was Lenin himself. They had only brought together what belonged together - the quotation and its source.

In a series of Monstrations from 2004 on, which can be understood as counterparts to the classical May Day demonstrations, individual banners with apolitical, often poetic or non-rational slogans were used: "Catch the Stallion", "Where am I?", "I'm for it", "Down with the Exploitation of Siberian Wildlife in Contemporary Art", or a simple white line on a red ground. ("Down with the Exploitation of Siberian Wildlife in Contemporary Art!", refers to the boom in use of Russia clichés such as alcoholism or brutality by western curators; the white line on a red ground calls to mind the work *Ideal Slogan*, 1972, by the artist duo Vitalij Komar and Aleksandr Melamid). Even before the banners for the 2004 Monstration could be unfurled they were already accused of being "anti-globalist Solutions", and in connection with the Monstration the members of CAT were arrested and sentenced to pay a fine.

In the actions of CAT there is an unmistakable echo of Joseph Beuys and his idea of social sculpture where every individual can deal creatively to contribute to the good of society and have a formative influence. But in the specific context of Russian society, where participatory democracy is a practically unknown concept, CAT repeatedly came into conflict with the law, or at least with what the authorities considered this to be. In some cases they were acquitted; in others sentenced to fines, which CAT paid, ironically, as part of an artistic action: *The Penalty Has Big Eyes*, 2004. The city became an exhibition space and the Russian bureaucratic structure was transformed, unwillingly, into a medium for exposing the functional incapability and absurdity of the political power structure in today's Russia. In addition, the media, especially television, was usually on site for the actions and reported on them, providing support and even protection to CAT.

The exhibition CAT. Monstration documents actions on the borderline between art and lawbreaking, with the accompanying police and juridical documents and reports from the mass media to demonstrate under exactly which circumstance art becomes a crime.

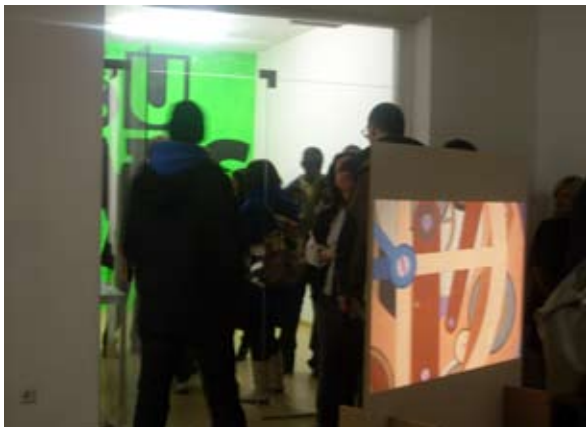
Sandra Frimmel



29.18.2008 - 04.01.2009
Curators from East and Central Europe III:
Mari Laanemets - *Hier wäre das Leben leicht*
 (There, Life Would Be Easy)

The exhibition revolves around issues of design, of the construction of surfaces we are surrounded by in everyday life: from textiles to texts, to street and city. One of the underlying intentions of the exhibition is to reflect on how these formal constructions organize our behaviour, give our lives a scheme, a program, and on the sedimentation of ideology in forms.

Kadi Estland, Anton Koovit, Sirje Runge, Killu Sukmit, Tere Recarens and Florian Wüst.



Sirje Runge (foreground)



Anton Koovit





Tere Recarens



Kadi Estland (l) Tere Recarens (r)



Florian Wüst

Curators from East and Central Europe III:
Mari Laanemets - *Hier wäre das Leben leicht*
(There, Life Would Be Easy)

Kadi Estland
Anton Koovit
Tere Recarens
Sirje Runge
Florian Wüst
Killu Sukmit
Mari Laanemets

How would an environment appear where everything was in harmony, where all daily duties and problems found natural solutions? An environment "which freed life from the slavery of things" as Karl Kraus wrote about the work of the architect Alfred Loos in 1933?

The exhibition *Hier wäre das Leben leicht/ There, Life Would Be Easy* deals with questions of design, the arrangement of environments, the formal character of surfaces, things from which lifestyles are constructed: from textiles to texts, from facades to fonts, from interiors to streets and cities. The title of the exhibition is a quote by Georges Perec's novel *Things* (orig. *Les Choses*, Paris 1965). The gaze is set upon composition, which structures reality and organizes life. The layout of a newspaper fabricates its sense of being up to date; TV series delineate behaviour patterns; apartment furnishings construct identity; fonts formulate content.

The artists in the exhibition react attentively and critically to questions of daily configurations. They analyse the practices of design and search for possibilities to intervene in these contexts. The examination of form, order, composition, display and the organization of space is also applied to the production of new ideas and concepts in the social context.

On view are works by Kadi Estland, Anton Koovit, Tere Recarens, Sirje Runge, Florian Wüst, Killu Sukmit und Mari Laanemets.

Mari Laanemets

24.10.2008 - 16.11.2008

Curators from East and Central Europe II:

Elena Sorokina

Subjective Events, Sometimes Recorded



In everyday language, an event is a notion that embraces two different meanings - a happening violating limits or, in the opposite, invigorating them. One is destructive, the other restrictive; one is closer to the chaos of a revolution, the other to a meticulously performed ceremony with a set of rules. The work in the exhibition focuses on the second meaning: initially, it comments on contemporary rituals or pronounced interest in social codes, which often re-emerge in times of crisis and insecurity. Through recording, staging, or enacting some examples of today's ritualistic behavior the artists examine how the so-called "flexible personalities" engage in a performance of specific and mainly self-imposed rules.



Yevgeny Fiks (wall) Ana Hušman (foreground)



Ana Hušman



Workshop with Elena Sorokina

Curators from East and Central Europe II: Elena Sorokina - *Subjective Events, Sometimes Recorded*

Yevgeny Fiks
Kent Hansen und Jo Zahn (for TV-TV)
Ana Hušman
Gulnara Kasmalieva und Muratbek Djumaliev
Franck Lebovici, Giulia di Leonarda, Armin Linke
REINIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT
Alexander Vaindorf
Katarina Zdjelar



REINIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT



Yevgeny Fiks

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The group REINIGUNGSGESELLSCHAFT observes visits to the newly built Japanese garden by the inhabitants of the Berlin district Marzahn, Alexander Vaindorf looks into some unusual therapy sessions, Katarina Zdjelar films amateurs singing, and Ana Hušman mocks a perfect lunch with invited guests. In analyzing these voluntary "ceremonial behaviors" proliferating in today's order, which promote "limitless living and choosing", the artists in the show direct our attention to contemporary changes in the nature of limits and social prohibitions.

Introducing the notion of the "subjective event," -- an experience which can't be proven and whose very existence is not certain ---- the exhibition circumscribes a field of tension between the mise en scene of the quotidian and intangible action as material for artists' work. Yevgenyj Fiks and the group Demokratisk Innovation enact subversive gestures or interventions which are inconspicuous and almost invisible for the "general public." Using custom-produced stamps featuring faces of former leaders of the American Communist Party to pay his bills, Fiks, for example, turns a ritual of the capitalist world order - paying bills to corporations - into commemoration of the American Communist movement. Kent Hansen and Jo Zahn from DEM at tv-tvconduct an "emancipatory experiment", handing a camera to random groups. They conclude, however, that the films produced never exceed personal narratives. Finally, some work recontextualizes highly visible public happenings as some kind of subjective events. The footage of visits by heads-of-state to France, used by Franck Lebovici, Giulia Di Leonarda and Armin Linke in their collaborative project, or body searches at airports recorded by Gulnara Kasmalieva and Muratbek Djumaliev - change their possible readings through displacement. These rituals, observed by the artists, collapse into meaningless repetition, never becoming the action they promise to be.

Elena Sorokina



30.08.2008 - 28.09.2008
Art and Science III
Reiner Maria Matysik - *Failed Organisms*

The Berlin artist Reiner Maria Matysik (born 1967, Duisburg, Germany) works in manifold ways with concepts for future organisms. In the course of the last years he has created his own new system of post-evolutionary life forms at the borderline between art and biology. In his installations, videos, actions and publications the term "biological sculpture", coined by Matysik himself, plays a vital role.



Art and Science III

Reiner Maria Matysik - *Failed Organisms*

The Organisms Are Failing / Failing Organisms/ Organisms That Fail

Notes on the Visual and Linguistic Strategies of Postevolutionary Scenarios in the Work of Reiner Maria Matysik

The Berlin artist Reiner Maria Matysik (born 1967) works in manifold ways with concepts for future organisms. In the course of the last years he has created his own new system of post-evolutionary life forms at the borderline between art and biology. In his installations, videos, actions and publications the term "biological sculpture", coined by Matysik himself, plays a vital role.

In the exhibition *Failed Organisms* realised at Art Laboratory Berlin in Summer 2008 as the third part of the series *Art and Science* Matysik has concentrated on one of his central themes – post-evolutionary life forms. Through the specific adoption of object, installation and video in both exhibition rooms he has developed a dynamic scenario of future organisms, which on the one hand are predicted as semi-nal, and which on the other hand are identified in the characteristics as nonviable (German version: die mal als zukunftssträftig prognostiziert werden, mal in ihren Eigenschaften als nicht lebensfähig erkannt werden). In this way Matysik creates an area of conflict between promise and failure in a potential bio-technical future. Both the visual implementation (e.g. the aesthetic character of the objects) and their linguistic form (such as the specific lexis in the description of the prototype model) can be recognised here as the essential artistic strategies which Matysik uses as his own interstice between the worlds of bio-technological research and pseudoscientific fiction.

Future Life Forms – the Prototype Models

In the framework of his discussion on future life forms Matysik has developed his own individual system in the last few years with a unique iconography of so called prototype models which he has called WESEN. (Reiner Maria Matysik: *WESEN. Prototypmodelle postevolutionärer Lebensformen*. Frankfurt/Main 2007). Well over a hundred of these organisms have been created by the artists as models (variously from plasticine, PVC, epoxy resin, rubber and silicone), and categorised by size, weight, gender, extremities, orientation, mode of life, location, etc. The specific forms of sustenance, preferences, and tolerances of these organisms have also been noted. (During a talk with the artist, August 2008)

The visual formations and conceptualisation of the characteristics in these combinations are unique; their systemisation – especially their binary form – reflects an intensive examination of the classification systems of Carl Linnaeus from the mid 18th century. Matysik has developed such organisms as the *inokuli* (the eyeless ones): *impigre sudans* (tireless perspire/00003), an organism which develops tube opistins covered with flowers or gland-like outgrowths; *caecus occultus* (hidden blind one/00005) whose combination with the eu- and prokaryotic cell structures give it a peculiar kind of mobility; *tracheodus loivaceus* (olive green rough tooth/00017), who has an exoskeleton on its back, which runs out into long ossifications; *clotho exentrica* (eccentric spinstress/00031), whose movements are languorous and one notes that a crease for food develops between the body and extremities of older individuals, etc. All these organisms have been modelled in miniature form for study in plasticine, in bright red, blue, beige with their specific forms (tentacled arms, perforated torso, porous surface, openings, etc.) The potential future role of these organisms is described by Matysik: "the inner development of the body structure and the external form as well as the interactions of a future organism shall enable it to find its spot in the world." (Reiner Maria Matysik: *WESEN. Prototypmodelle postevolutionärer Lebensformen*. Frankfurt/Main 2007, p.10).

To the *Inokuli* belongs also a group of prototypes presented in this exhibition, but these already fail. The creature *corpus servilis* (submissive body) in the front exhibition room with its open brightly coloured body, for example, can barely prevent itself from falling from a stack of palettes, due to a strong weariness. Then there is the prototype *suicidus petulans* (frivolous suicide) on the edge of a palette in the corner, which due to its decreasing cell pressure has slumped down (collapsed) in/ on itself and whose deeply wrinkled skin is sagging off its body.

Under the vitrine one can observe a type from the group *mesobiont* in a box. Typical is its brownish transparent material composition. By the way, this example is already aged and no longer very vital in its phallic power. A permanently sleeping organism is presented in the clean white creature *magnificus incoloratus* (large non- coloured one) which rests on the vitrine: during the assembling of its body substance it grows very slowly, not reaching sexual maturity before an age of 190 years, and it is "only awake for 12 days each year". In the middle of the room on a high stack of palettes we find a large prototype with many tentacles with suction cups: it suffers from an incurable skin illness. (Reiner Maria Matysik: prototype #01014.)

In contrast to their predecessors, who as phenotypes of promising new life forms, the prototypes in this exhibition are too weak and are condemned to extinction – Matysik regards them as failed organisms.

With this form of staged failure of 'biofacts', not only does Matysik refer to the current debate about biofacts but he also seems to playfully undermine it. The term biofacts made from a combination of 'bio' and 'artefact' can be described as biotic artefacts with living properties. In both the sciences (biology, computer science) and the humanities (philosophy, art, and cultural studies) the explanatory model of biofacts is currently under discussion. Especially noted is their technological influence on previous growth. (Nicole Karafyllis: *Das Wesen der Biofakte*. In: Karafyllis, Nicole (Hrsg.): *Biofakte. Versuch über den Menschen zwischen Artefakt und Lebewesen*. Paderborn 2003, p. 12.)

Matysik's biofacts as a model point to the upcoming radical post-evolutionary changes of organisms. The failing organisms in this exhibition though play exactly with the idea of a failed utopia and the visualisation of laboratory waste. The artistic intervention into the scholarly debate appears refreshingly ironic. Especially indicative (or: significant?!) is a term specifically created by Matysik - inokuli - the not seeing! The consciously chosen term eyeless, which we as viewer can, in fact, see and study is not least a playful reference that can be understood as a lack of clear vision.

Brave New World – the Rhetoric of Biofacts

The Museum of Natural History in Bonn recently opened a new department for its collection: in a wing of the museum a collection of models of future organisms was established. In vitrines one could study prototypes of future life forms. Some have already grown out of their vitrines and have mutated into swollen phenotypes, due to their formidable life energy. A scientist explains it all to us: "We are putting together the chemical compounds of life. We are constructing cells and chromosomes. So we are creating life forms that didn't exist before. All this is based on a long time experience with digitalised biology: first we sequenced the genome, and then translated the analogue into the digital world of the computer." (Text of Matysik's video biofakte, 2008, p. 1.) The spectators' reaction risks being overwhelmed in light of the insistent tone of this presentation. This propitious oration speech goes on in the following words: "In the museum's Department for post-evolutionary organisms we are showing the models of the first beings whose chemical synthesis is not based on the replication of already existing creatures. With this work we are building functional and capable organisms from the molecular biochemical level." (Text of Matysik's video biofakte, 2008, p. 1.)

Of course this addition to the Bonn Museum of Natural History is fictitious, the prototype models invented, and the 'scientist' lends the staged futuristic scenario a strange aftertaste through her solemn tone when she asserts that "humanity isn't only changing the form of the earth, but also its living creatures and ourselves. We are playing with unconscious processes in our own and foreign organisms. Understanding and will emerge from this disparately freer, smarter and more sensitive". (Text of Matysik's video biofakte, 2008, p. 2.)

The video, biofakte (biofacts) (2008), described here was shown at the Alexander König Natural History Museum in Bonn along with an installation by Matysik in spring 2008. By means of persiflage the video message gives a prognosis about future life forms ad absurdum. The promising proclamation of future organisms, in which a brave new world of hitherto unknown potential future life forms is predicted, functions like the staging of a phantasmagorical laboratory.

Not least, the text carries a consciously overcharged bio-technological lexis coupled with pseudo-scientific parts, intrinsically part of this pointedly staged persiflage as when the scientist closes her discourse with the following statement: "I am life, which desires life, and wishes for life, in the middle of life. We need a biological existentialism." (Text of Matysik's video biofakte, 2008, p. 3.) Finally the circle is closed between the prototypes of future life forms that Matysik has created in the last few years and the staged video statement. The discourse on post-evolutionary life forms in the exhibitions "Failed Organisms" remains consciously open – which is exactly consistent with the artistic strategy with which Matysik clearly moves between the worlds of bio-technological research and pseudo-scientific fiction.

Regine Rapp



30.05.2008 - 29.06.2008
Art and Science II
Marcus Ahlers - *Transposed Nodes*

The artworks of Marcus Ahlers (born 1974) functions on the borderline of visual arts and science. On one hand they explore visual metaphors for the human body in its surroundings, making reference to social and architectural space. On the other hand they are receptacles for electro-chemical reactions, which take place within them.





Lower three images: children's workshop with Marcus Ahlers (building a solar oven)

Art and Science II

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The sculptures in *Transposed nodes* are made of everyday materials - often industrial in function. Some, such as *X-electrolysis*, are anthropomorphic in form. The upper torso-like area contains water and two wires which form the basis for an electrochemical process - electrolysis - which slowly divides the water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen. Ahlers notes that "everything is a series of electrochemical processes" which "connect us with our surroundings." In these works water electrolysis is not only a metaphor for the many electrochemical processes that are continually going on in our bodies on a cellular and molecular level. It also refers to the fact that our bodies are 70% water, and that water itself is made up of hydrogen, the basic element that makes up most of the matter in the universe, and oxygen which is necessary to life.

Other recent works in the exhibition are architectural in form; though also indirectly anthropomorphic. As Ahlers' use of electrolysis refers to cellular and molecular functions, his use of architectural forms places the human in a social context. Buildings are our most immediate surroundings, which we not only inhabit, but move through, socialising, and breaking away into various public and private spheres. This movement through space, combining, separating and re-combining with others, is itself similar to a series of electrochemical reactions.

Ahlers also makes reference to the anthropomorphic qualities of architecture, where the plumbing system mirrors the digestive tract and ventilation imitates respiration. The electrolytic reactions within these sculptures also produce inspiration and material for further works. Copper rods, representing pipes and plumbing react to electrolysis by producing a liquid copper pigment that Ahlers then uses in his drawings.

In other works, crystals appear over the duration of the sculptures' lives, adding literally another layer, both aesthetic and chemical. The sculptures also produce oxygen and hydrogen. In fact water electrolysis is being considered as a means for producing hydrogen, an alternative and renewable energy source. In other projects, Ahlers has produced solar ovens and used bio-mass (in the form of 500 potatoes) to fuel a short wave radio.

The artwork of Marcus Ahlers combines science and art to explore the inner connection between man and the environment on a variety of levels ranging from the molecular to the social to the global.

Marcus Ahlers is also one of the founders and leaders of the *takt kunstprojektraum*, an art space and residency program based in Berlin-Friedrichshain.

<http://marcusahlers.com>

<http://www.taktberlin.org>

Christian de Lutz



29.03.2008 - 04.05.2008
Art and Science I
Dmitrij Bulatov - *Senses Alert*

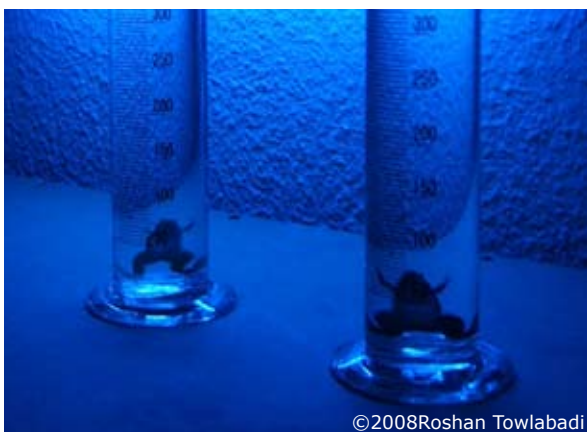
The Kaliningrad based artist Dmitrij Bulatov views the contemporary art scene as a kind of petri dish of living material for his investigations. Coming from his own artistic experience he has investigated this sphere and explored its dynamics and spatial vectors. In connection with his scientific research and artistic practice, Bulatov has staged an active evolutionary dramatisation of 'post-biological' forms whose paradoxical development may completely change our idea of the surrounding world.



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Art and Science I

Dmitrij Bulatov - *Senses Alert*

Contemporary Art already long ago turned away from a solely anthropocentric point of view. Currently in Science Art, it is concerned, among other things, with ecological phenomena and is investigating the existence of newly emerging life forms; Art and Science have been combined. The Kaliningrad based artist Dmitrij Bulatov views the contemporary art scene as a kind of petri dish of living material for his investigations. Coming from his own artistic experience he has investigated this sphere and explored its dynamics and spatial vectors. In connection with his scientific research and artistic practice, Bulatov has staged an active evolutionary dramatisation of 'post-biological' forms whose paradoxical development may completely change our idea of the surrounding world.

Bulatov's three part project *Senses Alert*, 2004-2007 is devoted to a critical reflection of the newest technologies, their development and use in contemporary society and art. Biology is no longer concerned with just the decoding of (genetic) information about human and animal life forms, but also, in a further step, with manipulating these codes. What use and value does genetic experimentation have when mankind begins to alter and form itself and its environment, purely bounded by its own short-sighted conceptions? In an

attempt to deal with these complex questions, Bulatov, together with scientists from the Moscow Academy of Science, initiated an experiment in genetic technology from which emerged life forms on the borderline between the animal and plant kingdoms. The interdisciplinary conflict between the scientific-technological and the ethical-aesthetic viewpoints provides an opportunity to define a field of discussion in which Art and Science can interact.

Dmitrij Bulatov



26.01.2008 - 2.03.2008
Eastern and Central European Curators I:
Denisa Kera and Pavel Sedlak
Cosmopolitics:
New Media Art from the Czech Republic

The Czech new media art scene could be characterized by a latecomer strategy which in recent years is turning its disadvantages into a source of advantage. As video art and other trends from the 1980s and 1990s were never strong in the Czech art academies, young artists feel free to experiment and often develop very promiscuous relations to different traditions, trends and technologies.



Josef Bareš



Internet Generation



Jakup Nepraš



Jan Pfeiffer



Pavel Tichon

Cosmopolitics: New Media Art from the Czech Republic

Curated by Denisa Kera and Pavel Sedlak

The Czech new media art scene could be characterized by a latecomer strategy which in recent years is turning its disadvantages into a source of advantage. As video art and other trends from the 1980s and 1990s were never strong in the Czech art academies, young artists feel free to experiment and often develop very promiscuous relations to different traditions, trends and technologies.

The exhibition presents projects from recent years that demonstrate this playful and experimental strategy which is neither purely political nor technological. It is cosmopolitical in a sense that it tests the limits of our common world which we share with both machines and nature. It examines different networks between nature, society and technology; but also between our history, present and possible futures. It presents challenging views of different hybrid collectives of humans and machines. It interconnects globalization as well as evolutionary and technological processes to examine different versions and views of our common world; but also the possibilities of contemporary art. The exhibition presents works by Josef Bareš, Internet Generation, Jakub Nepřaš, Jan Pfeiffer, Pavel Sterec and Pavel Tichon.

Posthuman networks

show art as an exploration of collectives of human and machines and the limits between physis and techné. Pavel Sterec work *Symbiont*, 2007, presents a tree with prosthesis and a new apple of paradise which presents the intimate and balanced relationship between the artificial and the natural. An autonomous biorobotic plant climbing up a living tree consists of a water collector in place of a tuber, solar panels instead of leaves, rubber tubes and an artificial fruit. Inside the fruit there is nutritive soil in which microorganisms reproduce. After gradual "ripening" the "fruit" is released due to excessive pressure. It falls down, where it fertilises the host tree. A "seed", which is actually an SD card is placed inside the fruit. All the data necessary for the breeding of a new symbiont is put into the card. A microcontroller guarantees the accuracy of the growth process and is in control of the whole procedure. *Symbiont* offers nutrients, which promote the growth of the host plant, in exchange for better access to light (i.e. Solar panels in the treetop).

In his works *Generator-P730* and *Cultures*, both 2005, Jakub Nepřaš questions subjects like the urban reality and environmental problems. In the video a common circuit board has been transformed into a media microcosm: the everyday life of a town with its inhabitants takes place between connections, cables, and hard disks. The boundaries between real and edited images are technically so perfectly blurred, that it takes a few moments, until the illusion of the work reveals itself to the spectator.

Global networks understand art as exploration of new distribution channels and popular media: world records, torrents etc.

In his video *Xiaozhu*, 2006, Josef Bareš gives an instruction on how to survive on the global market as an artist while competing with cheap pirate copies. While others sell Chinese art to make money, there is always someone who will try the more challenging thing and sell art to the Chinese. The screening includes a selection of animations from the hawked DVD.

Post-totalitarian networks show art as exploration of technology, time and politics. In his work *Short Cuts*, 2006, Jan Pfeiffer uses Google map as the camera to the past, video as a means to understand our present, politics and art.

The group Internet Generation tells us: "Artwork is a file! Everything is a FILE! DIGITIZE everything that is analogue! SHARE all that is digital! PROGRAM and develop new software for files!"

Denisa Kera



23.11.2007 - 6.01.2008

Art and Text III

Prinzenallee:

a Play without Dialog by Birgit Szepanski

In her installations the Berlin artist Birgit Szepanski composes an aesthetic form of urban space using word and image, in which the walls, floor, windows and doors of the exhibition space become part of the art work. Taking regular walks through urban localities is a major part of the artist's production process, during which she collects thoughts, words and images of the city for her exhibition projects in Germany and abroad. There is a correlation between the architectural and bibliophile aspects in her artist's books, photographs, films and audio pieces.



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As part of the exhibition series "Art and Text" Birgit Szepanski will present a site specific work for Art Laboratory Berlin. Prinzenallee. A Play without Dialog is an installation encompassing both exhibition rooms, and relating to the street outside the art space in Berlin-Wedding. Film, photography and text envisage traces of this street. In an explicitly minimalist manner the street unfolds into the exhibition space. In her texts Birgit Szepanski consciously lets different literary genres intermingle: Description and narration, transcripts and monologues transform the play into an urban labyrinth, where fiction and reality seem to oscillate. The exhibition space becomes a crime site and the visitor a voyeur, who enters intimate urban zones through image, sound and text.

"The graphic and spatial transformation of the urban theme in the exhibition space resembles Gaston Bachelard's description of topo-analysis as the 'study of the locality in our inner life'. This publication shows excerpts of artistic work – photography as well as five fictive texts – that formed the exhibition, and mirrors, in their formal composition, Birgit Szepanski's special aesthetic of text and image installations. The chosen bibliophile medium accommodates the artists formal language especially well." (Regine Rapp: On the oscillation of urban signs. In: Prinzenallee. Ein Stück ohne Dialoge. Published by Birgit Szepanski and Regine Rapp. Berlin 2009)

Birgit Szepanski about her artistic practice: "When I take photographs it's not enough for me, and it doesn't really reflect what I really mean: the narration in image and text and the location, the city. Therefore I choose different media: text, film, photography, the publication and the sound piece. I enjoy writing as much as I do photography, and I equally like the medium as such [...] – the booklet or book, or installations. Sound is also important for my work, because sound describes a place and evokes images. For me it is the diversity and the fragmentary shards, which produce the whole. The interaction of the different media, for me, produce the possibility of a narrative." (From the interview Gazing, Walking, Writing – On the Aesthetics of the Street. In: Prinzenallee. Ein Stück ohne Dialoge. Published by Birgit Szepanski and Regine Rapp. Berlin 2009).

Regine Rapp



28.9.2007 - 28.10.2007
Art and Text II
Christian de Lutz - *Ekphrasis*

Christian de Lutz has worked as a photographer and visual artist since moving to Europe in 1994, after having worked in painting and video in New York during the late 1980s and early 1990s. During these years de Lutz has built up a considerable photo archive, which he has used as the basis to create his current images. The original analogue photographs have been processed through digital imaging software; some information has been taken away, while new information has been added.



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Art and Text II

Christian de Lutz - *Ekphrasis*

CHRISTIAN DE LUTZ: EKPHRASIS.
PHOTOGRAPHY BETWEEN PAINTING AND MONTAGE

Christian de Lutz (*1965) has worked as a photographer and visual artist since moving to Europe in 1994, after having worked in painting and video in New York during the late 1980s and early 1990s. During these years de Lutz has built up a considerable photo archive, which he has used as the basis to create his current images. The original analogue photographs have been processed through digital imaging software; some information has been taken away, while new information has been added. In the last seven years the artist has increasingly worked at the periphery of image and text. By means of a digital montage of photography and source code or algorithmic texts his pictures have generated a palimpsest-like layering of pictorial and literary signs. As part of the exhibition series "Art and Text", Art Laboratory Berlin is presenting a selection of de Lutz's most recent Source Code Images.

In ancient times the term ekphrasis (Gr., description) meant description in the broadest sense. In modern times it means a literary visualisation strategy in the form of the rhetorical description of an artwork. Ekphrasis can also mean the verbal representation of visual representation; thus a double intermediality of the real, as a depiction of the depicted. (James Heffernan: *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. Chicago and London 1993, p. 191.) It is in this very sense of ekphrasis that Christian de Lutz operates on the manifold character of references within his Source code Images, in which the collaged text often refers ironically to the images. Already the manipulation of the original photograph into what resembles a painting marks the moment of depiction of the depicted.

The works of the Source Code series are based on a digital collage of text and image. The appropriated texts have been HTML or Java script, or in recent works excerpts from the source code of computer viruses. The commands and syntax of these computer languages, sometimes even single characters, are ripped out of their original context. In this correlation of image and text we often find subtle metaphors and indirect puns. In their resemblance to tableaux paintings these photographic images refer to the traditional medium of painting, which they then put into question.

The work untitled (damagestuff), 1998/2006, shows a person, standing before the façade of a house, looking through a camera at the viewer. On the picture are solitary words, letters, numbers in small and capital white letters: "306h ; March 6th/ je damagestuff/ retf ; return control/ to original/ bootblock @ 0:7C00h/ damagestuff: xor." At first sight this loose graphically structured web of shortened word combinations seems to float over the image. Read from left to right, above to below, these pieces resemble a set of instructions. De Lutz has used source code from the Michelangelo virus, a worm which works its way through whole hard disks. The word "damagestuff" functions as a 'tag', an encrypted signature of the hacker who wrote the virus.

"I am also intrigued by the use in virus source code of non functional language, tags that the hacker has put in that have no functional use in the running of the virus, but are little hints or signs left behind for other hackers to discover," remarked de Lutz in an interview.

"And in the picture there is graffiti on the building, also a medium with 'tags'." (Christian de Lutz, in conversation with the author, August 2007.) The visualised form of a computer program refers here in turn to the transformation of the analogue photograph from 1998 into the digitally reworked photograph of 2006, whose own existence is also system of co-ordinates. The medium of photography, here hidden by means of the process of printing on canvas, becomes even more complex when we become aware of the photographed person who is focusing her camera on us: our gaze is captured and the genesis of the image is mirrored – photography answers with photography. Over the person's head are the words "remote control". In the digital context these words are a 'command'; here they function as an ironic reference to the power of the gaze.

Besides untitled (damagestuff) there are other recent works such as Temp Path, 1998/2005, in which the correlation of image and language as well as the typographically liberated form from linear text structures bear resemblance to visual poetry. In Globalfree, 1997/2005, the lone words, taken from the source code of the My Doom virus, come together to form a new, independent rhythm with phonetic qualities. The work Avebury/Kournikova 1, 2004/2005 couples the image of a field of bronze age stone megaliths in Avebury with a text layer appropriated from the Kournikova virus, which perpetuates itself via email.

In a talk about his use of sources de Lutz said: "I use the source codes or algorithms, that would normally function on a computer, but they are then taken out of the digital world and printed on to this canvas. Then they lose their functional purpose, but become representations of the digital world. My

combination with the visuals is sometimes metaphoric or connotative – such as the weather forecast. But very often I also play with metonymical relations between image and text.” (Christian de Lutz, in conversation with the author, August 2007.)

In *Weather 3*, 2004/2005, from the *Weather Project* series we find a further form of the visualisation strategy of image and text. The picture shows the sky with drifting cloud formations. The sunlight breaks through from below into the picture. The starting point of the image, the view of the sky from a Berlin roof, has been changed by means of a strong blue filter and the addition of text. The text corresponds to algorithms which were designed for use by programmers of weather forecasting software. De Lutz develops a special moment of Ekphrasis here: the text of a meteorological computer program meets a picture of clouds. The verbal representation (the meteorological algorithms) of a visual representation (the cloud formations) can be understood as the depiction of the depicted. The algorithms of the meteorological program also refer in turn to the algorithms which the artist has used to transform the photograph of a cloudscape into what appears, at first glance, to be a painting.

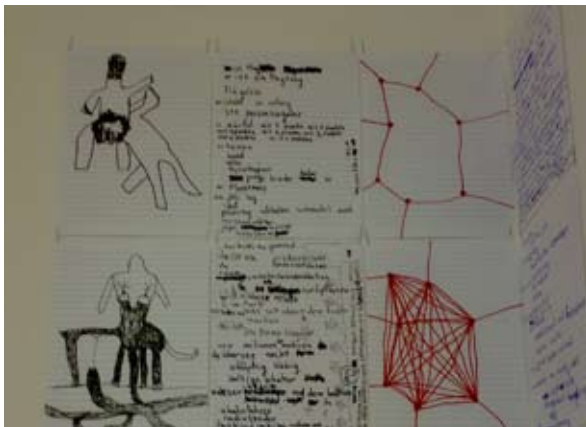
In *Weather 1*, 2004/2005, also from the *Weather Project* series, the text turns out to be ‘traces’ of text placed like white shadows against the cloud formations. The white text presents itself more as the gesture of text, as it isn’t so much read as viewed. This moment between the read and the viewed demonstrates a basic synaesthetic periphery in de Lutz’s collages. Finally the algorithmic text material also refers to the fundamental structure of the digital image itself. Furthermore it leads the painterly effect of the images, which are digitally altered and then printed on the traditional medium of canvas, *ad absurdum*.

Regine Rapp



31.8.2007 - 23.09.2007
Art and Text I
Farkhondeh Shahroudi

Born in Tehran in 1962, Shahroudi has lived in Germany since 1990. She is both a visual artist working in a variety of media: sculpture, drawing, painting, photography, video and computer, and a poet writing in Farsi and German. Her work indeed functions like a series of hyperlinks between art and text, between tradition and technology.





Art and Text I

Farkhondeh Shahroudi

Art Laboratory Berlin is pleased to present a solo exhibition of book art, drawings and a digital work by Farkhondeh Shahroudi as part of the series Art and Text.

Born in Tehran in 1962, Shahroudi has lived in Germany since 1990. She is both a visual artist working in a variety of media: sculpture, drawing, painting, photography, video and computer. Her work indeed functions like a series of hyperlinks between art and text, between tradition and technology.

Her two artist books from the series *The Book in Book* (2001-2007), are hand painted on fabric. Each is unique, referring back to the pre-Gutenberg traditions of illuminated manuscripts and to classical Persian miniatures. Both books are filled with the images of women veiled in the traditional Iranian chador. Shahroudi's use of different fabrics for the book's pages, with their opacity or transparency, challenges our preconceived cultural notions both in terms of material substance and subject matter. By cutting away parts of pages, she creates in her own words "windows and doors" within the artwork.

In contrast to the mechanically produced artwork or book, which according to Benjamin's dictum, loses its 'aura' through mass production, the uniqueness of Shahroudi's hand-made books in effect loads them with a special 'aura' similar to that of a relic or fetish. She sees the artwork as "an object which functions as a carrier of meaning."

Her recent series of drawings, *Glossolalie* (2007), started as an experiment. Right-handed, she made a series of drawings on paper with her left hand. She then painted these images onto fragments of cloth which were cut from a previously unfinished artwork: a cloth which was covered with layers of writing in Farsi.

Shahroudi uses a formula for creating the 'illegible' texts found in many of her artworks. She often writes spontaneous texts, similar to the automatic writing of the Surrealists, and then continues writing over them several times with further texts. The result is simultaneously illegible and (at least phonetically) partially recognisable. It is a mixture of image, calligraphy, lost meaning, and half hidden sound. In her use of writing, sewing, painting (and working on computer) the movement of the hand replaces the voice as the main linguistic medium. "When I work with my hands, it is as if my tongue is working through my hands."

The digital projection *Gülüzar* (2005) is a photo-collage of a camping wagon parked in front of Kreuzberg's Görlitzer Park (which is nicknamed *Gülüzar* - flower meadow - by the local Turkish community). The wagon appears to be upholstered with a Persian carpet. Both the carpet and its symbolic role as mobile garden are a major motif in Shahroudi's work. In her performance *Restituzione* in Rome's Tiburtina railway station (2003) she distributed fragments of carpets to bewildered passers-by. In 2005 she wrapped the columns of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin with Persian carpets.

The garden is a common theme in classical Persian art and poetry. It is also the major motif in the oriental carpet, whose designs usually refer to trees and flora. Furthermore, the carpet as mobile artwork, mobile garden is the perfect symbol for an artist working ex-patria.

Christian de Lutz



30 June- 22 July 07
Art and Music III
Viktor Alimpiev - *Two Songs*

Viktor Alimpiev, whose work *Summer Lightings* was shown at the 4th Berlin Biennale in the Former Jewish Girls' School, combines different artistic fields in his cinematic work: visual arts, music, theater and dance. In his films he has worked with the human body and more recently with song and speech. During the 2005 Venice Theatre Biennale he directed the play *We're Talking about Music* in Italian language together with Marian Zhunin. In Linz in 2006 he created the video *Wie heisst dieser Platz?* in German.



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Art and Music III

Viktor Alimpiev - *Two Songs*

VIKTOR ALIMPIEV – TWO SONGS. BETWEEN SPEECH, SONG AND BODY.

Viktor Alimpiev (*1973, Moscow) combines different artistic fields in his cinematic work: visual arts, music, theater and dance. In his films he has worked with the human body and more recently with song and speech. During the 2005 Venice Theatre Biennale he directed the play *We're Talking about Music* in Italian language together with Marian Zhunin. In Linz in 2006 he created the video *Wie heisst dieser Platz?* in German as a *sprechgesang*.

As part of the exhibition series "Art and Music" Art Laboratory Berlin is pleased to show two recent works during June and July 2007, where the medium of film visualises a full framework of references about speech, song and bodily movement, within which the concept of sculpture plays a vital role.

In his video work *Wie heisst dieser Platz?*, 2006, Alimpiev uses language in the form of singing and speaking as artistic plastic material. A group of eleven women and men stand close to one another in the middle of an empty room. One person, though, is standing with her face to the crowd. "So, what is the purpose of this speaking? What really is the value of this play?" are the first phrases of the woman's *sprechgesang*, with a close-up of her face. Her question remains unanswered, a dialogue does not take place. "And the distance between the speaker and the listener. [...] A reason to speak", she sings later, after having already been silently rejected by the crowd several times. During the whole speech the protagonist's wish to be well placed "at the square" – in the space, at the place becomes visible: "This really is an entertainment, I am speaking on the square... [...] A person speaking from a distance." Meaningful and enigmatic gestures accompany her monologue: downcast gazes of rejection, the pushing back of the counterpart, the rebellious reaction of the group, hands forming fists, the covering of the ears, hands touching the back of the head; and the constant tense posture.

"In my work I want to refer to the 'talking on the square'", said Alimpiev about this work. "Here it is German speech about space, about the place of one person. About the possibility, to name the earth under one's foot." (Interview: Viktor Alimpiev and Christiane Büchner, in: International Short Film Festival Oberhausen 2006, p.146.) The square/place as a social space provides a basis for the opposition of the crowd and the individual; it also locates the individual within the crowd. The German word "Platz" derives from the Greek "plateia" ("street", "official field") and nowadays means a vast field, which is used as an entertaining, recreation or meeting place. The antonym to it is "Enge" (in English: "narrowness") and "Gedrängtheit der Masse" (in English: "fullness of the crowd"). Alimpiev consciously makes use of void and fullness: The vastness of the place, which is expressed in the *sprechgesang*, stands in opposition to the over-fullness of the crowd.

The theatrical staging is fundamentally characterised by the *sprechgesang*, which is the speaker's "appended singing" and dates from Schönberg. Here, the *sprechgesang* is a consciously used speech-melody, similar to a recitative, which in its turn focuses on a clear pronunciation and a the musical awareness of the meaning, rhythm and sound of the word. The use of the *sprechgesang* can be considered here as a conscious break of narrative structures.

Furthermore, the video work *Wie heisst dieser Platz?* can be interpreted as a classical model of the speech act. As if Alimpiev staged several situations of Searle's speech act theory; the act of speech is analysed to its communicative form. The question "Do you hear me?" with the following phrase "I want to speak to you!" is only one of these questioning, asserting or commanding moments in this work, where language turns out to be speech as a means of communication.

Next to the performative speech act, however, sculpture also plays another vital role in this work. The crowd, standing close to one another, reflect a sculptural effect, especially due to their predominant immobility. Alimpiev, attaching great importance to the sculptural in his video and film works, once emphasised the "immobility" and the "eternalmoment" of a sculpture in opposition to moving images and montage, which he wants to use to abolish the value of the single image as well as to "replace eternity with seconds and minutes." (Interview: Viktor Alimpiev and Christiane Büchner, in: International Short Film Festival Oberhausen 2006, p.144.) So the artists acts here like a media sculptor, tracing back the "eternity" of a static group of people back to its temporal level This annihilation of simultaneity is due to the consciously chosen montage cuts, which at some points are even jump-cuts, and break in turn the cinematic continuity.

The most recent work *My Breath* from 2007, which Alimpiev has dedicated to the well known Moscow conceptualist Andrey Monastyrsky, is a study about the conditions of speech and song. We see a close-up of two female faces, who, standing cheek-to-cheek, look past one another. They sing a duet in a

calm and concentrated manner. At first glance it seems like a classical singing exercise. In the course of the performance, however, it develops into an idiosyncratic presentation about breath, breathing and speech.

"Listen! Correct your breath!" sings one singer in Russian, "I breathe in a little, I breathe out a little. It's with me. It's with me! My breath." In a faster tempo she sings about the process of breathing: "Wait until the tone disappears... wait... [...] and then breathe out..."

The gestures of singing – the open mouth, the wide open eyes, slight swaying of the upper body – are followed over the whole five and a half minutes by the camera, which revolves around the heads of the singing women. The close-ups onto the sound producing and sound reciting parts, mouth and ear, emphasise this, as does the conscious blur of the background room. The sung text resembles an actor's breathing exercise: "Now try to remember? What it's called, this breathing out?" The "song" ends with its refrain nearly pleading: "All right! Let it wait. It's with you! It's with you. Don't be afraid. It doesn't go anywhere. It's with you."

The singing, in different tempos, sometimes louder and sometimes lower, recalls a liturgical song, whose solemn presentation and the emphasis on the quint and quart intervals come across as idiosyncratic. This is reflected in the etymological meaning of the title: The Russian word "dykhanye" means "breath", "breathing", "respiration" and also "breeze". It is associated with the Russian word "dukh", which stands for "spirit", "mood" but also "breath". This corresponds with the antique connection between "breath" and "pneuma" (Greek), which can be translated both as "spirit", "aspiration", "breeze" and also as "swirl", "breath of wind" or "pressure". This etymological connection is significant. Roland Barthes once described the connection between "breath" and "spirit" in the following words: "The breath is the pneuma, the soul swelling or breaking, and any exclusive art of breathing is likely to be a secretly mystical art." (Roland Barthes: Image, Music, Text. New York, Hill and Wang 1997, p. 183-84)

A possible interpretative version of this work as a liturgy, also establishes the double meaning of the work's title. An essential aesthetic aspect in My Breath is the self referentiality, which is reflected in both the singers' text on breathing and in the physical act of breathing during song.

Regine Rapp



25 May - 17 June 07

Art and Music II

3-ROOM-CONFERENCE.

A Live Performance with an Exhibition by the Berlin Tiefenrauschorchester

In connection with his painting *Inbetween* (2001) and his film projection *Cloud Pieces* (2005) Leo Königsberg will realize a sound collage on his space cello. This audiovisual production will be taken further by the live act by Christian Glass' electronic acoustics. The dance performance by janusz de woyciechowski, in relation to his film *Titania* (1970), which will be projected in the art space, will develop this interdisciplinary experiment through the human body in movement.



Art and Music II

3-ROOM-CONFERENCE.

A Live Performance with an Exhibition by the Berlin Tiefenrauschorchester

The 3-Room-Conference is a performance project, which was organized by the Berlin Tiefenrauschorchester especially for the rooms of the artspace Art Laboratory Berlin.

In connection with his painting *Inbetween* (2001) and his film projection *Cloud Pieces* (2005) Leo Königsberg will realize a sound collage on his space cello. This audiovisual production will be taken further by the live act by Christian Glass' electronic acoustics. The dance performance by Janusz de Woyciechowski, in relation to his film *Titania* (1970), which will be projected in the art space, will develop this interdisciplinary experiment through the human body in movement.

The Tiefenrauschorchester consists of sound and visual artists, performers, dancers in varying combinations. It is part of the FACTORY-BERLIN, an artist community located in a former battery factory in Berlin-Oberschöneweide. It was founded at the beginning of the 1990s as a place for the production of painting, sculpture, music, performance, dance, film, photography and theater.

"The performance project 3-Room-Conference is an artistic communication in three different spaces. The artists communicate with one another by means of different media in their own specific forms. Elements of sound flow together with the help of an electronic setting which complements the video works. These, in turn, correspond to the dance performance. Altogether we have a whole body of art, which the spectator through his/ her pure presence will become a part of, and without having to act he/ she will become an agitator."

Leo Königsberg in a conversation with Art Laboratory Berlin, April 2007

Leo Königsberg, born 1958 in Salzburg, Austria, studied violin, piano and voice at the Mozarteum in Salzburg from the age of nine. Between 1976-1980 he studied art history and literature at Salzburg University. He worked as a singer at the Salzburg Landestheater and as a stage direction assistant under Czesław Winiarski, and later assisted Professor Pierré Marietan in Paris. As a project for the Studios for New Music at the Salzburg Mozarteum, he realized the work *Installation with 12 Alphorns* at different places in the city of Salzburg. He came to Berlin in 1991. In the beginning of the 1990s he founded the Tiefenrauschorchester and is also a founding member of the artists group Tiefenrausch Ost (T.R.O.). Together with the architect Hans Schmidt he realized the project FACTORY-BERLIN in Berlin-Oberschöneweide. He has exhibited his works in Berlin, Antwerpen, St. Petersburg, Salzburg and other international centers.

Janusz de Woyciechowski, born 1942 in Poland, finished his school with a major in music and studied classical dance at the Ballet Academy in Gdansk. He was the premier solo dancer at the Baltic Opera House and also worked at the Dance Theater. Later he had numerous engagements in Western Europe as well as working as a solo dancer in France and Germany. Additionally de Woyciechowski was the director and producer of the film *skylife*. He wrote and directed the 35mm-film *alicija*. After his position as a ballet director at the Theater Oberhausen he was an actor and choreographer at the Theater a. d. Ruhr in Mülheim. He has also been a director at the Russian Theater Berlin and is currently responsible for the project *theaterknall/ das labyrinth* in Berlin.

Christian Glass, born 1974 in Hamburg, studied history and theory of music in Hamburg and Berlin as well as composition under Prof. Younghi Pagh-Paan in Bremen. He composes theater and film music. In recent years Glass has realized concerts, sound installations and performances in Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin and Munich.

Glass: "Often in my music you can come upon streams of sound. I produce sound material, which amplifies the sound of space by means of accordion, drums, guitar, piano and voices. Then I try to transfer the stream of sound into the visual. Within my work with sound, silence plays an important role. This might seem like a paradox, but silence can be understood as sound, which, with its streaming, creates the possibility to temporarily break free from the feeling of linearity. Silence also gives space for the reaction of the participants." Christian Glass was a founding member of Tiefenrauschorchester Berlin and is a member of the artist group Tiefenrausch Ost (T.R.O.). He has lived and worked in Berlin since 2001.



30 March 07 - 20 May 07
Art and Music I
The Artist Group PG – video works

The Group PG was founded in 1998. It now consists of Ilya Falkovsky, Alexey Katalkin and Boris Spiridonov. PG is a play on words that can be interpreted differently, for example as "Criminal Group", "Hydrant" or "Hand Grenade".

The group activity is multifunctional. It publishes its own magazines and postcards, releases musical albums, makes comics and performances



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Art and Music I

The Artist Group PG - *video works*

The Group PG was founded in 1998. It now consists of Ilya Falkovsky, Alexey Katalkin and Boris Spiridonov. PG is a play on words that can be interpreted differently, for example as "Hydrant", "Hand Grenade" or "Criminal Group". The group activity is multifunctional. It publishes its own magazines and postcards, releases musical albums, makes comics and performances. PG combines various artistic activities in "multimedial comics", installations combining photography and graphic art with video and music. Their main topics are the cruel realities of daily life, but it is ironically reflected through a lyric approach of Moscow psychedelic culture. The artists play the roles of Russian mass media characters: gangsters, Chechen extremists, street hooligans, subculture representatives. In the poster series "Glory to Russia!" they refer to explosive topics in Russian society, for instance the numerous cases of fatal abuse of conscripts in the Russian army, the corruption of the Russian administration, the Chechen War and the power politics of the Russian petroleum industry.

Art Laboratory Berlin: How do you become interested in the topics you later work on?

PG: Every sort of injustice and intolerance attracts our attention. In this matter we don't think only about social injustice, but simply cases of prohibitions of things we like, such as drugs and sex.

A.L.B.: What sort of injustice do you mean exactly?

PG: For us the greatest injustice is the discrimination and violence against those who are smaller and weaker. When the degree of injustice in the society starts to go above a certain level we take this as a theme in our work. We try to take the role of a social thermometer, if one can say that.

A.L.B.: What role do irony and cynicism play? When I first saw your works several years ago, I found it difficult to differentiate between its superironic distance and overidentification.

PG: We consider irony simply as a way, to communicate to the contemporary art viewer, who is not able to deal with statements of direct pathos.

A.L.B.: How do you work as a group? Who takes what role?

PG: At the beginning of our collaboration we distributed specific responsibilities. This differentiated us from other artist groups. PG was the Trojan horse, in which we were able to enter the art scene. Katalkin was responsible for negotiations, PR, card playing and design. My responsibility was protection, debt collection and texts. Boris covered military intelligence, espionage, pickpocketing and editing. The meaning of our cooperation is to be able to react immediately to every violent sociocultural situation. In the course of a conscious maneuver of deception we later exchanged roles. Everything got mixed up over time. Today each of us tries out new fields, in which he earlier felt unsure and tries to learn new things.

A.L.B.: Which role do Russian myths and tales play in your works?

PG: An essential one. It is for us like roots in Reggae. Before we go to war, we get our energy from these sources – just like the legendary heroic knights of the Russian sagas Ilyusha (Muromets), Alyosha (Popovich) and Dobrynya (or Boryan). The similarity to our names has a strong symbolic meaning for us.

A.L.B.: Who are you going to war against? Who is your enemy?

PG: Our opponents are all the reactionaries, who set up barriers and prohibitions, and then who divide the power between themselves.

A.L.B.: Do you consider yourselves as political artists?

PG: Yes, we do consider ourselves as political artists, but rather in an aesthetic sense. We call that "political psychedelic", more or less. To change life and the world, one must first change certain things in consciousness; first in your own. We are trying to expand the borders of this consciousness.



'pre-opening' 23 February 2007

Film screening:

Bildungscamper.

Der Blick des Patriarchen

A documentary film by Nicola Hochkeppel 2004, 62 min.

Using the family's home-movie footage (1965 – 1975), the documentary film *Bildungscamper. Der Blick des Patriarchen* (*Learning by Camping*) from 2004 (62 min.) also chronicles a chapter of German social history during the heyday of the flourishing welfare state.



Film screening:
Bildungscamper.
Der Blick des Patriarchen

A 1960's and 70's West German vacation idyll. The Hubert J. Wagner family of Cologne – all nine of them – trapped between the „simple life“ romanticism of camping and the educated middle-class ideal of classics-based scholarship. Tax consultant Wagner, the arch-catholic clan patriarch, suffers no amendments to his meticulous plans for the rigorous summer pilgrimages. Using the family's home-movie footage (1965 – 1975), the documentary film LEARNING BY CAMPING also chronicles a chapter of German social history during the heyday of the flourishing welfare state. Hitting the road for the holidays with kids, kit, and campervan: The unique super 8 aesthetic prompts associations with highbrow Riviera holidays, complete with madcap comic appeal. Contrast is provided by the present day interviews with Hubert's wife Maria and her grown children. At times critical, at times with ironic humor, the family members delve into early traumas. Despite all attempts at leaving the past behind, the story comes full circle when the former younger generation, now parents themselves, proudly show us their own various and sundry camping vehicles. There's a bit of old man Wagner in all of them after all.

Alexander von Schmidt

Directed and written by Nicola Hochkeppel
 Cinematography: Hubert J. Wagner (+), Super8-Filme (1965-1975) Nicola Hochkeppel
 Editor: Oliver Szyza
 Editing advice: Peter Eckes
 Audio-Restoration/ Mastering: Daniel Schulte
 Technical support: Sven Kesting/ Reinhard Möller
 tsunami film distribution
 wit Produktion ©2004
 2004 21. Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- & Videofest, Honorable Mention Goldener Schlüssel
 2005 The Image Festival, Toronto, Kanada
 Shadow Festival, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Biography
 Nicola Hochkeppel, born 1972 in Cologne. M.A. in Media Studies currently working on her PhD (Film on TV) at the Humboldt University (Berlin). Worked as a scholar on the project Die kleine und die große Show des DFGForschungsprojekts Programmgeschichte des DDR-Fernsehens – komparativ (The Small and the Big Show of the DGF Research Project: a comparative programming history of East German TV).
 Filmography
 2004Bildungscamper. Der Blick des Patriarchen. Dokfilm, 62 min, dv_color.
 2001Cycles. 3'06 min, dv_color.
 Campleben. Theatersommer am Kap. 5'08 min, dv_color.
 2000Auf dem Sofa. Die Pixelpark-AG. 13'47 min, dv_color.

The filmmaker was present at the screening.