

TESA DELLA NUOVISSIMA 105 / ARSENALE DI VENEZIA, JUNE 8TH - AUGUST 26TH OPENING JUNE 7TH 4PM
 & LE PRINTEMPS DE SEPTEMBRE - à TOULOUSE, SEPTEMBER 21ST - OCTOBER 14TH 2007

THE LIVES OF THE ARTISTS

Beyond the Cult of Personality: The Emergence of Public Persona as an Artistic Medium

Alison M. Gingeras

Flamboyant. Extravagant. Extroverted. Eccentric. Meglomaniac. Alcoholic. Sexually obsessed. Manic-depressive. Bohemian—there are as many stereotypes as there are anecdotes about famous artists. The inevitable entwining of an artist's colourful biography and aesthetic genius has provided fodder for scholarly speculation, populist fascination as well as plain, old-fashioned entertainment. Beyond the mere sensationalism, how important is persona in understanding an artist's practice? It's a question that has troubled art historians for a long time. For many, the artist's persona is like the pesky shrew

fiction. Five hundred years after Vasari's death, art history has become a much more stringent practice. By dismissing Vasari's factual errors and exaggerations, the current academic consensus continues to discredit one of his main contributions to the field - the idea that legend and myth, as generated by the artists themselves, are inseparable from understanding their art.

It is not only art historians that are to blame. Artists have always been granted a different status than the rest of the populace, and were, consequently, treated differently. They could speak to the gods. They were granted privileged

positions, disregarding traditional class divisions. As an inverted barometer for societal values, artists could act out safely fantasies, break the taboos, and enjoy the indulgences that are shunned by the moral consensus.

Not all artists continue to take refuge in bohemian or countercultural ideals. Western society has changed this, epitomized by the obsession with celebrity. The result has been that avant-garde strategies have been absorbed into mainstream culture, sucked into the allure of the 'culture industry'. So, what is left at the artist's disposal? How, then, can artists resist the culture industry? Should they resist? Are they passive victims or active proponents of this industry? What position should artists occupy in this kind of society?

Many artists have consciously cultivated their public personas as a strategic, often antagonistic element in their art practice. While there is no single moment of origin when artists began to elevate their own personas into something more significant than simple biographical interest, there are those who have contributed to the transformation of persona into an autonomous field of artistic activity, as equal as any traditional artistic practice.

This use of persona, however, should not be confused with a type of art practice that emerged in the course of the 1970s in which artists used their own life as their primary subject matter. Such figures as Sophie Calle, Christian Boltanski, Hanna Wilke, or Eleanor Antin used art as a poetico-sociological vehicle for the documentation of their



download texts:

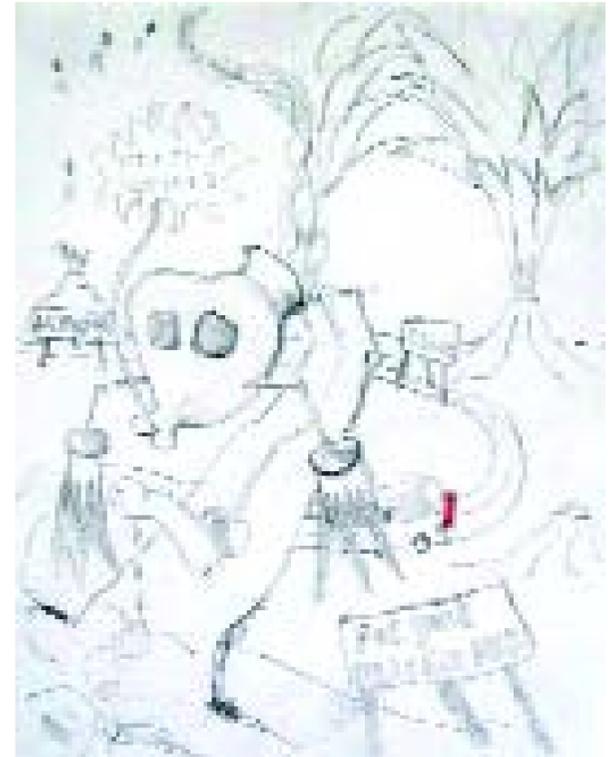
that is best chased away so as not to impede the historian's or critic's "serious" quest for facts and objective interpretation.

Yet this antagonistic shrew has been an integral part of art history. Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* the sixteenth century classic, and required reading for all students of art history, densely interweaves detailed descriptions of the achievements of the great Renaissance artists (from Cimabue and Giotto to Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo) with biographical anecdotes intended to reveal their inner character and better illuminate their art. To say that Vasari was a good storyteller is like saying Frank Sinatra could carry a tune. He was, as one critic put it, a "profoundly inventive fabulist" who not only embellished tales about dead artists, but also incorporated the self-propagated myths told to him by his contemporaries. His collection of biographies freely blended aesthetic theory, sociological description, fact, and

The figure of the artist possessed a unique duality, eliciting equal doses of fascination and contempt, envy and disdain.

The invention of bohemianism in nineteenth-century France provided an efficient means to prevent artists from 'contaminating' everyone else. Derived from the name of a region in the Czech Republic known as Romany, an area inhabited by nomadic gypsies, the modern notion of Bohemia designated a place where artists and disillusioned members of the bourgeoisie could intermingle with the poverty stricken, foreigners, racial minorities, homosexuals, and anyone else on the margins of society. As the historical epicenter of *la vie de bohème*, mid-nineteenth-century Montmartre provided as the basis of most of the populist notions about how artists should live, be-

Continues On
Page 5



Gelatin, 2001, untitled, drawing, 21,5 x 27,7 cm
 Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

A Refuse Between Mind and Matter is a Mine of Information

Chaos Used Creatively in Gelitin's Humanely Conceptual Art

Midori Matsui

Gelitin's art projects can be characterized as a humorous and humane interventionist practice that creates situations for a lively communication and refreshed perception of the everyday phenomena, by providing a physically engaging space in which the participants are encouraged to reestablish their individual contact with the immanent world.

Gelitin's works obviously inherit the spirits and methodologies of Fluxus, Situationists, and Land Art, emphasizing audience participation rather than artist's autonomy, process over a finished work. In this sense, they are in affinity with relational art. But there is a difference between the relational art practiced by the generation of Rirkrit Tiravanija, and that of Gelitin. Although both of them encourage the audience participation, using such basic physical mediums of food and travel, Gelitin's installations and public performance are far more chaotic than Rirkrit's. Inheriting conceptual structures from the sixties's and seventies's avant-garde art, Gelitin execute their performance with their comic (cosmic?) scatology that mix serious reflection with childlike excess. The physical affects of heat, cold, wetness, closedness or expansion of space break down the participants' sense of decorum, enabling them to accept the relatedness of their mind to the "lowest" cycles of excrements and discharges of bodily fluids. Theirs is a conceptual art made human through the artists' contact with contemporary life. Receiving art historical knowledge and children's games

Continues On Page 3



Gelatin, 2003, yuko, drawing, 32 x 24 cm Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

A Refuse Between Mind and Matter is a Mine of Information

Chaos Used Creatively in Gelitin's Humanely Conceptual Art

Midori Matsui

Continued From Page 1

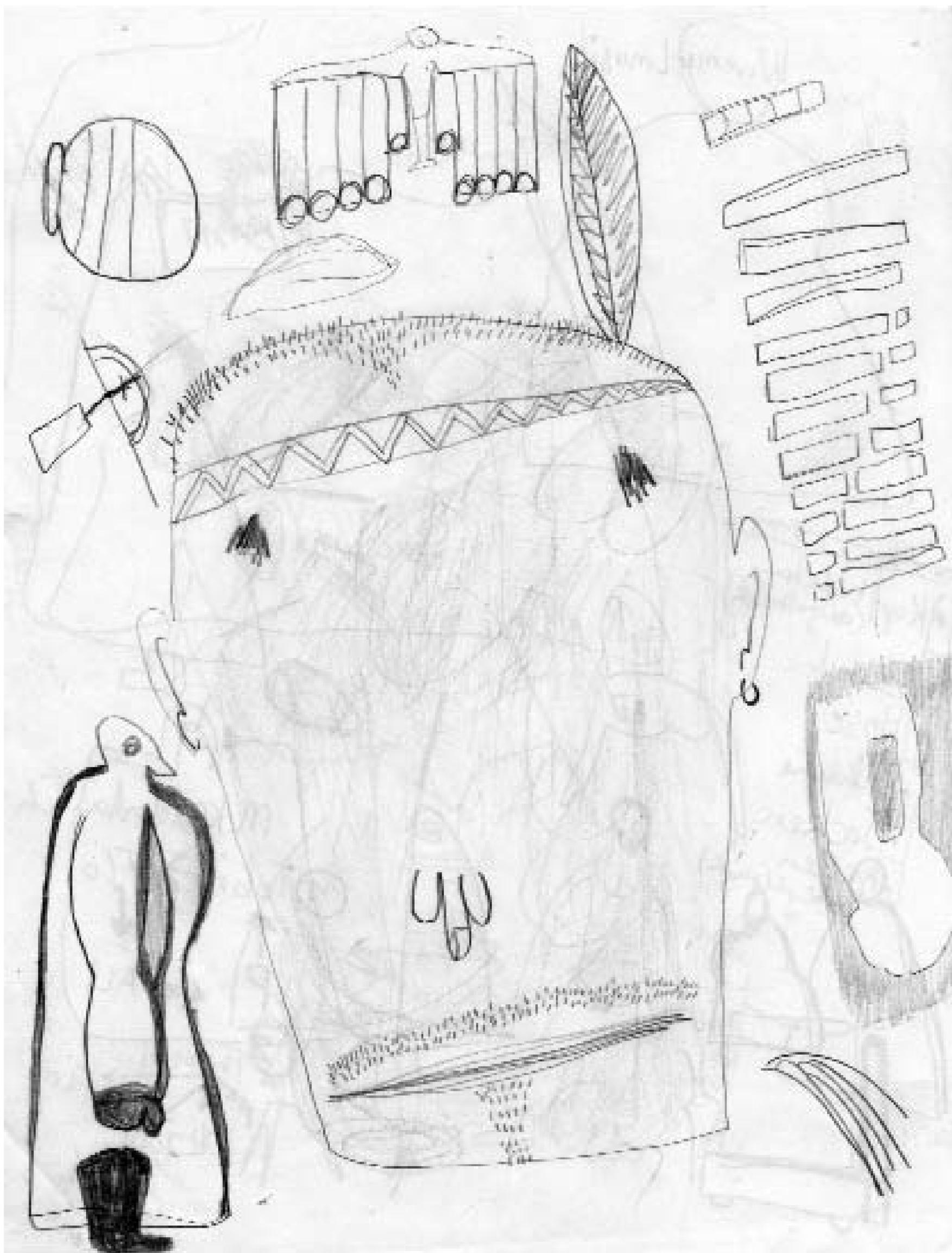
with equal appreciation, they adopt them as equally significant elements to constitute their art. In this, one may see a working of a "pop" sensibility, which is not related to American pop art, but is informed by Gilles Deleuze's idea of a minoritarian art. It is a non-institutional positionality that provisionally forms its codes of behavior by rearranging fragments accumulated through various communicative processes and informational resources, using an advantage of a dweller of a big city. Forced to function in a major culture with a limited access to the institutional body of knowledge, this "minor" and "pop"—"micropop"—sensibility inevitably makes deviations and gaps, creating a new "language" to express and communicate with. Deleuze describes this micro-pop positionality as one that can "find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape." It is a creativity that breaks down the rigid and artificial boundaries between species. Indeed, in Gelitin's installations, "an animal enters into things, assemblage comes into play."¹ The "humanly conceptual" character of Gelitin's art inherit conceptual directions from the public performance and sitespecific projects of their precursors, including Fluxus, Robert Smithson, and International situationism, but produce a greater sense of freedom, fun, and release, with the simplicity, exuberance, and primitive sensibility of children who perceive the world through their affects on their body. The result is a generous and flexible art open to the realities of the human world frequently ignored or repressed by the official categorization of a living space and the economy of human body as governed by its functional efficiency. Among their works, *Rabbit* and *Sweatwat* especially present their rejuvenation of public intervention through a deliberate adoption of an absurd, gratuitous, and childlike

action that dissolves the sense of adult propriety.

Rabbit demonstrates Gelitin's reinstatement of a land artist's visit to a specific site, frequently to a defunct place to endow it with a sense of myth and magic. The project can be compared with Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*. With its gigantic spiralling monument, Smithson indicated the endlessness of time, the incommensurability of matter, and the uncertainty of the human perception of it, while evoking the primordial state of creation through the "molecular lattice of crystals" that connected the monument to its environment. The mixture of crystals with salts enhanced the decay of the monument and its assimilation in the lake's red water. In a more prankish way, Gelitin made the gigantic stuffed pink rabbit sprawling on the hill overlooking a small village in Tyrol, forming a new site that encouraged people's visit to a quiet village, causing a new traffic of things and people. Although the appearance of their monuments were different, one geometrical, and the other "pop," both endowed a new significance to an obscure place, making it a site for a public assembly as well as meditative contemplation. Smithson and Gelitin share certain conceptions of and attitude toward things. Describing the significance of scale of *Spiral Jetty*, Smithson stated that "scale depend[ed] on one's capacity to be conscious of the actualities of perception."³ For him, the largeness of *Spiral Jetty* was important, because it placed the viewer in an uncertain relation to the thing, surpassing the limits of reason that reduces matter to an object ("For me, scale operates by uncertainty"); that sense of uncertainty, encouraged also by the spiralling movement that constantly shifted the viewpoint, gave the viewer a feeling of being in a process, of a cyclical time in which the end led to a beginning. Gelitin's pink rabbit with its intestines sprawling out of its side, with its fading color and wearing skin indicating its gradual return to nature, also evokes a thought that decay is an inception of a new life. The interest in an amorphous matter also relates Gelitin to Smithson. Gelitin's installations frequently consist of a chaotic assembly of things, like a heap of furniture superimposed on one another, or an amalgam of junk-like frag-

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975), trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 27.

³ Robert Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1996), p. 147.



Gelatin, 2003, indianer, drawing, 21,5 x 28 cm, Courtesy Galerei Meyer Kainer, Vienna

ments and mud. They also demonstrates the change in the state of matter through a process of pulverization, that is, breaking down of the original constitution of things and emergence of a new system out of the amorphous particles, "slump and debris." Zaf de Pipi, shown in the 2005 Moscow Biennial, showed the process and the outcome of the freezing of bodily liquid extracted from liver into a crystallized icicle. Water and mud deregulate people's

movement in an important way in Sweatwat and Chinese Synthese Leberkase, respectively shown in London, in October, 2005, and Bregenz in April and May, 2006. Such spectacles point to the idea of "sedimentation," presented in 1968 by Smithson as a method of an art that indicates the undifferentiatedness of creative thought or natural process that surpasses the boundary of a classical art form. In his essay "A Sedimentation of the Mind:



Gelatin, 2001, untitled, drawing, 48,2 x 63,5 cm, Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna

Earth Projects, “Smithson argued that the artist’s thoughts are like “geological miasma,” “crush[ing] the landscape of logic under gracial reveries.” The “slump, debris, slides, avalanches” of impressions and physical affects “take place within the cracking limits of the brain”; what seems as “solid consciousness” is constituted by “particles and fragments” active in “the cerebral sediment.”⁴ Smithson was opposed to the blind worship of modern technology which “organized this mess of corrosion into patterns, grids, and subdivisions.” He felt that by excluding technological reduction from the making of art, artists discovered “processes of more fundamental order,” which recapitulated the process of thought, as well as the actual state of matter which always contained “caverns and fissures.” Believing that “solids are particles built up around flux,” their forms being “illusions surrounding grits,” Smithson thought that by integrating the four processes that emulate natural sedimentation, including “oxidization, hydration, carbonization, and solution,” in its method, art could contain the chaos as the source of imaginative creation.⁵ The use of water in Sweatwat made the creation of such liberating chaos possible. Filling the inside of a gallery with stacked up pieces of furniture and water coming from the penis of a big sculpted human figure, Gelatin created a situation that loosened participants’ inhibitions, making them come together in the shared enjoyment of physical pleasure and freedom of being nothing but an acting body. Finally, I would like to point out the political implications of Gelatin’s “spectacle.” Their spectacle is always of tactile and experiential nature, opposed to the spectacle of the consumer age. The latter was criticized by Guy Debord for reducing experience purely to that of vision, the most abstract of all senses, repressing touch.⁶ Debord argued in his 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle* that the Spectacle, which was people’s euphoric relation to society encouraged through the social apparatus of public events and consumer products, was fundamentally controlled by the laws of capitalism and the intent of the ruling class; the latter planned to confine the perception of people to that of false pleasure, enforcing the acceptance and praise of the status quo.⁷ Debord hoped that situationists’ public demonstrations will break down the people’s confine-

ment in the spectacle, devising “games and situations” that encouraged a different use of senses than the habitual, awakening the hidden potentiality of their creativity.⁸ Gelatin’s public performances, including Sweatwat and Tantamounter, performed in New York, in December, 2006, set up such situations. In the former, the ubiquity and increase of water in a room makes it difficult to walk straight; the infiltration of water into your clothes, the second skin put on to present social propriety, makes you feel helpless, as well as liberated from inhibitions. In either case the distance from the matter and other bodies break down. In Tantamaounter, the human copy machine that generously produces an art work in return to any object put into a box is an extremely generous act. For Gelatin, their confinement in a box, without any access to the external world, via telephone, internet, or even the sight of a person interacting with them, created a situation in which their senses were focused on the things in front of themselves, the limitation of information, time, and material, inducing the flashes of inspiration, calling forth the yet unrealized parts of their creativity. With their playful disintegration of normal senses, which releases the participants and themselves from the hard shell of the parochial existence, Gelatin’s actions become a micropolitical art responding to the negative effects of globalization, including the destruction of communities and flattening out of perception. In the similar manner to that in which the sixties’ and seventies’ artists reacted against the rise of a postmodern age with its standardizing of environment with an entropy of meaning, Gelatin’s work strives to cure contemporary minds of apathy and reification, by mixing conceptual strategies with the laughter and innocence of the sensibility nurtured in the hybrid influences and disseminations of the micropop spirit.

4 Ibid., p. 100.

5 Ibid., p. 106; “By refusing technological ‘miracles’ the artist begins to know the corroded moments, the carboniferous states of thought, the shrinkage of mental mud, in the geological chaos—in the strata of esthetic consciousness. The refuse between mind and matter is a mine of information” (107).

6 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), p. 17; “Since the spectacle’s job is to cause a world that is no longer directly perceptible to be seen via different specialized mediations, it is inevitable that it should elevate the human sense of sight to the special place once occupied by touch; the most abstract senses, and the most easily deceived, sight is naturally the most readily adaptable to present-day society’s generalized abstraction.”

7 Ibid., p. 19.

8 Guy Debord, “Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency” (1957) trans. Tom McDonough and rpt. in *Guy Debord and The Situationist International*, ed. Tom McDonough, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 44-5; “Our central purpose is the construction of situations, that is, the concrete construction of temporary settings of life and their transformation into a higher, passionate nature. We must develop an intervention directed by the complicated life and the behaviors that it incites and that overturns it” (44); “Our action on deportment...can be defined summarily as the invention of a new species of games. The most general aim must be to broaden the nonmediocre portion of life, to reduce its empty moments as much as possible” (45).

THE LIVES OF THE ARTISTS

Beyond the Cult of Personality: The Emergence of Public Persona as an Artistic Medium

Alison M. Gingeras

Continued From Page 1

everyday lives or activities. Unlike these “Life Artists”, the artists herein are uninterested in the documentary or narrative framing of their lives nor are they invested in the veracity of the tales or reliquary they used in their artworks. Instead they harness Western culture’s attraction and repulsion for the cult of personality in order to intensify the antagonistic power of their self-generated myths.

Francis Picabia: Sea, Sex and Sun

Dadaist conspirator, enfant terrible of the Surrealist revolution, friend and occasional collaborator of André Breton, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and Tristan Tzara, the French artist Francis Picabia [1879-1953] has an indisputable place within the pantheon of the historical avant-garde. As well as his important contributions to some of the most important art movement of the twentieth century Picabia had a ferociously unconventional persona. Echoing his fierce aesthetic independence, he did not conform to the image or lifestyle of his avant-garde colleagues. Born to a cosmopolitan family, the son of a Cuban diplomat in Paris, Picabia never dabbled in bohemianism. He was rich and had no qualms about flaunting his wealth in public. More playboy than serious artist, Picabia and his wife, Olga, lived on a yacht in Cannes during the 1930s. While many of his fellow artists split their time between the Côte d’Azur and Paris, Picabia steered clear of artistic circles when socializing in both cities. His relentless pursuit of pleasure was not only publicly acknowledged, but it surfaced in his work as well as in that of other artists. Picabia’s love of fast cars, [Man Ray made several images of him in the 1920s], was surpassed only by his insatiable taste for women. A self-portrait from 1940 depicting him with windswept hair and framed by two female temptresses is the artist as an unapologetic womanizer (he often made aphoristic analogies between the pursuit of art and the love of women).

Picabia’s male bravado and unabashed decadence takes on a more complex tone when read in parallel with his countless writings, letters, poems, and aphorisms. A devout Nietzschean since early adulthood, Picabia firmly believed that self-generated myth was one of the essential elements in his nihilistic program. When understood in these terms, his carefully groomed public persona was a part of his artistic strategy. As Carole Boulbes, a Picabia specialist, has written:

“[Like Friedrich Nietzsche,] Picabia interwove his writings with numerous aphorisms about art, love, the family, glory and money. . . . When Picabia opts for skepticism and insists that there is nothing to understand or when he prefers the critique of values to superfluous commentary on the works, this is in fact the expression of a philosophy. Throughout his literary and visual works he calls into question the founding oppositions of Western aesthetic categories (beautiful/ugly, pure/impure, good/evil)”

The interpretation of Picabia’s art, writings, and lifestyle are all subject to these Nietzschean principles of deformation and nihilism. When Picabia strays from the orthodoxy of the avant-garde or cultivates a nonconformist, decadent persona, his acknowledged affiliation with Nietzsche makes it hard to interpret his intentions only at face value. In this light, the superficial appearance of his “sea, sex, and sun” lifestyle on the Côte d’Azur in the early 1940s seem antagonistic, particularly during a time of war.



Andy Warhol: The Wrong Person for the Right Part

“If I ever have to cast an acting role, I want the wrong person for the part (...) it’s more satisfying to get someone who’s perfectly wrong. Then you



Left to right: David Galloway, Christian Meyer and Franz West in the artist's atelier, Vienna, January 2007, Photo: Darsie Alexander

know you’ve really got something.” Andy Warhol, “Fame,” *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, 1975

Andy Warhol wasn’t merely famous - he changed the nature of fame, and this impact was not limited to the world of art and artists. Warhol founded his art practice on the careful choreography of his public persona. He harnessed the power of celebrity - his own, the celebrities he created, the culture’s growing thirst for celebrity as such - elevating to it to a different status. For Warhol, his persona was an artistic medium, no different from the more conventional forms (film, painting, sculpture, photography) he used in his art.

Despite our current facility to merge the figure of Warhol with today’s entertainment-obsessed society, there is little interpretation of the relationship between Warhol’s construction of his persona and its direct impact on his art. The campaign to isolate and dismiss the importance of Warhol’s persona in terms of his overall artistic contribution is much more systematic in recent academic writing. Scholarly publications such as *October* attempt to “fix” the persona problem by historicizing Warhol into two distinct periods: the Early Factory Years (1960–68) years and the Business Art Years (1969–87). Art historian and film theorist Annette Michelson has chosen the term “prelapsarian” to characterize the first period. This biblical allusion perfectly sums up the “evil” that caused Warhol’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden. “After 1968”, she writes, “Warhol assumed the role of grand couturier, whose signature sells or licenses perfumes. . . . Warhol’s ‘Business art’ found its apogee in the creation of a label that could be affixed.” While the pre-1968 Factory certainly flirted with celebrity and the mainstream vehicles of fame, it did so under critical auspices. For Michelson, the prelapsarian Warhol reflected the ills of mainstream culture through irony-soaked parody.

The shot fired from Valerie Solanas’s gun in 1968 signaled the beginning of Warhol’s supposed “decline.” It is a commonly held truth that this traumatic event soured Warhol, driving him toward more cynical modes of art making. This event also marked a dramatic shift in the way Warhol consciously “used” his celebrity, marking perhaps the emergence of public persona as a legitimate and autonomous artistic medium.

At least on the surface, Warhol’s life and art in the “new” Factory carried on as before: he continued to make films, paintings, and sculptures as well as having a hand in various cultural enterprises. Yet as the delegation of Warhol’s artistic production slightly increased, Warhol made even more time for public appearances. During the 1970s and 1980s, he continued to travel around the world, documenting his globetrotting through his *Time Capsules*. In New York, his social life epitomized the fashion of the time, and peaked with the decadence of such mythical clubs such as Studio 54. Warhol behaved like any other star. His overactive social life was relentlessly photographed by the paparazzi, and he appeared regularly in the society and gossip pages. Michael Jackson, Bianca Jagger, Joan Collins, as well as countless other stars, royalty, and society women—the list of Warhol’s companions on film was not only a barometer for who was hot in the 1970s and 1980s, but also reflected his rolodex of celebrity clients for his booming portrait business.

Working for the Zoli modeling agency (available for “special bookings only”), Warhol sold his celebrity to various companies for product endorsements in television and print, giving a sense of inevitability to his early Pop appropriations of such banal products as Brillo scrubbing pads and Campbell’s soup. Whether he was modeling Levi’s blue jeans, advertising TDK videotapes, I.a.Eyeworks, or the ill-fated Drexel Burnham Lambert junk bond trading firm, or

guest starring on an episode of *The Love Boat*, these vulgar commercial activities were part of the logical culmination of Warhol's trajectory. "Business art is the step that comes after Art. I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist. After I did the thing called 'art' or whatever it's called, I wanted to be an art businessman or a Business Artist."

Warhol refused to differentiate between "right" and "wrong" appearances in this Business Art phase of his life. What counted was translating his persona into its most extreme commercial potential. Yet while Warhol was trying to maximize the impact of his public persona in the spheres of art, popular culture, and the market, he insisted on highlighting his imperfections, his personal neuroses, and he claim to be "Nothingness Himself." While this paradoxical coupling of extreme public exposure and sense of invisibility might be chalked up to some manifestation of false modesty, as morally bankrupt as his indiscriminate activities, it could also be attributed to the fulfillment of one of his crypto-critical philosophical maxims. When he describes himself as "putting his Warhol on," he enumerates what he sees in the mirror: "Nothing is missing. It's all there. The affectless gaze. The diffracted grace. . . The bored languor, the wasted pallor. . . the chic freakiness, the basically passive astonishment. . . The glamour rooted in despair, the self-admiring carelessness, the perfected otherness, the shadowy, voyeuristic, vaguely sinister aura. . . Nothing is missing. I'm everything my scrapbook says I am."

Warhol worked very hard at being the wrong person for the right part. His "wrongness" was documented in his obsessive archival activities: the publication in his *Diary* and his *Philosophy (From A to B and Back Again)*; his scrapbooks and *Time Capsules*. More than any "artwork" or film he ever made, Warhol's public persona became the most effective device to record and reflect on contemporary life. If the role of the artist today is search for "aura" in a world of vacuity, Warhol was definitely the wrong person for the right part.

Jeff Koons: The New Adam

Jeff Koons is one of the unmistakable icons of the 1980s—as much through his affiliation with the "commodity art" scene that emerged out of the East Village as through his continuation of Warhol's legacy. Koons consciously took up where Warhol's "Business Art" left off by espousing mass media and the market as the subject of his work while harnessing their strategies in the promotion of himself.

In every interview that Koons gives about the content of his work, he infused his otherwise "empty," "vulgar," "icy," and "banal" oeuvre with more than just biographical details. His discourse is peppered with pseudo-revolutionary maxims, explaining the desires that drive his art: "to communicate with the masses"; to provide "spiritual experience" through "manipulation and seduction"; to strive for higher states of being promised by "the realms of the objective and the new." His professed love for the media goes beyond its usefulness as a communication tool: "I believe in advertisement and the media completely. My art and my personal life are based on it."

During the 1988-1989 art season, Koons and his galleries put their money where their mouth was. A series of full-page advertisements was purchased in the major trade magazines of the time: *Artforum*, *Flash Art*, *Arts*, and *Art in America*. In the centre of each highly theatrical tableau, Koons presided over the scene smiling smugly at the camera, impeccably groomed, obviously airbrushed. Each of the four ads illustrated one of the derogatory aspects of Koons's persona as propagated by the press: Koons as a "breeder of banality" (pictured with two pigs), Koons as "corruptor of the future generation" (photographed in a schoolroom full of children with slogans such as "Exploit the Masses" and "Banality

as Savior" written on the blackboard behind him), Koons as gigolo (pictured in a Hugh Hefner-style robe in front of a boudoir-like tent), and Koons as frivolous ladies' man (posing with bikini-clad models and a braying pony). These self-satisfied images marked the introduction of Koons own image into his work while beating the critics to the punch. He called himself a pig, an indoctrinator, a whore, and a narcissist before the guardians of "truth" and "authenticity" could even attack his next body of work—*Made in Heaven*.

By now, everyone knows the story. Koons met the Eurotrash Pop singer/porn star/member of Italian parliament Ilona Staller [aka Cicciolina] in 1989 after having based the sculpture *Fait d'Hiver* (from the *Banality* series, 1988) on a found image of her body. Having initially solicited her involvement on his new body of work to be titled *Made in Heaven*, their collaboration fast turned into a real-life love affair and marriage. The resulting works—an ensemble of life-size sculptures in wood and plastic, paintings, glass figurines, as well as a billboard advertising their unrealized porn film—graphically depicted acts of matrimonial consummation. Moral backlash aside, this union of art and life pushed the perception of Koons over the edge—even in the art world. In the end, sexual exploitation was a minor irritant in this story. The real taboo that Koons shattered can be located in the manner in which he used his very public relationship with Staller to challenge the humanistic expectations of the role of the artist in contemporary society. As Sylvère Lotringer writes, "[Koons] embraced the System as publicly as he kissed Cicciolina's ass. Ilona Staller became his best PR, using her genitalia, Koons said, to 'communicate a very precise language'. He never had to deny or 'deconstruct' anything to make his point. The culture industry was doing it for him."

With this foray into sexploitation, Koons's proclamations about Ilona and himself are most radical when taken at face value. As the "contemporary Adam and Eve" [as Koons put it] they were far from taking the position of passive victims of capitalism's malicious impact on society and art. Twisting the biblical reference to fit contemporary life, the Koons-Staller union embraced the supposed "sins" of the market, brazenly shattering the expectation that artists should operate in a higher moral realm; it removed the money, power, and celebrity that corrupts the rest of society. With this complicity, Koons fulfilled his role as the new Adam, blissfully savouring the once-forbidden fruit offered by the American way of life, minus the cynicism or guilt that plagued his artistic forbears.

"Every Artist Is a Person": Kippenberger as *Selbstdarsteller*

Martin Kippenberger didn't need to die prematurely at age forty-three to become a cult figure in Europe. At the end of the 1970s, before deciding to become a visual artist, Kippenberger's main preoccupation was self-invention. He went to Florence in 1976 "looking like Helmut Berger on a good day" but was never discovered. He returned from Italy and temporarily moved to Paris to become a novelist (he never finished his novel, but continued writing throughout his life). In 1978, he established the Büro Kippenberger in Berlin with Gisela Capitain; this marked his formal debut as a visual artist, although his office was more than a studio, as it blended all forms of artistic endeavour à la Warhol's Factory. Shortly thereafter, Kippenberger became co-owner and manager of the S.O. 36 in Kreuzberg, the centre of the punk and new wave scene. To mark his twenty-fifth birthday that same year, he printed a poster picturing himself with a hooker, with the banner title, "A Quarter of a Century as one of you, among you, with you." The self-designated epithets "show-off," "hypervoyeur," "pretender," "informer," "organizer," "ringleader" "long-a-painter," and "big spender" surrounded his head like a halo. During this early yet hyperactive phase in his life, Kippenberger's indecision about his vocation produced a maelstrom of creative activities. The only

thing that was constant was his tireless, systematic promotion of his persona.

Kippenberger's invention of Kippenberger was not limited to his early career; it was an ongoing process. His nicknames and alter egos appeared everywhere he worked: Kippy, Der Kippenberger, MK, Spiderman, a crucified Frog, or just plain Martin. He wore as many hats as he had names for himself: painter, sculptor, architect, writer, poet, underground club manager, musician, promoter, exhibition maker and director of his own museum (MOMAS, the Museum of Modern Art Syros). It was impossible to disentangle his self-promotion from his way of life.

The German language offers a perfectly tailored word to designate Kippenberger's programmatic drive. *Selbstdarsteller*, as Diedrich Diederichsen writes, is "often translated as 'self-publicist' or 'self-promoter' but literally means 'self-performer.'" In his text on Kippenberger's art and life between 1977 and 1983, Diederichsen goes on to explain that in contemporary German parlance, the term *Selbstdarsteller* is most often used as an epithet in the realm of politics, while in the arts takes on a more ambivalent tone. Kippenberger as *Selbstdarsteller* can be compared to equally self-promoting/self-performing artists, "poised somewhere between Serge Gainsbourg and Klaus Kinski." Yet the nuance offered by the German term - its oscillation between promotion/publicity and performance of the self - raises an important distinction. Unlike the purely cynical marketing strategies in the mainstream of the music business and the art world, Kippenberger's *Selbstdarstellung* contained a complex economy of checks and balances, promotion and self-effacement, exuberance and humility, gut-splitting humor and profound melancholia.

"Every artist is a person," Kippenberger said. Originally used to combat Joseph Beuys's maxim "Everyone - each person - is an artist....The Revolution is in us," Kippenberger's humble statement might seem to contradict his own self-generated mythology. Kippenberger's first artwork - a cycle of one hundred small-format paintings titled *One of You, A German in Florence* made out of frustration with his acting career in 1977 - might hold the key to this seeming contradiction. *One of You, A German in Florence* offers a panoply of snippets from Kippenberger's everyday life in the modern Renaissance city, rendered in black and white oil paint. This multipanelled work - deliberately reminiscent of Gerhard Richter's grisaille *48 Portraits of Important Men* - is Kippenberger's first attempt to create an open system of images, signs, language, high and low cultural references, and architectural motifs. From a typical hole-in-the-ground toilet to a neon sign of a local ice-cream parlor, "Perché no", from a portrait of an Italian crooner to a neighborhood milk man and a copy of Sandro Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Man with a Medallion* (1470-75), this is more than a picture of the human condition. Kippenberger always counted himself among us.

As one critic noted: "Kippenberger staged his public life because he thought he could bear it better in its mythologized form. He demythologized art and the conditions of its creation so that it would not lose its credibility." Kippenberger's contradictory yet poignant use of self-performance/self-promotion was one possible answer to the challenge of existing in the contemporary cultural landscape.



NOMADISIEREN

Urs Jaeggi

Es gibt nichts zu rechtfertigen. Dass Kunstmachende heute offensiver in das Warum und Wie der Kunst eingreifen, hat damit zu tun, dass sie ungesicherter arbeiten als je zuvor. Kunst ist, was sie ist. Ein Kunstgebilde. Martin Heidegger schrieb: „Kunst ist nur ein Wort, das keiner Wirklichkeit entspricht.“ Eine Seifenblase?

Die Ästhetik, die Kunst zu erklären versucht, setzt Zeichen und wenn sie ehrlich ist, stellt sie Fragen. Meine paar Sätze drehen sich, auch wenn sie weiter gehen, um das, was sie hier von mir sehen und hören werden. Der Raum ist das Bild. Das Bild der Raum: Wort und Ton.

Eine Installation?

Etwas Installiertes. Ich habe zwei Onkeln gehabt, die Installateure waren. Sie planten und setzten möglichst funktional etwas zusammen, das gebraucht wurde: Heizungsanlagen. Was nützlich, ja notwendig ist. Kunstmachende Installateure sind nicht notwendig, stellen wie alle Kunst Überflüssiges her. Wir sind Durcheinanderbringer, die das Durcheinander-gebrachte ordnen oder weiter chaotisieren. Ähnlich wie Zeichnen und Malen, können Kinder das auch und zum Teil sehr gut. Man braucht sich nur Kinderzimmer anzugucken: Objekte werden zerlegt, neu zusammengesetzt. Berühren, spüren, sehen, das Funktionieren ausprobieren, zerlegen, aufbauen, die Farben fließen lassen, Töne und Geräusche suchen. Das ist, wenn auch nicht immer für die Eltern, wunderbar und genau so überflüssig wie Kunst, und kann genau so spannend sein, aufregen und Unruhe verbreiten. Samuel Beckett sagte, es gebe keine Malerei, es gebe nur Bilder, und da Bilder keine Würstchen sind, sind sie weder gut noch schlecht. Alles was man sagen könne: dahinter stecke ein absurdes, letztlich unerklärliches Drängen zum Bild, dem innere Spannungen entsprechen, und die den Betrachter interessieren, aufregen oder gleichgültig lassen.

Kunst?

Man kann versuchen, zu den Werken die Meinungen und Urteile der Betrachter zu erfassen. Ein Teil der Kunstsoziologie beschäftigt sich damit, womit aber die Werke nicht zu erklären sind. Man kann die Formen, Farben und die Ikonologie der Bilder zu erfassen versuchen; damit wird systematisiert, werden Unterschiede aufgezeigt. Was nützlich ist und Teilerklärungen bringt, vor allem wenn man, hermeneutisch, sorgfältig und Zug um Zug Werke und ihren Kontext aufzuhellen versucht. Aber vor und nachher wissen wir: Kunstwerke existieren, weil wir sie als Kunstwerke erkennen und bezeichnen.

Und wer ist „wir“?

Einmal der Betrachter, vor allem aber eine Allianz von Spezialisten, die von der Kunstgeschichte, der Philosophie usw. oder der Kunst selber herkommen und die das Phänomen „Kunst“ zu spezifizieren und funktionalisieren versuchen. Sie urteilen, bestimmen. Der Versuch ist meist auch das Urteil.

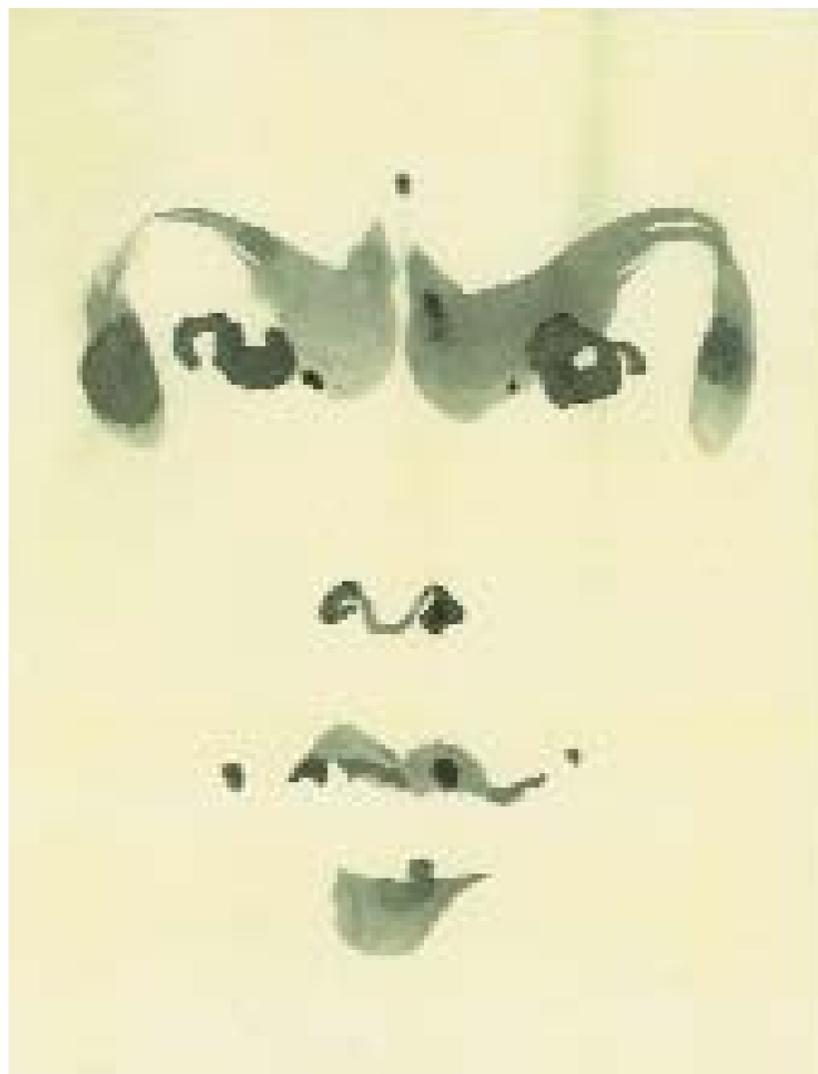
Die Grenzen werden dabei immer offener, sagt man, alles ist möglich. Aber da sind die erwähnten Wächter, die Zellen bilden und überwachen. Fast jeder kennt fast jeden, Streit und Übereinkünfte blühen. Das Spannende, weil Ausbrüche nicht zu verhindern und notwendig sind, geschieht trotzdem auf der Flucht. Da, wo die Kulturen sich überschneiden und bekämpfen. Und im Innern, wo die Disziplinen brechen (Kunst, Poesie, Naturwissenschaft, Musik, Geschichte und Philosophie) und die autoreferenziellen, geschlossenen Systeme nicht mehr greifen. Draussen, im Freien, ist die Luft allerdings schärfer und ungemütlicher, das Denken schwieriger. Ein Grund vielleicht, warum der immer stärker geforderte interdisziplinäre Diskurs prekär und verletzlich bleibt und, manchmal gegen die eigenen Forderungen, leicht diskreditiert wird. Die Wunde bleibt oder nüchterner: die Notwendigkeit.

Die Kunstschaffenden selber fordern diesen Diskurs, beteiligen sich an ihm, nicht immer mit den dafür notwendigen Kenntnissen, um über das rein Ästhetische hinauszugelangen. Weil sie, wie die Philosophie, kein eigenes Terrain haben, bleiben die Arbeiten, ohne deswegen an Bedeutung zu verlieren, fragil, zerbrechlich, immer häufiger auch ephemere. Um es wieder etwas pathetisch zu sagen: hier wird am deutlichsten, dass wichtige Werke immer auch riskant das Spiel zwischen Leben und Tod inszenieren und austragen. Hier, über die Hintertreppe, erscheint die *conditio humana*, die Angst, das Schreckliche, das Grausame der Modernität, aber auch das Schöne, Angenehme, Frivole, das Schockierende und Berührende. Dass das Inhumane und das Menschenwürdige die Kunstmachenden umtreibt, ist natürlich nicht neu, aber unvermeidlich in einer krisen- und kriegsdurchschüttelten Welt. Und politisiert. Nicht im direkten Engagement. Man kann Blumen malen, Bäume oder was auch immer machen.. Es gibt kein Ausweichen vor der Frage: warum Kunst machen in einer Welt, in der Millionen ums Überleben kämpfen und Hunderttausende diesen Kampf verlieren?

Es gibt keine Entschuldigung.

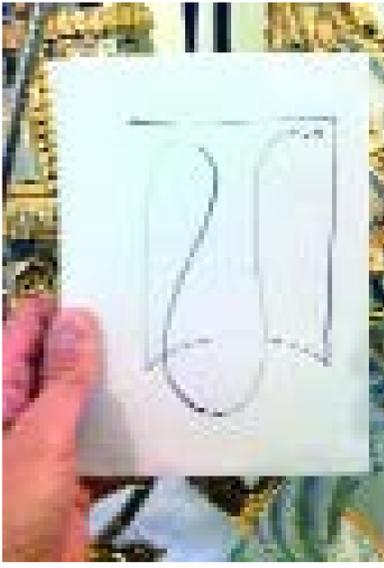
Ich murmle: es ist seltsam und wunderbar, wie sich mitten in der Hölle etwas dagegenstemmt. Ein Wunder. Wie die Liebe. Vielleicht eines der Dinge, die uns vor dem Aufgeben und dem Selbstmord schützen?

Das ist wenig und viel.



Olivier Garbay, Roman Forest, 2005
(from the series: l'importance d'aimer ou de l'indifference du papier)
brushed/painted ink, Courtesy of the artist

**Le Printemps de Septembre
— à Toulouse.**

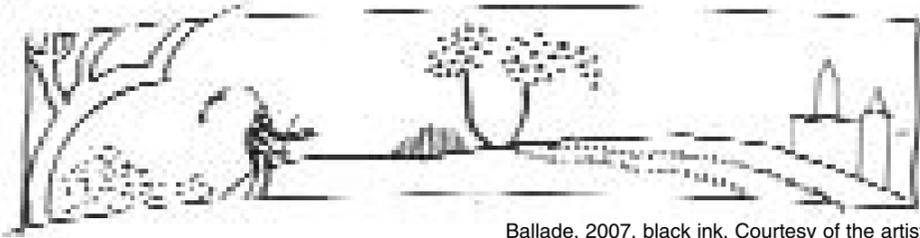


The Cloud, 2007, ink drawing
Courtesy of the artist



Sans titre, 2007, Courtesy of the artist

*La source est un monde d'ours.
Habités, vêtus de cuir, sales,
Ils peuvent faire plus de bruit
qu'un rocher...
S'altérer à une fausse santé pour regarder
son sort d'animal couronné d'été-été,
justement que ça : une hôte à l'été
avec qu'ils aiment la mélancolie
pour regarder à la fin de l'été.*



Ballade, 2007, black ink, Courtesy of the artist



Galaad, 2007, porcelain, Courtesy of the artist



Olivier Garbay



Monk with a bird in his ear, 2007
ink drawing, Courtesy of the artist

Perceval and the Pure of Heart

Bruce Haines

Ram, based off Garrett Lane in the borough of Wandsworth in south London was apparently the last brewery in the city to deliver beer by horse and cart, a distant memory that chimes with simpler and, some might say, better times. To more metropolitan eyes, 'heavy' horses are less familiar as a tool to be worked with on the land than a vehicle for crowd control on the streets, with their ability to mount pavements and to turn in their own length, effective in a way that a motorised vehicle could never be. Theirs is a kind of benign appearance that calms a situation before it gets out of hand.

The working 'heavy' or 'shire' horse was eulogised in ceramic forms by potteries based in Northern England, notably by H.A. Wain & Sons who manufactured their Melba Ware at Longton, Stoke on Trent in Staffordshire. Most were sold from around 1967-1984, when the company ceased trading. Many of these horses, sometimes made at 1/8th scale, were harnessed with miniature copies of the horses' brasses - cast brass 'medals' stitched to a leather backing often now found hanging at the side of fireplaces, especially in village pubs - and leather fittings that would hang from their heavy yokes and from around their flanks. The ceramic horses would often come with their own little hand made wooden and brass carts.



Sarah Lucas's *Perceval* (2006) is a replica of these china ornaments, many of which are still to be found on mantle pieces of a certain elder generation of the population's homes throughout Britain. It scales the heavy horse back up to life size, transformed into a 4550kg life size bronze. Though Lucas has described *Perceval* as "a sculpture for the pure of heart", this impressive simple beast implies many complex associated references: *Perceval* is an eight hundred year old Arthurian legend; has nodding references to 19th century pastoralism; and carries the spirit of a peculiar 20th century English modernism. The legend from which it borrows its name has formed the basis for Jungian analysis of male adolescent development. And as a public sculpture it exists in the context of the history of the horse, mounted or not, as public monument which cover the principle cities of Europe from Madrid to Paris and, of course, Venice itself.

Lucas spends much of her time working in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, not far from the site of John Constable's painting *The Haywain* (1821), itself titled after a type of horse-drawn cart, near Flatford

on the river Stour. In *The Haywain* a horse and cart stands in the river in the foreground of the painting while across the meadows in the middle distance a group of haymakers are at work. The cottage shown on the left of the painting was rented by a farmer called Willy Lott and stands behind Flatford Mill. Today the cottage and river path are still much as they were in Constable's day. Everything else, unsurprisingly, has changed. But in fact the painting was an imitation too in a way, as it was as much a memory of a place, seeing as it actually created in Constable's London studio in Camden from sketches made en *plein air*. Far from being acknowledged as the icon we know it to be today, when it was exhibited at the royal Academy in 1821 *The Haywain* failed to attract any bidders. In fact he was despised in England for his paintings depicting rural toil and graft. But when exhibited in France, Charles X awarded Constable a gold medal for the painting for his quintessentially English scene.

Perceval's load in his accompanying cart, are two somewhat unexpected giant outsized painted cast concrete courgettes, lying across one another in the back. While the horse is as complete a copy of a real miniature of a life size 'heavy' as it is possible to make, the courgettes are as far removed from their original context as they could possibly be. And suggest a more lascivious beginning or end to its journey. They are the scale of bodies, cast as phalluses, their references also more innocently calling to mind the deliberately grown giant vegetables that lie next to one another competing for rosettes in country fairs. Such fairs are themselves most often associated historically around key dates to do with ancient fertility rites, such as the Mayday Maypole or Harvest Festival.

Being cast in bronze at this scale is not the most straightforward procedure, both time-consuming and expensive to make. Lucas is known primarily for using comparatively 'simple' materials from cigarettes to stockings but she has always been an artist to surprise. In fact although on first appearances *Perceval* is perhaps an unlikely subject, especially physically, for Sarah Lucas to have addressed, in many ways it functions perfectly as a carrier of the dominant themes that run throughout her work of sex, death, Englishness and gender, not to mention a sense of misbehaviour, bravura and even drinking. The name 'heavy', in Scotland, is also the county's generic term for its beer. Lucas's countless references dovetail both distant points in history and also by implication our own personal experiences.

The title *Perceval* is borrowed from the name of one of King Arthur's 'Knights of the Round Table' in the legend of *The Holy Grail*, first written by Chrétien de Troyes around the end of the 12th century. The legend exists in many versions, pagan and Christian, and originated in fertility rites celebrating the passage of barren winter into fertile spring, often involving an element of human sacrifice. *Perceval* is character often portrayed as an innocent who grew up deep in the Welsh forests after his father died while he was young, and uninitiated 'in the ways of men', namely the influence of knights, swords, horses and, one assumes, sex. The story of his life charts the move away from his mother into the wider world. Eventually, age 15 years old, he

meets a group of passing knights and determines to become like them, travelling to King Arthur's court. After proving himself as a useful warrior, he is invited to join the Knights of the Round Table. It seems that his innate naivety may have contributed to his subsequent success in locating The Holy Grail.

The story was taken up in a group of stories known as the Welsh Romances associated with a publication called the *Mabinogion*. The hero in the *Mabinogion* is Peredur, the Welsh for Perceval, son of Efracw (Efracw is etymologically based on York in the North of England and suggests his father ruled there at some point). In the *Mabinogion*, Peredur has many more lasciviously orientated adventures than his namesake in Chrétien de Troyes' version, which includes a stay with the Nine Witches of Gloucester and an extended foray of fourteen years in Constantinople.

The *Mabinogion* was not widely read though until its translation into English in 1849 by Lady Charlotte Guest, who gave it the title and which coincided with a revival in Welsh nationalism celebrated through a festival known as the Eisteddfod, which still takes place today. The Eisteddfod can be traced back to 1176 when it is said that the first Eisteddfod was held, under the auspices of Lord Rhys, at his castle in Cardigan. There he held a grand gathering to which were invited poets and musicians from all over the country. A specially made chair was awarded to the best poet and musician, a tradition that prevails in the modern day National Eisteddfod.

What the two versions of *Perceval* share - and there are many more - is the mistake the main protagonist makes in not asking the right questions, simply because he was taught, when being brought up, to not ask too many. Consequently he fails to ask the crucial question of the King that would have resulted in him being healed. The King had been injured, apparently, in his sexual organs, with the result that his once fertile country was left barren, a wasteland. In later accounts the true Grail hero is Galahad, Lancelot's son. But *Perceval* remained a major



character and was one of only two knights (the other was Sir Bors) who accompanied Galahad to the Grail castle and completed the quest. The overarching need, it seems, was for the knights to be motivated by a desire to save the land and not to act out of personal gain - the suppression of ego for the greater good of 'mankind'.

This legend of *Perceval* underpins Jungian psycho-

analysis as it surfaces in literary and operatic works such as T.S. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland* and Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal*. The English modernism described in Eliot's *The Wasteland* has at its heart mythic elements woven into naturalistic scenes, focussed on different areas of London and the river Thames. Eliot manages to interject into his otherwise rather gloomy poem a certain romantic beauty. His *wasteland* is not a physical manifestation environmentally though; it is the psychological effect of being overcome with doubt and uncertainty.

For Wagner too the central theme is the departure of young people from their parental home, a place of apparent security that not only family but also institutions can provide. The need to think for oneself, to form one's own ideas is liberating and painful. So when Wagner's Parsifal kills a swan with his arrow, his initial pride at his achievement is overcome with astonishment at the sight of the dead bird and the realisation of, and remorse for, what he has done. When Parsifal is reproached and asked what his name is and where he is from, he can only name his mother, Herzeleide, or 'Heart's Sorrow'. Parsifal is subsequently told that his father was killed in battle while he was young and that Parsifal himself grew up in a remote forest away from the ills of the world. He recalls though running after a group of knights riding along the forest's edge, though he was unable to reach them. He thus embarks on the journey to internalise what he sees and experiences and to make it become a part of his consciousness in order to become a better person. He realises he must break with his past – his mother – in order to move on. This will require passion but also discernment, the ability to see through what on the surface might be the most attractive option. The lesson of the 'parable', such that it chimes with biblical references, is that a true knight must be able to withstand

temptation, to be able to control desire – though acknowledging that it is desire that drives us to aspire to greater things – but at the same time, life must be allowed to run its course.

Sarah Lucas's *Perceval* occupies an equally cerebral, though earth bound stance in relationship to the kind of equine statuary gracing most city centres in Europe. Venice has its own 'horse story' in the provenance of the four horses on the Basilica of St Mark's Cathedral. Their origins are also unclear. Once thought to be sculpted by Lysippos – the great sculptor of the 4th century BC and the only sculptor that Alexander the Great would allow to do his portrait – they are now thought to be later 2nd century AD Roman, not Greek. The horses were originally war booty from Greece, installed on the facade of the cathedral after they had languished in the Arsenal for fifty years, their metal in danger of being turned into cannon fodder during the attendant troubles.

They remained above the cathedral entrance for 500 years until the last five years of the 18th century, when Napoleon swept through the Italian peninsula. Despite initially being welcomed by the city of Venice, he looted the horses along with many other priceless paintings and the city's symbolic winged lion accompanied by two winged 'Victories', which he shipped off to Paris at the end of 1797. Napoleon had the horses set on top of the Arc du Carrousel, the triumphal arch on the Tuileries end of the Champs-Élysées, opposite the much bigger Arc de Triomphe at the other end. After Napoleon was defeated, the 1815 Congress of Vienna sent most of Napoleon's loot back to Venice, and the horses were reinstalled. They came down again 95 years later for restoration and were remounted in 1902. Fifteen years later, during World War I, they were removed to Rome for safety before being returned when the

war had ended. The pattern recurred again in World War II when they were dispatched to a Benedictine abbey at Praglia in 1942.

Despite their turbulent 2,400-year-old history, the horses stayed in pretty good condition, and in the early 1980s, a touring exhibition took them to Mexico City, New York, London, Paris, Milan and Berlin. However, they did not return to the Basilica of San Marco because they were being damaged too much by modern air pollution and so replicas were created which took the place of the originals. Now you can climb a steep stairway to where the replicas stand on the Basilica today for a top spot to view St. Mark's Square and see the originals too, now kept inside a small museum on the same upper level of the cathedral. So, *Perceval*, in being brought to Venice, is somewhat of an antithesis to these beasts, a proletarian version, his feet firmly planted on the ground.

It seems a strange gift now for a couple in their late twenties to buy one another, but my mother bought my father a Melba Ware shire-horse and cart for his birthday nearly 30 years ago. The Staffordshire china replica reminded her of growing up in South West London where her own father, a miller, used to have a horse and cart of his own. Now living in a principle market town in the heart of England as the wife of a market gardener, conversely she was brought up a metropolitan girl in post-war Aden and London. The Melba Ware horse and cart was perhaps symbolic of shared values across an otherwise cultural divide, both a sweet acknowledgement of the history of her husband's profession as heavy horses were the tractors of their day, and his fondness of recreational horses of the racing kind. Bringing *Perceval* back to life size with its attendant load has meant the 'heavy' on their G-plan sideboard will never look the same again.



Sarah Lucas, *Perceval*, 2006, bronze, concrete, paint, 230 x 183 x 548 cm, edition of 5, Copyright Sarah Lucas Courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London

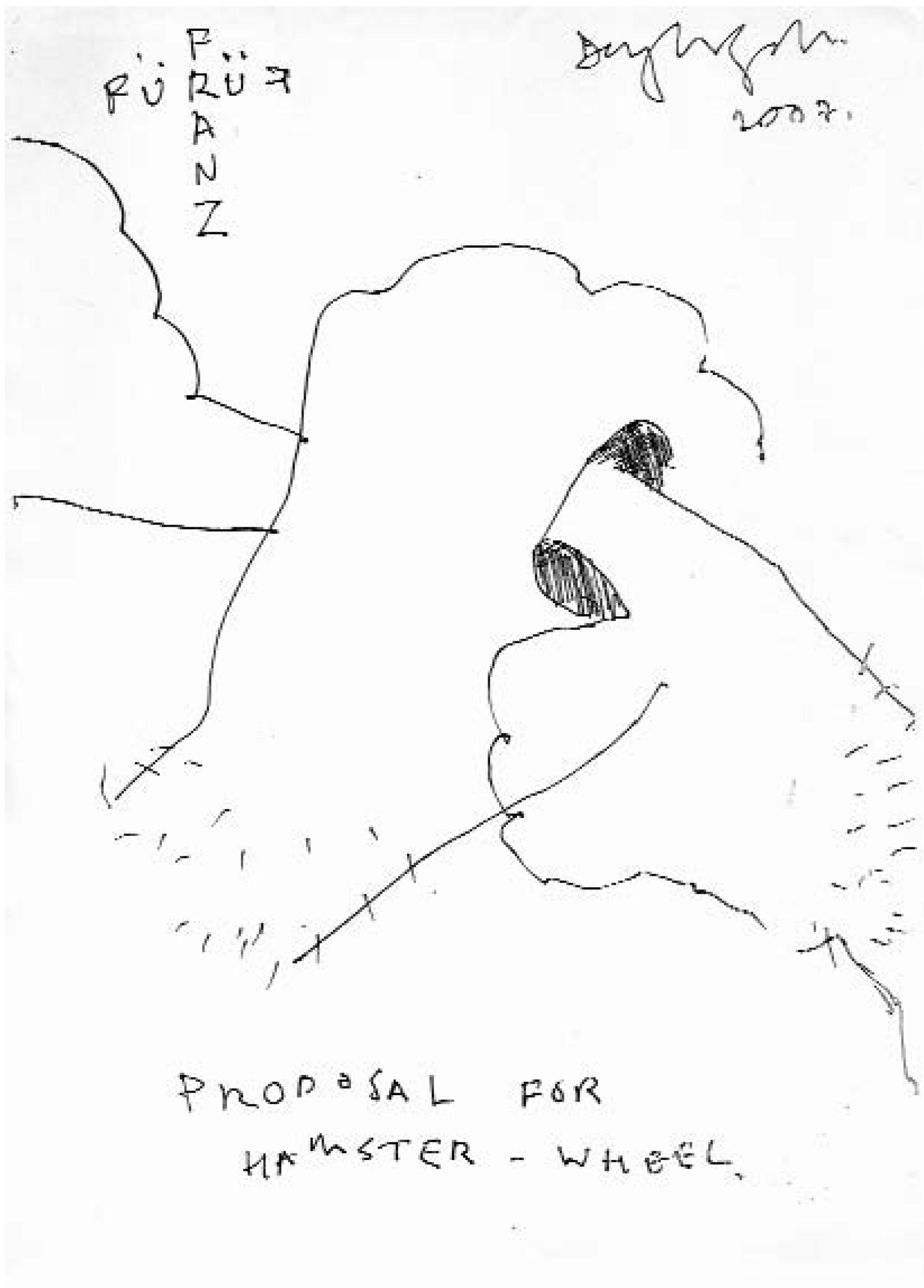


Sarah Lucas, Richard, 2004, polystyrene, jesmonite, paint, wax, 183 x 86 x 129 cm, Copyright Sarah Lucas Courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London



Franz West, Wittgenstein at the Cool Books (Modell), 2007, Papiermaché, Holz, Plexiglas, 52,5 x 52,5 x 26 cm







ACHILLE BONITO OLIVA - FRANZ WEST

ACHILLE BONITO OLIVA: Tu ti sei formato nel clima culturale dell'Azionismo Viennese, ma fin dall'inizio il tuo lavoro si è rivolto ad analizzare le convenzioni stabilite tra l'opera d'arte e la sua fruizione. L'arte è un atto di trasgressione che coinvolge artista e pubblico, oppure comunicazione di principi che la ispirano?

FRANZ WEST: Ambedue. Io credo che se si vuole limitare l'arte a certe modalità si sbarra l'accesso (o gli accessi) a ...alle cose forse non definite con precisione o definite in modo errato.

A.B.O.: Il tuo lavoro ha più una valenza concettuale o comportamentale?

F.W.: Una valenza comportamentale....

A.B.O.: Nella tua opera mi sembra che esista una grande attenzione per la fruizione dell'opera da parte del pubblico. L'arte per sua natura è interattiva? Richiede la partecipazione del pubblico o la semplice contemplazione?

F.W.: Ambedue. Da una parte la funzione delle sculture in paper maché è meramente una considerazione contemplativa, mentre gli „Passstuecke e i „Mobili“ chiaramente richiedono la partecipazione del pubblico.

Secondo la mia esperienza, non è possibile avere le due cose contemporaneamente, quindi perseguire solo uno dei due aspetti mi suscita un senso (o sarebbe per me) di mancanza. Sarebbe anche stupido. (Se, nella ubriacatezza della contemplazione, questa stessa venisse trasferita in gesti, si arriverebbe probabilmente a forme espressive simili al

culto del corpo e alla danza espressiva, come ad esempio (Rudolf) Steiner nella prima metà del XX secolo). Questo è obsoleto - ridicolo. Significa che di fronte alla cruda realtà ci si espone al ridicolo, ci si trova in uno stato inerme. Questo non vuole dire che la qualità che si prova nella contemplazione sia insignificante; al contrario, a me, che tendo ad una leggera depressione di fondo, è di aiuto, provoca un abbandono tale che l'asprezza e il lato poco appetitoso della vita hanno l'effetto di un apparato censorio da cui evadere.

A.B.O.: Molteplici sono i linguaggi, i materiali, le tecniche da te adoperati, tutti rivolti a creare una fusione tra arte e vita. Ma esiste invece una soglia tra il quotidiano e la sua banalità e invece l'atto creativo e la sua esemplarità?

F.W.: Per l'artista il quotidiano è esemplare, serve da modello, è soglia tra arte e vita; non si tratta di rimuovere il quotidiano bensì di darne una visione artistica.

A.B.O.: Ricordo la tua installazione al MOMA di New York dove le sedie da te progettate si confondevano con quelle di uso comune appartenenti al Museo; ricordo ancora che nella tua mostra alla White Chapel di Londra tu presentavi anche una specie di grande sedile fosforescente che offriva al pubblico una fruizione ludica del tuo lavoro. Esiste uno spirito Fluxus nella tua opera?

F.W.: Certamente! In effetti io vedo le mie poltrone come grafiche che possono essere usate. E' questo il salto immaginario nel quotidiano.

L'arte scompare, ci si siede sopra, non la si vede più, ma rimane nella coscienza.

A.B.O.: Nell'opera il cui titolo è *Invenzione* tu proponi ancora una volta una libera fruizione dell'opera. L'arte è anarchica disciplina, trasformazione del mondo, o semplice analisi di principi che regolano il sistema dell'arte?

F.W.: Vedrei la trasformazione del mondo nel senso di Wittgenstein che nel „Tractatus“ sostiene: „Io sono il mio mondo“. In questo modo comprendo anche il resto. Non lo penso in modo solipsistico, ma forse monadico.

A.B.O.: Nella Certosa di Padula tu hai presentato un'installazione che interagiva con l'opera di Tamuna Sirbiladze nella quale hai messo in scena la quotidianità e il banale arido della vita di tutti i giorni. Vuoi normalizzare l'arte o resuscitare la vita del quotidiano?

F.W.: Le due cose. Ma non in senso missionario. Provo a dar vita ad eventuali disposizioni e in maniera interattiva!

A.B.O.: Al contrario di Duchamp che ha realizzato una metafisica del quotidiano attraverso il Ready Made, la tua innovazione è sottile, silenziosa e concettuale. Vuoi promuovere il superamento gerarchico tra arte e vita, tra poesia e prosa e realizzare la democrazia di una comunità concentrata che vive liberamente e fuori da ogni convenzione un nuovo rapporto con gli eventi. Dove finisce il ruolo dell'artista creatore e dove inizia quello del pubblico creativo?

F.W.: C'era una Chevrolet Malibu, parcheggiata sul bordo della strada a Peekskill, nello Stato di New York. Una meteorite del peso di 12,6 kg la trafisse il 9 Ottobre 1992 e credè un cratere sotto la macchina.

A.B.O.: Tu accompagni sempre la tua opera con performance che sconfinano nella musica o nel teatro. La multimedialità favorisce la creazione?

F.W.: Gli elementi della multimedialità si annodano letteralmente dando vita ad un atto creativo che però non è distaccato bensì mantiene la sua relazione con la natura del mio processo di invenzione formale.

A.B.O.: Alcune volte hai progettato tavoli e sedie, come per il RAM, hai occupato lo spazio dell'arte volutamente con la banalità di oggetti quotidiani. L'arte è soltanto analisi del suo sistema, trasgressione, destrutturazione, trasformazione, oppure liberazione da ogni convenzionalità di pensiero e di mercato? Ti consideri un indisciplinato interdisciplinare?

F.W.: Certamente! Il tavolo che è stato mandato a RAM adesso si chiama „Ramme“ (mazza-picchio) e io vorrei fare un video in cui 4-6 assistenti sfondono, anzi sfasciano una porta. Ecco l'interazione disciplinare che costituisce l'argomento di questa nostra conversazione. E' lo scioglimento della cortecchia che è parte integrante del nostro tessuto sostanziale.

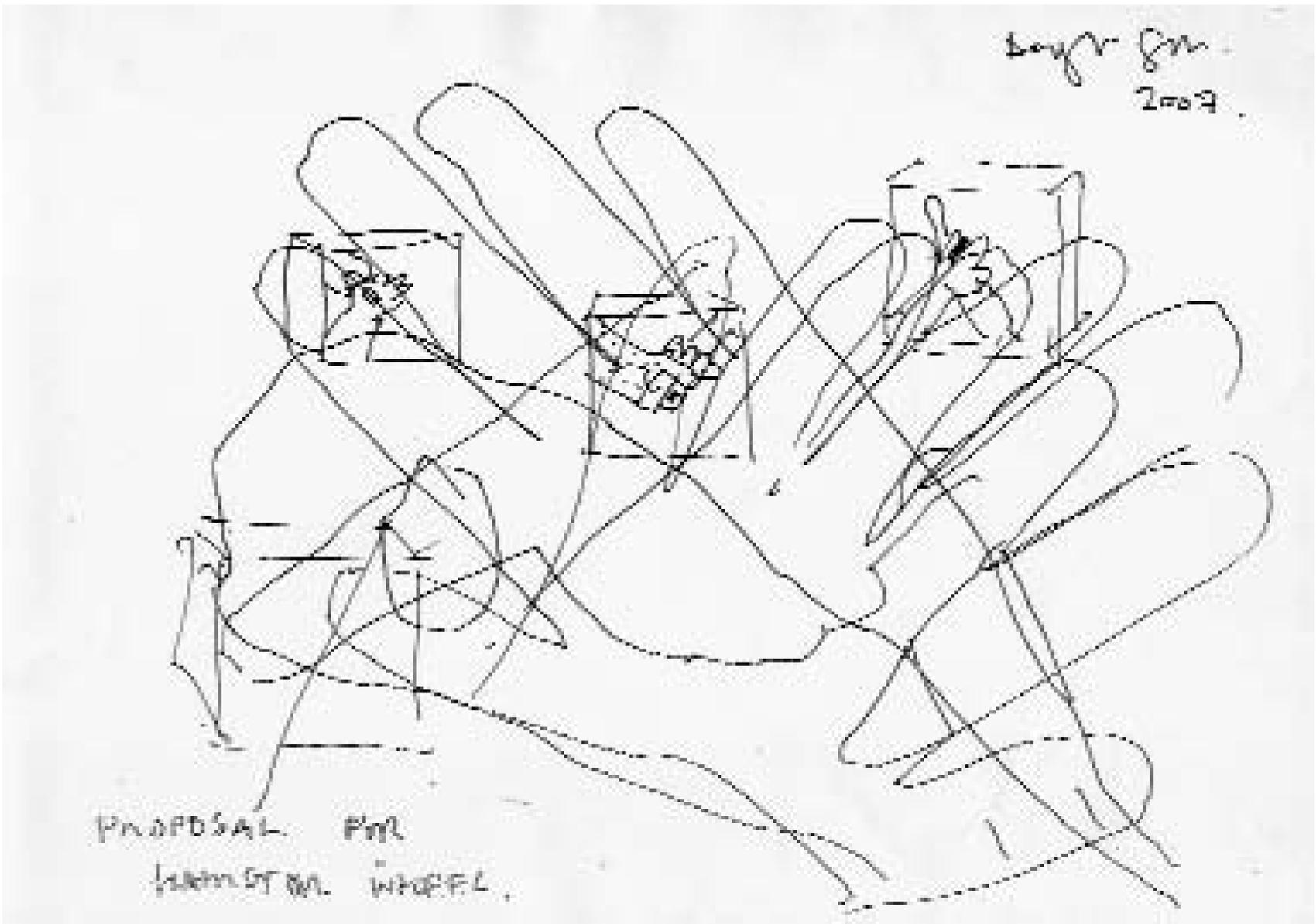




Franz West, Cool Books, 2007, aluminum laquered, 50 x 200 x 190 cm, Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna and Gagosian Gallery, London



Franz West, Cool Books, 2007, aluminum laquered, 50 x 195 x 195 cm, Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna and Gagosian Gallery, London



Douglas Gordon, Franz West, Studie zu *Fingerfuck*, 2007

Andouillette AAA!!!' A digest of the doctrine of the anal — And an account of the relationship between art and shit

Georg Gröller

A tramp knocks at a monastery door to beg for something to eat. In the time he waits — the nuns must finish their prayer, before they turn to worldly things — the poor man is overcome by an inner need and he relieves himself beside the convent door. At this very moment a nun opens the door and sees the man crouching his offering and shouts angrily “That is a bit thick!” To which the tramp replies “and what about the length?”

Whenever psychoanalysis deals with a subject, it directs a gaze inevitably and with all the faithfulness of the metier to the “pre-Olympian world of the gods” in which giants and titans, born as monsters, unmanned their father and ate their own children; in which a goddess grew from a penis adrift on the sea and where goddesses could still be changed into trees by a curse - in other words it turns to the fantastic imaginary world of the child at that time when it begins to constitute itself as a subject amid the heftiest psychic thrusts and agitation, until it finally submits to the symbolic order in the Oedipus complex adopting the laws of mathematics as the matrix of its being in this world.²

So even by broaching the subject of the relationship between art and shit the psychoanalyst under these premises does so, automatically and as a kind of preliminary spadework task, by examining the question of the position the sphere of the anal takes in the universe of the child. When we consider the disgust and contempt society has poured out on excrement and all those processes that have to do with it, (the simple appearance, but still more the smell and touch - with the exception albeit of a fascinated preoccupation with one's own excrement, but this in closeted secret of course), we gain a first hint of those forces that are at work here — since none of this aversion is yet to be found in the small child. Quite the contrary: proceeding from the initial pleasurable or painful devotion of the baby to his digestive processes to a general emergence of the capability to control the sphincter musculature, excrement advances the very first object that the child itself produces. The two to three year old invests it as both a part and a product of its own body with the greatest curiosity, with all its pride and tenderness, with feelings representing the notion it has of its own brilliance at this age — a warm and smelling pile with its deliciously pasty, mouldable consistency makes the act of shitting a first triumph of human creativity.

Play with the excitation of the mucous membranes, which the child itself can either delay or accelerate

and intensify, gives the process of defecation an additional erotic dimension that is not only in morphological terms a neighbour of the genital allure: In their first concepts of the sexual act children often imagine this as anal penetration (see Freud's “wolf man”), and in this process the excrement becomes both penis and also the child that is pressed out of the mother's belly — comparable to the primitive cloaca, where the anus and the reproductive organs have not yet been separated. In the mind of a child the lust zones have not yet been clearly differentiated one from the other, nor can they in any way be placed in categories of their own yet whether morally or aesthetically. Hand in hand with the still marginal inducement to differentiate more clearly between the sexes or indeed to establish a primacy of heterosexual relationships, the entire ensemble of the polymorphic perversity results from this, a situation characterising the sexuality of the child in its totality. The almost exclusive and seemingly self-evident representation of genital lust by the anal is shown later not only in the anal pleasures of the compulsive neurotic, but also makes a return appearance in the regressive processes of old age, when with the laming of the power of the loins lust often rather turns again ever more to eating, drinking — and by inference, to shitting.

All of this would possibly not have such a great and

sustained significance, when the gradual development of the child's ability to control the anal processes at will was not also predestined to be the first systematic point of approach to satisfying the demands of the Other. Auto-erotic lust is directed into the field of the inter-subjective by this means and it undergoes a conversion to a decisive medium of social regulation of the child. The demands of adults — whether these begin to be made at an earlier or later stage, in a rigid or tolerant form —, their praise for the correct and rebuke for wrong giving and retaining in potty training, constantly turn the anal processes, as we all know from the nursery, into a battleground of power, subjugation and resistance, turn excrement into the first tender gift of love offered by the child, or equally into a weapon with which it literally seeks to throw shit at another person. It is through this process that the child first learns what it means to relinquish its own lust as a means of gaining the devotion of the Other. As a result of the regulation in this exchange procedure of *faeces for love*, excrement assumes a natural position as the first universal currency of mankind, the little pile becoming the first heap of gold, the first possession and it is no surprise at all when money and all the economic procedures that are linked with it can be understood with entire freedom in terms of the logic of anal processes. Producing to sell, earning to save, to buy, to possess

and be powerful, all of these lusts and coercions of business show us that any talk of shit capitalism bears more than a quantum of truth albeit unintentionally and quite apart from any indignation the phrase may provoke.

That the field of the anal becomes a true precedence case for the effect of the forbidden explains the powerful barriers of disgust, which the child begins to erect against the anal starting from this early age — showing us what drastic measures the child must resort to, in order to enforce on its own this prohibition imposed from without in its own inner life and consciousness. And once again compulsive neurosis can show us impressively in this context to what point of life-stupor the ambivalences of love and of hate that derive from these conflicts can bring us.

Space is not available here to describe the extraordinary richness of significance contained in the anal and all its many variations. But the experience that the Oedipus complex retrospectively structures the field of the anal, and the way it does that, should not go unmentioned. The irrevocable fixation on the difference between the sexes in the Oedipus complex and the incisively radical experience of castration now permit excrement to appear as something that really separates itself from the body and thus becomes a true bodily model of a loss, stamping the soul with the seal of lack. In the dread of this existential experience we are unwilling to relinquish anything more — or put literally we shit ourselves, while triumphing over this experience it is exactly the thing that is lost that becomes the object of desire and the motor of that which we describe as “giving a form to existence”.

Confronted with this fantastic wealth, which, covered over as it may be by public contempt, links human experience with excrement, it will be no surprise that the anal is not only quite plainly a secret driving force

behind all social life, but also that it is encountered in art in every possible form of disguise or undress.

Only a few of these should be considered here in order to provide ourselves with a notion of what varied mechanisms art employs in fulfilling its real task, that of bringing into articulation that portion of living reality that is socially frowned upon — in our case the anal.

What characterises the material aspect in the traditional work of the fine arts more than the kneading of clay, pasting and plastering, the pressing of pigment sausages out of the tube and the pleasure of applying this to surfaces and bodies? These are no more than the classic sublimatory satisfactions that are already offered to the child as a comfort and a substitute for its relinquishment of the anal. And in times like ours, when the aesthetic is allowed to drift away under pressure of circumstance and the emphasis on an increasingly urgent and direct approach to the point at issue, the painting of a Jackson Pollock or a Jean Fautrier shows how this act of sublimation of the anal is transformed into an explicit joy to create — owing much of its effect on the observer also to this experience of joy.

At the opposite pole of the possibilities of human expression, beyond any sublimated translation, we find exemplarily in Artaud's *Abject* a delirious state of collapse by means of which the organs of the body and their functions emerge in a state beyond any *representation* in the real, bringing about a catastrophic transfiguration of the world, in which perhaps Artaud himself with Christ is finally transformed into that heap of shit that the Virgin Mary squeezes out, in Artaud's Anus sitting, as the childish imagination may have *conceived* the process of birth.

The assumption of this outrageous radicalisation of expression in public discourse is also quite possibly to be thanked that a very direct and unveiled preoccupation with excrement, partially under the collective

term *abject art*, assumed an important position in the art of the second half of the last century. This appears as a revolt against the demand of society for cleanliness and order, under the cloak of disguise, or indeed as its essential *despised supplement* (?i?ek) as we can understand the wars, such as the battlefields of the Second World War or the practices of the industrial revolution from the mid 19th century up to this day: one gigantic anal scenario. Public outcry and the demand for order are also to be understood in terms of this kind when artists such as the Viennese actionists reveal the aggressiveness of these processes that derives from the fixation of its anal origins in the subconscious — whereas precisely by giving a *gestalt* to these processes, they allow them once again with its original libidinous portions.

But the scene has changed. Not that preoccupation with the sphere of the anal has disappeared from art today. But it would appear to have changed in character. This is shown generally neither as a delirious scream nor as revolt, and even the process of sublimation frequently loses at least one of its most significant characteristics: the adaptation by means of which the desired object is hidden as though by a veil. When we observe an installation such as Franz West's *Fragile Cloaca* we find ourselves almost in a garden in which two out-sized lengths of excrement (in metal) invite us to linger in an almost friendly and inviting manner. It is a fact that scarcely any city would wish to display these sculptures in public, but in the context of cultural activities it no longer appears to have the effect of a provocation — and even more important, it does not appear to be aiming at this objective. Far more it conveys us to a fairy tale or dream world in which like Gulliver in the country of the giants, and thus very like a child, we pause in astonishment before these enormous lumps of excrement and try to

imagine how huge and how powerful the beings must be who have produced them. It would be entirely senseless, of course, to make use of real excrement in this concept with all its odorous and tactile qualities as a means of artistic expression, although seen from the perspective of *imagination* it now seems that we can dare to do anything, in a world without prohibitions. Better perhaps in a world either before or after the prohibitions.

Since art is always a messenger of our hidden present, one in which we do indeed live, but which we still perceive and comprehend in terms of the past, art clearly shows us all that we owe to an ideology of globalised liberalism: - a world in which once again everything is possible as it was before the oedipal disillusionment with our omnipotence: one in which we joyfully shit enormous heaps of excrement, available to us simultaneously in the form of penises and children, love tokens and weapons, and of the currency of our wealth and by means of which the world lies at our feet once more. And moreover in which we forget how we ourselves, like King Ubu in this gigantic manner, can also abruptly become powerless weaklings.

How fortunate that in art this is all only a matter of the imagination. Its function in this respect is like that of an andouillette sausage - the delight of the taste of this speciality deriving exactly from the taste being so strikingly *like* that of faeces, although we know well enough that these are not among the real ingredients. The hope here is that the delight we obtain from the playful in this process will save us from ending in the maelstrom of a much less sublime libidinous scenario —

and thus truly landing in the shit.

English translation by Joseph Lancaster / Y plus

¹ Andouillette, from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia. Andouillette is a French sausage, a speciality of Lyon, Troyes and Cambrai.

Traditional andouillette is made from the colon and the stomach of pig. ...It ...is an acquired taste and can be an interesting challenge even for adventurous eaters. Many French eateries serve andouillette as a hot dish, and foreigners have been disgusted by the aroma, to the point where they find it inedible. While some find that hot andouillette smells of faeces, food safety requires that all such matter is removed from the meat before cooking. Faeces-like aroma can be attributed to the common use of the pig's colon in this sausage, and stems from the same compounds that give faeces some of its odours.

² This glimpse back to the “age before Oedipus” never reveals the true relationships as they are at this time, of course, since we perceive childhood only from the perspective of now, subsequently and as a portion of our present that we have created *and lost* through the *ruling order*. To this extent it regularly appears to us as either a lost paradise or as chaotic horror and death in the most vivid and lively terms.



Franz West, Cool Books, 2007, aluminum laquered, 55 x 190 x 185 cm, Courtesy Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna and Gagosian Gallery, London





Jean-Marc Bustamante, Lava II, 2006, ink on plexiglas, galvanized steel, 1600 x 600 x 15 cm, Courtesy Gallery Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, Exhibition view at Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2006, © Photo: Markus Tretter,



(GESTELLUNGSBEFEHL)

STELLUNGSNAHME UNTER STALLBRÜDERN

Veit Loers

Eine Ausstellung zu machen ist etwas anderes als Kunst zu machen. Für das eine gibt es die Künstler, für das andere die Kuratoren. Manchmal verwechseln die Kuratoren dies und spielen selbst Künstler, weil sie das einmal gerne geworden wären. Manchmal aber inszenieren die Künstler ihre Installationen wie Kuratoren, indem sie an der Wirksamkeit des Auftritts arbeiten. Im Begriff von Ausstellung und Installation ist im Deutschen das Wort Stellen, Stellung und Stall enthalten. Im Althochdeutschen ist Stall ein bedeckter Platz für stehende Tiere (altfriesisch stal = stehen). Deshalb sieht es manchmal in Ausstellungen auch wie im Saustall aus, etwa in den Environments von Allan Kaprow, Dieter Roth oder Paul McCarthy, aber mit System. Ausstellen tut man auch Urkunden und Arbeiter aus Betrieben, und im Krieg geht man in Stellung. Die Ausstellung ist also nicht nur eine Stelle, an der man ausstellt, sondern das Ereignis, bei dem etwas in Position an einem bestimmten Ort gebracht wird, eine „Exposition“ eben. Im Deutschen kann man damit auch den Begriff Gestell in Verbindung bringen, ein Gerüst, eine Stellage, noch keine Installation, die als Behältnis oder Auflager für etwas anderes dient, sonst wäre es eben nur ein Gestell. Im süddeutsch/schweizerischen Sprachraum wird Gestell auch oft humorvoll auf den Körper bezogen. Doch Martin Heidegger hat in seinen berühmten Essays „Die Frage nach der Technik“ und „Die Kehre“ das Gestell zum Gesamtphänomen der technischen Entwicklung gemacht, in der es vom Menschen „be-stellt“ wird, auch wenn es die Welt mehr und mehr zu- und verstellt. Heidegger hat nicht die Gesamtheit der technischen Produkte im Sinne, wenn er vom Gestell spricht, sondern er bezieht sich auf „das Versammelnde jenes

Stellens, das den Menschen stellt, d.h. herausfordert“, etwas das im Wesen der modernen Technik selbst liegt. Und er spricht von der „Ge-fahr“, die darin liegt, als einem „rettenden“ Seinsmoment, das sich analog dem Movens des Ge-stells ereignet (M.H., Die Technik und die Kehre, Pfullingen 1992 (1962).

Die ästhetische Frage nach der Triebkraft von Kunst wird in Heideggers Essay nur ganz am Rande gestellt. Aber sie ist natürlich mitenthalten, nicht nur, was die Installation betrifft, sondern auch die Gestellung der Ausstellung. Man kennt den Begriff des Gestellungsbefehls, wenn man zum Militär eingezogen wird. Die Gestellung im Kunstwesen ist die Ausstellung, in der ein Künstler Stellung beziehen muss, wo sich also für ihn nicht nur eine Entscheidung anbahnt, sondern, wie Heidegger über das Ge-stell sagt, „eine geschickhafte Weise des Entbergens, nämlich das herausfordernde“. Die Kunst selbst entbirgt etwas, indem sie sich zeigt. In der Jägersprache ist ein Gestell auch ein schneisenartig ausgehauenes Waldstück, während der Burgstall ein zwar verlassener und ruinöser, aber doch noch in der Gemarkung sichtbarer Platz einer ehemaligen Burg ist.

Was sagt dies aber für das Verhältnis von Kurator und Künstler aus? Im deutschen Sprachgebrauch sprach man eher beiläufig vom Zusammenstellen einer Ausstellung, während heute nur noch kuratiert wird. Man legt also auf das Überwachungssystem des Kunstzeigens mehr Wert als früher. Es scheint sogar, als habe der Kurator dabei die Teilhabe am Künstlerischen ergriffen. Aber wie lässt sich diese wechselnde Herr-und-Knecht-Dialektik zwischen dem Kurator und dem Künstler entschärfen? Um aus dem Hamsterrad herauszukommen, muss man vielleicht Komponenten einbringen, die die Dialektik beim Ausstellungs-

werden auflösen oder wenigstens aufweichen. Um ans Ziel zu kommen, müssen vielleicht Personen zwischen dem Kurator und Künstler eingeschleust werden, die auf ihre Weise an der Mission einer guten Ausstellung beteiligt sind, die sozusagen mit ihren Botenstoffen als Transmitter an die künstlerische Zelle (wenn es denn ein White Cube ist) andocken können, warum nicht mit Endorphinen?

In Vergessenheit geraten ist der deutsche Begriff Stallbruder (im Niederl. stal-broeder), mit dem man vor einigen hundert Jahren einen Kameraden, Kumpanen und Zechgenossen im Landsknechtjargon meinte, wie das Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm ausführt. So heißt es in einem Gedicht von Hans Sachs:

„besetz jen tisch mit brot und wein!
Ich merck, das gut stallbrüder sein.“
Bekannt ist Kurosawas Film „Die Sieben Samurai“, bei dem es zwar nicht um Kunst oder Künstler geht, sondern um Kameradschaft. Der erfahrene Samurai Kambai, ein Künstler des Schwertes, heuert noch sechs weitere Samurai, daneben den Mächtigen-Samurai Kikuchiyo, an, um gemeinsam ein Dorf vor den immer wieder anrückenden Banditen zu schützen. Am Ende gewinnen, wie man weiß, die von den Dörflern unterstützten und bezahlten Samurai, von denen vier sterben, zwei weiterziehen und einer im Dorf bleibt. Viele Abenteuerfilme, Road-movies, Kriegsfilm und Western leben von diesem Schema der zusammengewürfelten Bande, in der es immer einen Helden gibt und einige unsicheren Kandidaten, die oft abspringen, sterben oder zu Verrätern werden. In „Herr der Ringe“ ist es die Ringgemeinschaft von Hobbits, Elben und Zwergen, unter denen Frodo die Hauptfigur bleibt, während andere wie Legolas und Gimli sich zwar nicht mögen, aber innerhalb der Gruppe und des Ziels funktionieren.



Una Szeemann, Love Story, 2006, video, 3min, Courtesy of the artist

Grotesk sind die Kumpanen in dem amerikanischen Märchen „Der Zauberer von Oz“ (1900), wo die Heldin, das Mädchen Dorothy, möglichst schwache, hilflose und dumme Gestalten um sich sammelt, um das Land der Munchkins zu befreien. Dazu gehören der kleine Hund Toto, die Vogelscheuche, der Blechmann und der Feige Löwe. Und auch schon in den Märchen der Brüder Grimm sind die Überraschungseffekte von solchen Tölpeln, proletarischen oder bäuerlichen Banden, nicht zu übersehen: etwa in den „Bremer Stadtmusikanten“ oder in besonders lächerlicher Form bei den „Sieben Schwaben“.

Im Märchen der „Sechs Diener“ sind die grotesken Kampfgefährten des Königssohns wahre Spezialisten. Der Dicke trinkt nicht nur Gewässer aus, sondern blockiert auch Eingänge, der Lange ist schneller als die Feuerwehr und größer als der höchste Berg, der Scharfsichtige kann es mit jedem amerikanischen Spionageflugzeug aufnehmen, der Frostige friert im Feuer und schwitzt im Eis, der Horcher ist für alle Lauschangriffe geeignet und ein Sechster mit verbundenen Augen sprengt beim Abnehmen der Binde mit seinen Blicken Felsen und Truppenverbände auseinander. Dem von

der Obrigkeit ernannten Profi (König, Zauberin, General, Direktor) stehen also sich lose sammelnde Gelegenheitsarbeiter (Stallbrüder, Vagabunden, Kopfgeldjäger, Bettler) mit erstaunlichen Fähigkeiten gegenüber, die unter dem Druck der Verhältnisse Verbrecher entlarven, unterdrückte Siedler befreien, Alien-Invasionen zurückschlagen, aber auch Banken ausrauben oder als Guerilla dem totalitären Staat zu schaffen machen. Was sie nicht an Kraft und Geschick mitbringen, erledigen sie durch

Continues On Page 24

(GESTELLUNGSBEFEHL) STELLUNGSNAHME UNTER STALLBRÜDERN

VEIT LOERS

Continued From Page 23

permanente Subversivität, List und Unerschrockenheit. Zuweilen hilft ihnen ihre Naivität oder der Zufall. Es sind also eigentlich Antihelden, die im Erzählmuster das langweilige Gut-Böse-Schema durchbrechen, am Ende sind es Gestalten wie Jesus und seine Apostel, die zwar später als Martyrer mit ihrem Leben bezahlen, aber als einfache Landarbeiter, Zöllner und Fischer in einer Kommune von Underdogs und Outlaws das Christentum begründen.

In der Kunstausstellung ist das Ziel doch etwas anderes, aber die unheilvolle Beziehung und gegenseitige Fixierung von Akademiker und Bohemien, um es drastisch auszudrücken, wird in der gruppentherapeutischen Auseinandersetzung durch eine gewisse Amateurhaftigkeit

und durch Improvisation aufgehoben. Zwar werden aus den Kuratoren keine Künstler und umgekehrt auch nicht aus Künstlern Kuratoren, aber die verschworene Gemeinschaft aus Amateuren und Spezialisten, in denen Kritiker, Sekretärinnen oder Sammler beim Aufbau der Ausstellung eingesetzt werden können oder Ehefrauen wie bei der jetzigen documenta in Kassel mitkuratieren, dürfte vielleicht dem Offiziellen, Eingefahrenen, Routinierten der Kunstausstellung, also eigentlich dem Eklektizistischen, eine Wendung ins Spontane, Überraschende, Skurrile geben. Ein verstoffener ehemaliger Zahnarzt wie Doc Holliday kann dann genau so treffsicher sein wie Wyatt Earp, und mancher Galerist schießt noch heute schärfer als ein Museumsdirektor (wenn er Zielwasser getrunken hat). Dies trifft auch auf die Künstler selbst zu. Es hat noch nie eine Ausstellung gegeben, in der alle Teilnehmer gleich gut waren. Es gibt das

Kriterium des Namedropping, das noch lange keine gute Show garantiert. Sieht man sich die Künstlerlisten vergangener Biennalen und documentas an, stößt man auf ein Heer von uns unbekanntem Künstlern. Dies gilt ebenso für die legendären Galerie-Ausstellungen der Minimal- und Concept-Art. Aber entscheidend ist, dass sie von einem Spirit mitgetragen wurden, der für dieses Event galt und nicht ein Leben lang anhalten konnte. Als ich Martin Kippenberger bei seinem letzten Ausstellungsprojekt fragte, ob er nicht einige der schwächeren Bilder wieder herausnehmen wollte, antwortete er mir, es sei eine alte Ausstellungsregel, in jedem Raum auch ein paar schlechte und mäßige Arbeiten zu haben, dadurch würden die guten noch besser. Und mit einem Slogan aus Heideggers Essay kann man diese Stellungsnahme zur Ausstellung abrunden: „Das Bestellen des Gestells stellt sich vor das Ding, läßt es als Ding ungewahrt, wahrlos.“



Rachel Harrison, Your Score and Their Score, 2006, Mixed media, 124,5 x 128,3 x 174 cm
Courtesy of Greene Naftali Gallery, New York

HAMSTER WHEEL

David Galloway

Reflections on the Production, Dissemination and Reception of the Work of Art in Contemporary Society, Together with Speculations Pertaining to the Disappearance of the Light Bulb in Nimes and the Hitherto Unheralded Ubiquitousness of the Manhole.

Van Gogh's Ear

When Britney Spears cut off her golden tresses, her action set off media shockwaves of the strength usually associated with rumbles along the San Andreas Fault. When Vincent van Gogh amputated an ear, the event was not worth a one-liner in the local newspaper. (There are those who insist the painter merely slashed his ear and did not literally amputate, but myths die hard.) Only the lessons of time will conclusively establish which of these events was of greater consequence for the collective culture of the Western world. Yet the parallels between these two events are clear: both were acts of desperation rooted in a major professional crisis. According to my grandson Basil, whose adolescent lust was spawned by the then-teen-queen, Britney is in the process of discovering her "dark side," as Vincent (Vince?) had done before her. He had flung bright stars against the blue-black sky, while she – a kind of Existentialist manqué – countered the dark with a harvest of gold. (Surely Marilyn, Di and Nicole were all the while humming a chorus of approval.) Perhaps Britney will emerge, at least sporadically, from the darkness, flaunting her pain like Nina Simone or Janis Joplin, though the probability seems remote. If so, she would offer support to the widespread and regrettable populist view that true art can only come from suffering. This cliché is rooted in the 19th century view of the mad genius, of the artist as a free-living, free-loving bohemian doomed to an early death – in short, a f****g WEIRDO! Two popular Hollywood films made particularly influential contributions to this pseudo-hagiography: the original "Moulin Rouge" (1952), in which Mel Ferrer hobbled about on his knees as the absinthe-addicted dwarf Toulouse-Lautrec; and "Lust for Life" (1956), in which Kirk Douglas so vigorously whetted the razor of the doomed Dutch artist, Vincent van Gogh. Though it should be common knowledge that even Vincent could not cut off an ear for every picture he painted, and that Frida Kahlo required more than a plaster corset to execute her pictures, popular images of artistic creation stress pain over such negligible factors as imagination, training, discipline, skill and elbow-grease. In this context, a breathtaking example of life following art would seem to be present in the near-assassination of Andy Warhol by Valerie Solanas, president and sole member of S.C.U.M. (Society for Cutting Up Men). Obviously (sic) this trauma accounts for the artist's fascination with images of violence, with skulls and shadows and revolvers and suicide victims from Marilyn Monroe to the anonymous defenestrating anti-hero pictured in yesterday's newspaper. The problem with this insightful theory is that Warhol addressed those themes – including automobile accidents, the electric chair and the police violence – long before Valerie pulled the trigger. Similarly, images of crucifixion, impalement and castration appear in the work of Keith Haring long before he was diagnosed as HIV-positive. This is not to question the impact on Haring and Warhol of being brushed by the feathers of the angel of death, but to reduce their work to such a formulaic reading denies the richness of their aesthetic vision. Of course an artist draws on personal experience – of pain but also of joy – in formulating his aesthetic hypotheses and

shaping his skills. He has no alternative. At this point it is worthwhile to recall a brief ditty from American vaudeville: "Shave and a haircut, six bits" – i.e., cheap at the price. Vince and Britney, take note!

Cheetah's Brushes

Among the celebrities who have chosen the succulent atmosphere of Palm Springs, California, to live out their twilight years is Cheeta, who celebrated his 75th birthday in April of this year. The world's most famous chimpanzee is also the oldest known member of his species, duly honored in the "Guinness Book of Records." Unlike most of the aging males who find shelter in this sumptuous oasis, Cheeta makes no attempt to conceal the streaks of grey in his hair or to close the gaps in his yellowing teeth. One might expect something else of a celebrated film veteran who co-starred with Olympic-medalist Johnny Weissmuller and later with Lex Barker in no fewer than 12 "Tarzan" films, as well as numerous television shows. A true and stalwart companion with a keen sense of improvisation and unflagging humor, Cheeta was unfazed by the fact that his companion wandered around in a loincloth. (It is interesting to reflect on other American heroes of the time – Superman, Batman and Captain Marvel foremost among them – who repeatedly trounced disfigured villains and saved the world while wearing nothing but their underwear.) Cheeta moved to Palm Springs in 1992 at the invitation of his former trainer Dan Westfall, who maintains an exclusive residence for aged "non-human anthropoids" who once enlivened the silver screen. (King Kong is not among them.) Cheeta makes no concessions to the youth culture that otherwise sets the tone in Palm Springs. He shows little interest in joining the senior swingers with plastic hips and plaid pants who steer their golf-carts across emerald-green lawns by day and fill geriatric discos by night. "Bill Haley, yeah!" Cheeta has other interests. To be sure, like many golden-agers he spends several hours a day before the television set, but he devotes even more time to playing the piano and painting pictures. His musical inspiration is apparently drawn from a variety of sources, including Eric Satie, John Cage and Keith Jarrett, but the results are pure Cheeta: dynamic, by turns fast and slow, crowned by atonal flourishes and sudden, crashing crescendos. At first glance, the retiree's pictures awaken associations with the Abstract Expressionists, perhaps above all with Jackson Pollock. What distinguishes his style from that of his more established colleagues, however, is not unrelated to his musical performances: a certain density of composition, a rhythmic interlacing of color and line that may owe something to the lianas that draped the sets on which he and Weissmuller performed in the 1930s and '40s. Yet those were black-and-white films, and what surprises here is Cheeta's gift as a colorist. There are, of course, skeptics who would attribute the painterly results to pure chance, but chance alone does not produce the immediately identifiable "signature" that informs each individual brushstroke here. Recently a fan brought one of his compositions to Da Fen, the reproduction-art village in Shenzhen, roughly two hours by train and taxi from Hong Kong, where more than 5,000 artists organized into 600 studios produce meticulous copies of any artwork the customer desires. Prices vary according to size and complexity of the composition. While Da Vinci, Matisse and De Chirico in medium formats average \$60, a leading Da Fen copyist, shaking his head in a mixture of bewilderment and admiration, asked nearly double that amount for a Cheetah look-alike. "The difficulty," he whispered, "is to capture the ethereal mood of the original." Let this be a lesson to

those inclined to regard the art scene itself as a lot of "monkey-business."

The Lightbulb of Nimes

In February of 1973, when I first visited the old Fine Arts Museum in Nimes, artificial lighting for the entire building consisted of a single unshaded bulb that dangled from the ceiling above the cashier's desk, to guide him in making change. Otherwise, the interior depended on daylight filtering down through skylights. At first glance, this low-tech approach suggested neglect and even backwardness; only later did I come to cherish it for the insights into ways of seeing that are now all but extinct. The original Nimes museum can be regarded as representative of the rapid urbanization and the extraordinary flowering of bourgeois culture in 19th century Europe and America. Writers like Balzac, George Sand or Henry James frequently make use of new urban locales like concert halls, opera houses and museums to introduce characters, advance the action or provide insight into relationships. The novels of Henry James would be virtually unthinkable without the fine-arts museum as a setting. Indeed, the Louvre plays a central role in James' very first international novel, *The American*, whose good-natured but unsophisticated hero orders several copies of paintings hanging there. Artists and their models people some of the author's best short fiction, as well. In what many regard as the Master's richest creation, *The Portrait of a Lady*, the naïve and impetuous Isabel Archer arrives at Gardencourt, the English country home of her aunt and uncle, and on her very first evening in the Old World, she insists on viewing the paintings in the gallery of the house. Though she can only do so by candlelight, she afterwards believes that she has truly "seen" the pictures – in the Jamesian universe, a sure sign of her blindness to reality, for which she will later pay dearly. James's heroes are figures like Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors*, whose misspent life is symbolized by his failure to buy a small Lambinet landscape when he first visited Paris as a young man, but whose sensitivity is so developed in the course of the novel that even the "pictures" composed by everyday life reveal their secrets. Such subtleties are lost on many contemporary readers, accustomed as they are to pictures experienced in a constant and uniform light. Imagine the difference between a Turner landscape viewed with sunlight streaming down from above and the same picture emerging faintly from deep shadow. Paintings once lived – breathed, one wants to insist – as they did on the artist's easel. They were not flattened into cosmetic conformity by computer-controlled louvers and the glow of synthetic "daylight." The true drama of viewing paintings as James and Balzac and their characters viewed them was the invaluable lesson offered by Nimes' "backward" museum and propagated today by a small but cherished handful of institutions, including the "art island"

Continues On Page 26



HAMSTERWHEEL

David Galloway

Continued From Page 25

at Hombroich, near Düsseldorf. One can argue, of course, that the advantages are conspicuously greater with works created in natural light than those produced in artificially illuminated studios, yet even the works of Karl Arp or Gotthard Graubner gain striking nuances in the shifting natural light Hombroich supplies. Here, as in the Nimes of yore, one can practice the discriminating Jamesian art of seeing.

Ralph's Manholes

The postmodern world has spawned a new kind of nomad in the artist who regularly jets between studios

in New York and Berlin, art fairs in Madrid and Vienna, biennials in Istanbul and Lyon. Yet the Paris-based American artist Ralph Brancaccio offers a unique example of the creative vagabond. Almost constantly under way with paper, paints and roller, he makes use of a kind of printing plate that most pedestrians take for granted: the manhole cover. The relief-patterns incised in these commonplace urban artifacts range from the geometric to the floral, often incorporating the names or logos of cities, utility companies or maintenance firms. The variations are seemingly endless, though from Shanghai to Brooklyn these utilitarian devices have more than a little in common. (We dispense, for the moment, with the intriguing question of why most manholes are round – a question once famously asked of applicants for employment with Microsoft. There are various theoretical answers, but the most persuasive is, simply, that a round cover cannot accidentally fall into a round hole.) First of all, manholes symbolize a process of urbanization in which revolutionary services like streetlights and sewage systems heralded a new age of enlightenment. Secondly, they seem to have appealed to a pri-

mary creative instinct in the craftsmen who lent them form. These anonymous artists were not content to produce merely a functional, protective "lid" for the shaft descending into the watery underworld, but subjected it to a process of creative design. Recognizing the existence of this richly modulated, international form language, Ralph Brancaccio resolved to pay homage to its anonymous creators. Setting to work in his curbside atelier, he may apply paint to selected details of the manhole cover or highlight elements with different colors, then press paper against this "template" to form a unique print. The results are documents of a particular culture at a particular time, but they are also and unmistakably "Brancaccios." For those who have encountered these bright, witty monoprints, the manhole will never be the same. There are, quite simply, artists whose idiom changes the way we see our day-to-day environment: Dan Flavin's neon tubes, David Hockney's swimming pools and Daniel Buren's stripes have long since exerted such an impact. In sensitizing us to the art beneath our feet, Ralph Brancaccio is thus in the best of company.

VIDEOS FOR HAMSTERWHEEL

arranged by Veit Loers

The videobox was presented in another form under the title „Franz West without Franz West 2006 in Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, and CAAM, Las Palmas

<p>John Bock Kleinodtotsod, 2003 DVD, 07:43 min</p> <p>Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin; Anton Kern, New York © 2003 John Bock. All rights reserved</p>	<p>Annika Ström Swedish Traveler, 1995 3 min Ed. of 5 of 2 AP</p> <p>Courtesy: c/o - Atle Gerhardsen, Berlin.</p> 	<p>Hans Weigand Der strenge Kurator - Otto Kobalek kuratiert die Ausstellung Sammlung West Innsbruck, 1995 / 2007</p> <p>Courtesy of the artist</p>	<p>Georg Herold ohne Titel, (Demoversion Bolero I + II) 2003</p> <p>Courtesy of the artist</p>
<p>Tamuna Sirbiladze 15 minutes of jeff, 2007 15 min</p> <p>Courtesy of the artist</p>	<p>Thomas Zipp Big Fly, 1998 digital video transferred to DVD, sound, 1.35 minutes edition of 3 + 2 ap</p> <p>All courtesy of the artist, Galerie Guido W. Baudach, Berlin</p>	<p>Ralf Ziervogel Das Erste, 2001 Mini DV / DVD Slingelaukoppelung vom Album "Proto" 2001 - 2003, Edition: 5 + 1 AP Editionsnummer 2/5</p> <p>Courtesy André Schleichtriem Gallery, New York City, Kopierrecht bei Ralf Ziervogel</p>	<p>Jonathan Monk Chinese Crackers, 2006 16mm film transferred to dvd (colour) with separate audio track Installation dimensions variable</p> <p>Courtesy: Lisson Gallery, London</p> 
<p>Antonio Ortega Yola Dance, 2005 DVD 2:40 min</p> <p>produced by Museu de l'Empordà</p> 	<p>Jose Ruiz Gonzalez Velcro, 2005 5:20 min</p> <p>Courtesy: of the artist</p> 		
<p>Rudolf Polanszky Zu einer Semiologie der Sinne, 1978 video, 16 min loop</p> <p>Courtesy of the artist</p>	<p>Erik van Lieshout Mary-Achi, 2006 DV transferred to DVD colour, sound 5 min</p> <p>Courtesy of the artist</p>	<p>Mark Leckey Made in Heaven, 2004 DVD, 2 min loop</p> <p>Courtesy: Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Köln</p> 	<p>David Zink Yi Ahumm, 1999 Videoinstallation 1.30 min.</p> <p>Courtesy: Johann König Galerie, Berlin</p>
<p>Peter Fischli / David Weiss Büsi, 2001 video, 6 min</p> <p>Provenienz - Künstler Courtesy Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich & Matthew Marks Gallery, New York & Monika Sprüth Philomene Magers, Köln/München/London</p>	<p>Christian Jankowski Angels of Revenge, 2006 DVD, 11:06 min</p> <p>Courtesy: Klosterfelde, Berlin; maccarone, New York; Lisson Gallery, London</p>	<p>Marcus Coates Radio Shaman, 2006 9:31 min</p> <p>Courtesy of the artist</p> 	

„Umso besser – dann kämpfen wir im Schatten“

Veit Loers

Der Titel ist die Antwort des spartanischen Königs Leonidas auf die prahlerische Behauptung des Perserkönigs Xerxes: „Ich habe so viele Bogenschützen, dass ihre Pfeile die Sonne verdunkeln.“

Humor reicht bis in die Prähistorie des Menschen zurück und sicherte seine Gelassenheit bei der Bewältigung des Überlebenskampfes. Ob Tiere, wie Aristoteles behauptete, keinen Humor besitzen, dafür gibt es keine Beweise, weil auch der Humorbegriff sich in der menschlichen Geschichte fast zur Unkenntlichkeit verändert hat. Wenn der Anthropologe über Gebaren und Rituale der Wilden gelacht haben mag, so diese über die Attitude des Wissenschaftlers bei der Recherche. Es ist kein Zufall, dass Humor, Spott, Witz, Ironie und Gelächter sich in den Künsten einnisteten, im Bereich der Fiktion, wo zwar das Epische, Spirituelle und Dramatische dominierten, aber das Komische als sein Alter Ego durchaus erwünscht war.

Vom unsterblichen Gelächter der homerischen Götter über die desillusionierende Maxime des Sokrates „Ich weiß, dass ich nichts weiß“ zieht sich ein roter Faden durch die abendländische Kultur bis zu James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp und Charlie Chaplin, eine feuchte Wärme (humor = feucht), die wie der Klimawandel die hartgefrorenen Künste zum Schmelzen bringt. Weil er der Obrigkeit ein Dorn im Auge war, musste der Humor in den Künsten oft eine untergeordnete Rolle spielen. Er fand Platz in der römischen und neuzeitlichen Groteske oder in den ornamentalen Bereichen der mittelalterlichen Kirchen und Handschriften. Aber schon ein Hieronymus Bosch konnte es sich leisten, kaum versteckt, humorvolle oder doch wenigstens groteske Elemente unter gewichtigen Themen wie Sündenfall und Apokalypse offiziell darzustellen. Schon hier wird sichtbar, Humor tritt immer in Verschwisterung mit anderen Elementen auf. Die Groteske etwa lässt den Humor sich im Unheimlichen widerspiegeln. Die niederländischen Genrebilder im Gefolge der Breughels, auf denen getrunken, gegessen, gekotzt und gepisst wird, erscheinen unter moralischen Themen und Vorzeichen, z.B. als Allegorien der sieben Laster, um ihre Darstellung von vorneherein zu legitimieren. In vielen italienischen Opern wird pausenlos gelacht, auch wenn sie tragisch enden.

Die Avantgarde des 20. Jahrhunderts kam zuerst ohne den Humor aus, der sich dann im Gefolge des ersten Weltkriegs unter dem Namen Dada als bittere zynische Antikunst entwickelte. Auch in der Nachkriegsavantgarde nach 1945 ist der Humor kaum gefragt. Das ändert sich mit der Fluxus-Bewegung Anfang der sechziger Jahre als Verballhornung und spielerischer Kostümierung künstlerischer Anliegen, welche die Diskussion um Gegenständlich oder Abstrakt außer Kraft setzt. Im Wiener Aktionismus waren es Otto Mühl und Günther Brus, die in ihren Aktionen Groteske und Humor verarbeiteten, eine grimmige Variante des Neodada-Humors der Wiener Gruppe um Gerhard Rühm, Oswald Wiener und Konrad Bayer. Im nachaktionistischen Wien, in dem es u.a. komödiantische Einlagen des Kabarettisten Helmut Qualtinger („der Herr Karl“) und des Nomaden Dieter Roth („Selten gehörte Musik“ mit G. Brus und H. Nitsch) gab, entfaltete Franz West eine eigene mimische Version des Wiener Humors mit seinen Paßstücken.

„Ich nenne die paßstücke mit ihren ver- bzw. angemessenen menschlichen leibern kunst (kunst ist das, wovon einer, der was davon versteht, sagt, dass es kunst ist). Und bei intensiver steigerung ihrer rezeption eignet diesen objekten bewegung, die wahrnehmung verfügt – in ihrer relation zur kunst über viele stufen, wie eine passive, auf klischierten assoziationen basierende perception, eine aktive, die sich mit der funktionsweise des gegenstandes beschäftigt, und schließlich eine mediale, bei der man

abfährt (volksmund) nämlich die welt der kunst, ideomotorisch, kurzum: die paßstücke dienen bei nicht bloss vorgestellter benutzung als motor für bewegungsabläufe.“ (1983)

Was soll das heißen? Franz West benutzt die Sprache des intellektuellen Diskurses, wie man ihn etwa in übersteigter Attitüde bei Kunstwissenschaftlern und Soziologen findet und er geht mit ihm um, während er sich gleichzeitig darüber lustig macht. Einerseits spricht er Tautologien aus, andererseits ist es in der Tat eine optimale Erklärung seiner Paßstücke. Dem Rätsel des Witzes, seiner Struktur und seiner Form hat sich Sigmund Freud aus psychologischer Sicht genähert, indem er über den Lustmechanismus, den Witz als sozialen Vorgang und die Beziehung des Witzes zum Traum und zum Unbewußten sprach. Dieser inneren Seite des Humors und seiner Ausdrucksformen ist jedoch unbedingt der russische Literaturwissenschaftler Michail Bachtin an die Seite zu stellen, der in Analysen über Rabelais, Cervantes, Dostojewski und Gogol sich mit der kollektiven Genese und Struktur der „Lachkultur“ auseinandersetzte. Er sprach von der Karnevalisierung der Kunst, ausgehend von römischen Festen wie den Lupercalien und Saturnalien, wo in einer Art verkehrter Welt die Herren die Sklaven bedienten und auf den Gassen und Plätzen des alten Rom ein karnevalisches Treiben herrschte, das die „Charivari“, also die lustigen Aufzüge und Narreteien des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit, mitgeprägt hat. Im Mittelalter gab es noch das rituelle Lachen, die *parodia sacra*, wenn man z.B. auf Beerdigungen lachte oder beim *risus paschalis*, wo der Prediger von der Kanzel herunter durch Scherze und Parodien die Evangelien lächerlich machte und die kirchliche Ordnung störte. Jede Gattung, sei es Gebet, Denkspruch oder Lied, hatte ein parodistisch-travestierendes Gegenstück, vom Knabenbischof und der Liturgie der Säufer bis zur Liturgie des Geldes. Im Dialog, so Bachtin, vereinen sich der statuarische Kunstmonolog und der spontane Karneval als offenes semiotisches System zur Metamorphose. Phänomene dieser Lachkultur sind: Befreiung von hierarchischer Stellung, Exzentrik und die Nacktheit aller.

Zum Phänomen der Lachkultur gehört auch die Figur des Tricksters, wie ihn C. G. Jung in seinem Buch „Die Archetypen und das kollektive Unbewußte“ in die Psychologie eingeführt hat. Dieser Trickster oder Schelm, den die griechische Mythologie in der Gestalt des Hermes prägt und in der nordischen Mythologie von Loki verkörpert wird, ist ein Archetypus, der den heutigen Kulturmenschen amüsiert, aber auch gleichzeitig ängstigt, weil er unberechenbar ist. Die Trickster von heute sind Künstler wie Martin Kippenberger, Fischli/Weiss, Maurizio Cattelan, Franz West und Sarah Lucas, die mit ihren demonstrativen Ready-Mades aus der Beziehungsfrustration coole Akzente setzt.

Die Kunstform des Videos eignet sich wegen ihrer relativen Kürze im Gegensatz zum mindestens einstündigen Spielfilm zu den genannten Formen des Humors, nicht des narrativen Humors, den man vom Medium Film kennt, sondern einer Komik, die wie ein guter Witz funktioniert, indem man Dinge miteinander zusammenmengt, die nichts miteinander zu tun haben oder die nur so tun, als hätten sie etwas miteinander zu tun. Diese Kriterien erfüllt auch der heutige Werbeclip im Fernsehen, mit dem Unterschied, dass sein Witz eindimensional und produktbezogen ist. Die wichtigsten Positionen der sechziger und siebziger Jahre – noch als Film gedreht – haben im Zentrum nicht die Humoreske, sondern eben diese Doppelbödigkeit: die Erfahrung des eigenen Körpers oder die allegorisch melancholische Illusion von Beobachten und Handeln in einem wörtlichen Sinne, in Andy Warhols Filmen, bei Marcel Broodthaers, in Bruce Naumans One-

Man-Movements, bei Vito Acconci, Gilbert & George oder Bas Jan Ader.

Das Video der neunziger Jahre nimmt diese konzeptuelle Tradition auf, die das Medium selbst durchbricht. Der Autor ist präsent, die Umstände der Aufnahme und das Künstliche der medialen Szene. Dazu gehören bewusst eingesetzte simultane oder nicht beabsichtigte Aufnahmen, inszenierte Clips und Ready-Mades von Filmeffekten. Sujet sind oft die Künstlerkollegen, der Kunstbetrieb oder die Kunst selbst. Der Philosoph Slavoj Žižek erinnert gelegentlich daran, dass im Gegensatz zur Tragödie in der Komödie der Schauspieler nicht nur die verkörperte Rolle spielt, sondern auch als realer Schauspieler präsent ist und dadurch die hypostasierte Welt, in die wir uns als Zuschauer hineinversetzen, plötzlich mit uns zu tun hat.

Man nennt das Situationskomik: Als Hegel 1806 nach der Schlacht bei Jena Napoleon durch die Straßen der Stadt reiten sah, in der er Philosophie lehrte, sagte er: „Dort sitzt der Weltgeist zu Pferde“, eine Feststellung, die einerseits visionär, andererseits aber irrsinnig komisch war, weil das abstrakte Symbol der Aufklärung nun plötzlich auf einem Pferd reitend zu besichtigen war.

Dass der deutsche Künstler Martin Kippenberger, der sich mit dem Medium Video so gut wie gar nicht beschäftigt hat, nach seinem frühen Tod so sehr ins Bewusstsein der Kunstwelt rückte, hat nicht nur mit seinem Oeuvre zu tun. Die beabsichtigte oder improvisierte Gestaltung seines Lebens war selbst wie eine Ansammlung grotesker Videos, immer um die Kunst herum, aber mit dem Background des Scheiterns und dem Herausarbeiten des „Nichts“. Man versteht dies besser vor Kants Aussage, das Lachen sei ein Effekt der plötzlichen Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts (Kritik der Urteilskraft).

Humor in der Kunst taucht entweder auf, wenn die zementierten sozialen und politischen Verhältnisse unmerklich von innen her bröckeln wie im deutschen Vormärz um 1840, der Zeit vor dem tschechischen Frühling und den frühen sechziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts in einem Westeuropa der bereits dekadenten Christdemokratie. 1968 gab es kaum humorvolle oder ironische Kunst, weil man bereits an der Veränderung arbeitete.

Jetzt, in den Zeiten eines ungebrochenen Kapitalismus und Imperialismus, hat Humor in der Kunst wieder einmal Konjunktur, ein Omen, das beachtet werden sollte, etwa in Italien, wo zuvor noch nie ein Künstler des Humors, der Groteske und der Ironie im Mittelpunkt stand (Maurizio Cattelan). Die Komik muss auch nicht immer in irgendwelchen Kabinetten stehen wie zum Beispiel die italienischen Grotesken oder die niederländischen Genrebilder sozusagen als Korrektiv zum Pathos und der Apotheose von Gott und Mensch in den Sälen. Aber es wäre an der Zeit, dass auch sie einmal wie bei Marcel Broodthaers ins Zentrum rückt: Dann haben Kinder keinen Eintritt ins Museum, der Museumswärter wird zum Kamelführer und statt Kunst werden Palmen und Kanonen ausgestellt.

Humor ist befreiend, aber er kann auch teuer werden. Das konnte man bei den Reaktionen der von Islamisten verursachten Sachschäden auf die dänische Karikatur des Propheten Mohammed sehen. Und auf der Rekordliste der Auktionen sind Masterpieces des komischen Genres keine Seltenheit mehr. Wenn Humor teuer wird, heißt es ihn zu bewahren.



Douglas Gordon, Franz West, Fingerfuck, 2007, video, Courtesy: Gagosian Gallery, London



»SUMMER LOVE«

Summer Love is Piotr Uklanski's debut film as well as the first Polish western. It was filmed on location in southern Poland with an all-Polish cast, except for the American Val Kilmer in the role of »The Wanted Man« and Czech actor Karel Roden as »The Stranger«. Based on the principle of »the copy of a copy«, Summer Love is steeped in dark humour, reminiscent of the western and set in a deeply depressed atmosphere. Francesco Stocchi talks with Piotr Uklanski about identity, economy, desires and the possibility of reaching the unreachable.

Francesco Stocchi: First of all, let's say that Summer Love is not a western in itself, nor is it a parody of the western genre. The choice of the Spaghetti Western, the lack of authenticity and the constant use of irony make it more a metaphoric western. Do you agree with this definition?

Piotr Uklanski: Definitely.

You perhaps picked up the most coded genre in film history, and moved within its really closely borders to face other themes like national identity, acceptance, communication gap, etc... Do you think that speaking about national identity today is still a way of defining differences?

I very much like your angle. I definitely wanted to start from something that is so bankrupt that it is empty. The western with its whole history of »social relevance« in defining American culture. Then, talking about its corruption, etc. Then the European chapter. So much in the past and nothing in the present. I saw it as a very codified melodramatic genre that is only theatre. But because it was such an empty shell, it did not have to bother with what it shows (in its story) but was more prone to over all reading – why would a Pole do a film like this now, why Kilmer, etc. And then you start looking at all the identity issues which I think I bankrupted as well: in the film industry it is purely a matter of money, in the art business it is that of politics. I think that the politics of identity have become a tool of not so interesting battles. Obviously, I am not taking a good guy stance here. I'm aware of the metaphors but I don't really find them all that effective.

Speaking of »I did not bother with what the plot shows« is commensurate with the way you tell the story that is in fact partly non-chronological, with more visual aspects and

suggestions than a narrative. The story in itself is absurd, starting with its improbable title and disorienting soundtrack. It seems as if the editing choices assumed a central role, evolving as the editing progressed. Was this the aspect you wanted to focus on?



This is different. On the content level, by saying that I did not bother with what it shows I was referring more to the story's archetypes (Woman, Man, Stranger, Love, Love Triangle, Money) – I was not looking for a discovery here. The same goes for the dialogues. In fact, nothing in the film is original per se. In a way, it is like a »found object«. Now in terms of editing I was very precise: the film starts somewhat coherent, traditionally. Then its structure disintegrates and, on the one hand, the story becomes fragmented/impressionistic, while on the



Summer Love, Poland, USA, 2006, Stills, Courtesy of the Artist

other hand the story's disintegration reflects the disintegration of what is in the story (the bleeding Stranger, the raped Woman, the suicidal Sheriff). All well planned.

Disintegration. In Summer Love, the visual aspect is accurately and vividly expressed without knocking away the tension the film

suggests. Each moment is a picture to me: you could de-compose the whole film, »dis-integrate« it by printing each single frame.

Each moment is a picture, I very much agree. I was looking for a certain viewing tension where the fibre (sets, costumes, make-up, guns, faces, etc.) would be authentic but the viewing experience would be nothing like you've seen in westerns. More like an old school »avant-garde« film experience where you'd have whole sequences with no sound ... A hypnotic experience. This was the aim. I thought it was the only way I could make a Polish western, a film like none other. In a sense I was going back (if you will) – instead of making a technological marvel, I've tried to »stop« the film, the story. In a very traditional, old school way; Brakhage, Cocteau ...

Summer Love is the result of a long process

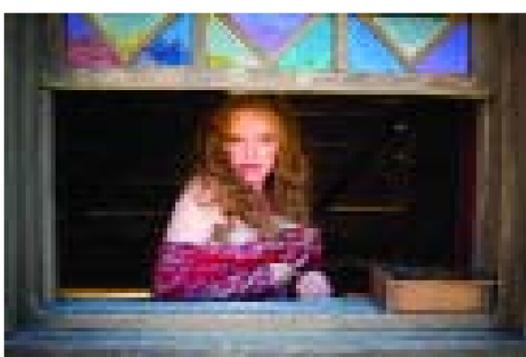
that lasted about seven years, which started with framed portraits shown in galleries. Could you describe the process that led to a movie?

First, the paradox: cultural impossibility. On a very conceptual level, the work was finished with these photos I made it in 1999. However, the photos had a greater impact than I had expected and I met some film people who challenged me to turn it into a film. Some years later I got more and more interested in the public sphere, in art or in culture in general. A wide resonance, cultural schizophrenia. Then the portfolio with some 16 photographs was no longer enough to convey the »Polski Western«. I had to make a feature film that could play with mass expectation.

Your work was often very closely knit with the world of the Nazis series are posters or film stills taken from Hollywood B-movies, the pavement constructed for Gavin Brown's club is a reproduction of Saturday Night Fever's dance-floor, the use of a stuntman in Full Burn for Manifesta II is a de-contextualization of the special effects practice in movies etc. What is it that really draws you towards it?

What is it that really draws you towards it?

The reasons are very different because there is at least a ten-year gap between some works: if we presume that art or other creative activity is capable of reflecting the truth about human existence, I believe it should not mimic that exi-



Summer Love, Poland, USA, 2006, Stills, Courtesy of the Artist

stence but to create an artificial reality/form through which you may or may not eventually get to the »truth about life«. Therefore I am all for artifice. Perhaps this could be a common denominator. The films, movies I prefer most are those that are less successful at their narratives: Exploitation films, B-films, Italian »bad« westerns. Perhaps that's the paradox that draws me to this medium: they so-o-o-o want to reflect life, and fail so beautifully.

Why do you think that more artists feel the need to do a movie now? Does it come from als it because of the chance they are given to them by an industry that supports them, a search quest for visibility outside the art borders, or is it more an expression of a contemporary need?

On the one hand, yes, of the above. On the other hand, what do you mean by »now«? Cocteau made a film with Yul Brynner in the 1950s. Warhol and Morrissey made two films (Dracula and Frankenstein) for De Laurentiis in the 1970s. David Laelas, too, made a film in Hollywood. And then you have Cindy Sherman, David Salle, Robert Longo, Julian Schnabel (1990s). What's »now«? Matthew Barney, Douglas Gordon, who else? Everybody is talking about making films, but who eventually makes them in the end?

I see, but I think the art system, due to the economic power it embodies today, is the only art expression capable of reabsorbing the others. It is a big pot licensed to digest fashion, theatre, music concerts, etc. Summer Love is conceived to be shown in theatres. How would do you react if you were asked to present it in a museum or a gallery one day? (Out of its context, but within your originaive context)

Well, I think that the change that has occurred in the art system as a consequence of this tremendous influx of money (last 10–15 years) is one thing. A very interesting discussion, but maybe some other time. I don't think I would be able to make such a »big« budget »avant-garde/art« film otherwise. Now, regarding absorption ... I think a good exploitation film can do it effectively just the same – Snakes on a Plane?

About Summer Love's distribution, this was an important issue before the film was shown anywhere because it has so much to do with the film's identity. I didn't want to pigeonhole it. But now, after showing in Venice and other festivals (Stockholm, Athens, Warsaw, Sao Paulo, Bratislava, etc.) it doesn't matter so much. I would show it in the museum if it has a theatre. This context no longer has the power to label it an art-world film – even if it goes straight onto DVD with no distribution.

The relation between the gallerist and the artist seems to be changing. I witness a new attitude towards the artist in which his needs, the conditions and the autonomy of his creativity are respected, which is basically a turning away from the attitude that was common in the 1980s and 1990s. On the other hand, the market is wealthy, so really hungry, always asking for more. As an artist do you believe that your creativity receives the respect it deserves and do you generally feel under pressure?

I don't think I receive the respect due to me, but if I thought any differently it wouldn't be very healthy. I don't think there is any particular pressure coming from outside. I always had quite a big self-imposed pressure, so the one from out-

side was never bigger. I think this situation could be a real problem for artists who are not interested and not willing to engage with an outside world, you know, »I just want to be in my studio doing my thing«. Nothing wrong with that, but then the pressures from the outside world can be devastating.

This organisation around art tends to make the artist non-guilty. Everything tends to move towards an explanation or a justification of whatever you do, »in the name of Art«. Criticism becomes more and more fused with marketing. How do you place yourself with this attitude?

I never let myself get too invested in the criticism. Therefore, the fact that it does or does not become infested with advertising bothers me on a more personal level only. Regarding the non-guilty artist, I am not really sure what you mean. If you mean that lazy, bad artists get away with this, it would worry me, but if you mean artists who are mean-spirited, bad-boys, or unethical – I couldn't care less – If the work is good, that is.

Like in the Nazis series, Summer Love deals strongly with repulsion, which I find an effective way to introduce seduction. Summer Love is really seductive. The characters are unable to communicate except through violence. Each little personal hope soon dies due to verbal, physical or psychological violence. The ugly and the malign figures do not embody an official status but are everywhere, spread among the people, which is much more compelling and scary. Is this a look at contemporary society?

At life. I am a pessimist.

The story and the surrounds settings don't seem to to take over thehave any influence on the characters' identity development (so stereotyped that they don't even have a name but a definition-role): whoever you are, the Boss, the Servant, the Lazy, the Stupid, the Willing, the only way to act is through violence. Violence is more a symptom of non-communication. But using these stereotypes you overstep the genre, making something experimental but within a defined category. To whom is this film addressed?

I think in most of my works I try to reach a few audiences at once. The immediate one and the one that is more in the know. The immediate one is a part of each project, so to speak. In case of Summer Love you first get the most predictable immediate audience (that goes to see violent genre films, with Val Kilmer, etc.) – which often gets disappointed. And an ultimate one, like you perhaps. But without the first audience the second audience would view the project differently.

This is a sophisticated approach towards your audience. But although the only possible language seems to be violence, the indefinite space where the movie is set, the economical crisis and depression expressed in it, create nostalgia and melancholy more than pain. Are these feelings more potent than pain?

I think so. Pain is more definite, therefore less projectable. I think we can talk some more about violence here. You mentioned it quite a few times. I think that the violence in Summer Love is a graphic sign rather than graphic violence. It is a quotation. And I believe that the element of tragicomic serves a similar role; it

puts a certain quotation mark. I think it was necessary to construct a »product« where you have to constantly re-define to what extent you are to believe what you are seeing. In and out. Like sex.

Comedy and violence. Violence is levelled with a sharp humour, making the scenes tragicomic. Do you see life as tragicomic?

I think quite a lot of the mainstream audience, in Poland for example, found it troublesome.

You think they didn't catch get the vivid humoristic aspect?

They did. But then they had a problem with defining whether this film was »serious« or not.

But should it really be defined?

Of course not. I tried to push the dichotomy as far as possible. And the Polish audience viewers proved to be the perfect audience/victim because they projected so much onto this film.

You once defined yourself as a fanatic about your work. Would you define your work as a job?

More addict than fanatic. My work is a job.

Appropriation is a common practice in your work. I could mention a good number of twentieth-century masterpieces that I believe explicitly inspired your works, like Warhol's 13 most wanted men (The Nazis), Dali's Voluptate Mors (Skull), Matisse's collages (The Bomb)... In Summer Love, I noticed that you don't

refer to other artists' works but to your own. An appropriation of yourself. Is that true?

I refer to other filmmakers, writers. They are artists. But it definitely is a form of self-exploitation.

The two main characters (The Stranger, Karel Roden and The Wanted, Val Kilmer) never say a single word. And how did you manage to convince a Hollywood movie star not to speak?

Well. Kilmer is dead – he can't speak. And of course, it would not be that difficult to write a flashback scene where he does speak. But I was very interested in concept-casting: American star power, wasted. And then the obvious reference when one has to have an American actor for the western to sound like an American (authentic) production. Karel's story is just a bit different. His looks always made me think of him as an eastern European Clint Eastwood. Man with no name and of a few words – in fact even no words at all. In the original version of the script there even was a comment spoken towards the end of the film where he (Karel) is a mute. It is very difficult to convince a star to play a role like this. Mickey Rourke considered playing in Summer Love either of both roles, but because there was no dialogue, he eventually turned it down.

I want to go further in this. The only American actor in the cast – as The Wanted, he represents the treasure – is the key to a new, wealthy life. He lies dead on the ground staring at the events. Is this subtle and courageous choice



Summer Love, 2006, Poster

a premonition of the forthcoming political order?

Jesus. I love it. GWB versus Korea.

The sheriff's instability, drunkenness, the banal dogmatism referred to his role of law keeper, underlines a crisis of the authority figure, or its original intrinsic absurdity?

Actually, for the first time, I have to contradict you. For me the sheriff is a self-portrait. A drunken artist. Hoplessly in love. Pathetic. Pitiful. And a first billed main character of Summer Love.

"The interview was first published in spike art quarterly No. 11, March 2007. www.spikeart.at".



Talkeetna, Photo: Paola Pivi

Dell'opera di Tamuna Sirbiladze

Carola Annoni



Fin dai primi anni accademici si distinguono nei lavori di Tamuna i punti essenziali della sua pittura. L'esperienza universitaria in diverse città quali Tbilisi e Vienna hanno contribuito ad elaborare e ad arricchire uno stile proprio. Il linguaggio pittorico di Tamuna si è evoluto con i suoi spostamenti e come per molti artisti, il primo approccio alla pittura è stato caratterizzato dal disegno dal vivo dal quale poi l'artista si distacca per concentrarsi sul tratto, il colore e la composizione. Al disegno figurativo, Tamuna preferisce un tratto impulsivo semplice ma deciso. I colori naturalistici sono rapidamente sostituiti da colori puri abbinati secondo le tecniche espressioniste, l'artista si concentra sulla ricerca tra l'equilibrio, il colore e la composizione delle immagini sulla tela. Le sue tele sono quindi lo spazio su cui

esprime le sue sensazioni, esperienze ed emozioni.

Arrivata a Vienna si lascia affascinare dal mondo multimediale: per breve tempo lascia la pittura e lavora con il video, rielabora immagini scaricate da internet, per poi tornare definitivamente alla pittura. Dotata di una piccola telecamera si diletta a registrare la realtà che la circonda creando dei montaggi molto semplici, ma comunque forti, su internet scopre le risorse che Google offre. Inserendo una parola, infatti, il motore di ricerca Google trova infinite immagini ad essa correlate. Una volta scelta un'immagine, Tamuna la rielabora aggiungendo parole o frasi. Questa fase che lei stessa identifica come sperimentale si esaurisce in poco tempo ma aggiunge alla sua espressione stilistica un elemento importante e costante quale la parola. Alle opere, infatti, si accompagnano titoli spesso molto lunghi che vogliono in parte suggerire una chiave di lettura sempre "positiva" dell'opera.

Lavorando su tele di grandi dimensioni, Tamuna si esprime attraverso un tratto forte ma pulito; nei suoi quadri sono riconoscibili figure e oggetti interpretati attraverso l'impulsività del segno e la leggerezza del colore. Il tratto deciso e quasi

violento è smorzato dalla trasparenza del colore e dalla composizione delle figure sulla tela che trasmettono un senso di profonda armonia e trasparenza. Tamuna lavora con l'acrilico sulla tela bianca dando un effetto quasi acquarellato certamente improprio di questa tecnica. Il contrasto tra la leggerezza del colore e il tratto impulsivo sono sempre armonicamente distribuiti su grandi sfondi bianchi che creano un effetto di spazio e di forte luminosità.

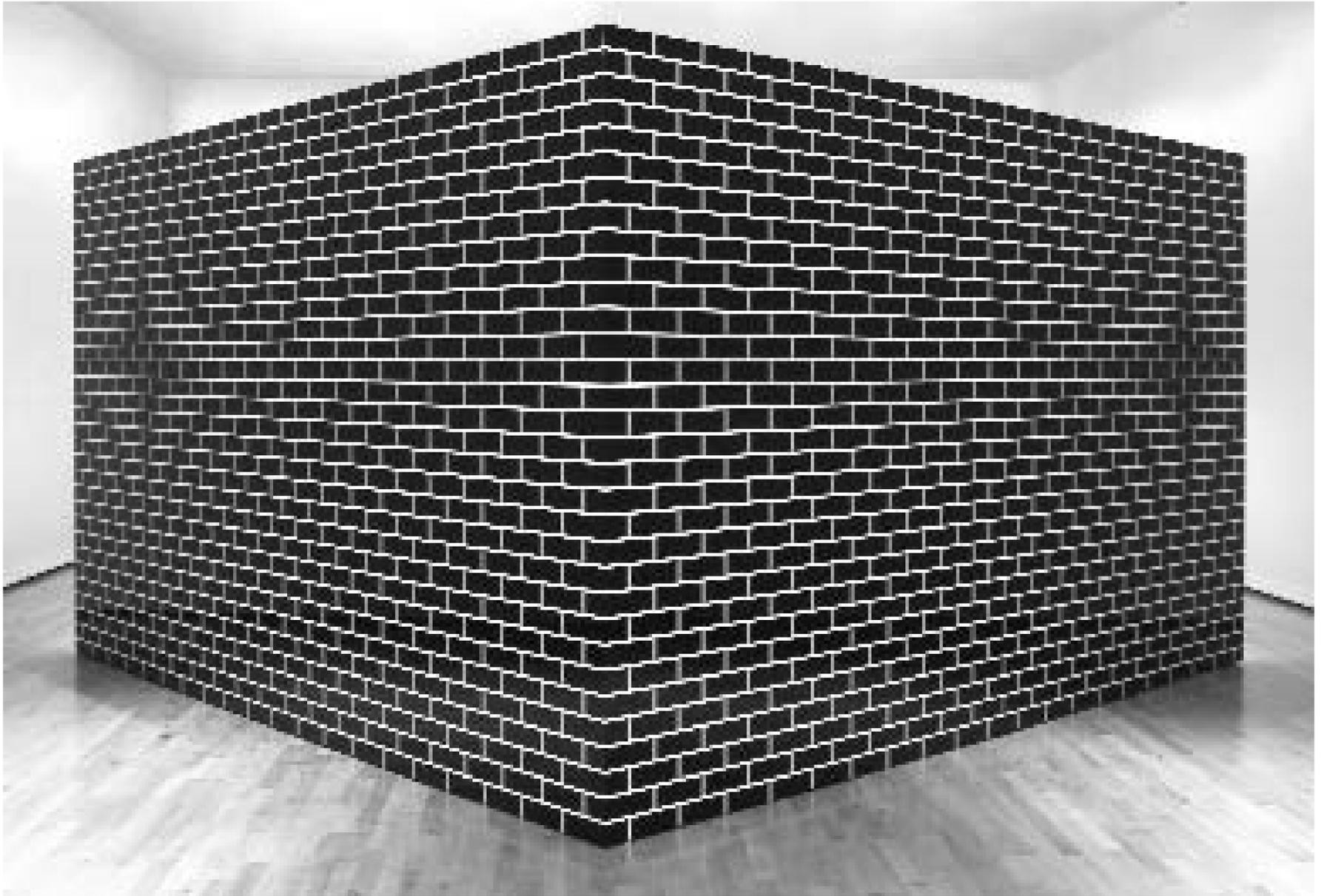
Le figure e le storie che rappresenta sono il risultato di una costante relazione tra la vita interiore dell'artista e i diversi impulsi provenienti dall'esterno. I temi delle sue opere sono spesso legati al mondo muliebre, al quotidiano delle donne impregnato di una femminilità quasi violenta e spesso non comprensibile dall'altro sesso. Tutto ciò spiega la scelta delle sue soluzioni tecniche che servono ad esprimere immagini non totalmente nitide, quasi oniriche che ricordano come le figure delle sue tele siano la traduzione di situazioni in parte inventate ed in parte vissute dall'artista stessa. Le donne sono spesso dipinte nude perché non interessa tanto il loro aspetto fisico quanto la situazione in cui queste si trovano, come ad

esempio donne al bagno, in camera, gruppi di figure o coppie. I soggetti delle tele possono sembrare una rappresentazione cruenta della vita delle donne ma al contrario vogliono essere un'interpretazione poetica del mondo femminile in cui la donna si esprime con gioia in tutti i suoi aspetti anche nei più intimi. A differenza di molti artisti, per Tamuna dare un titolo alle sue opere è fondamentale. I lunghissimi titoli vorrebbero suggerire una lettura sempre positiva delle opere sebbene a volte ciò possa apparire non ovvio. Di conseguenza la parola diventa parte stessa dell'opera; è da notare quindi come i titoli non siano mai pienamente esplicativi delle opere, poiché è Tamuna stessa a non volere imporre un solo significato ai suoi lavori attraverso un determinato titolo ma solamente suggerire una strada per interpretare le storie raccontate nelle sue tele.



Photos: Darsie Alexander, Tamuna Sirbiladze





Ugo Rondinone, nesting ground, 2006, Holz, schwarze Beize, Acrylfarbe, Lack
240 x 400 x 400 cm, Ed. von 2 + 1 AP, ©Ugo Rondinone, Courtesy Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich

FADING BLACK / IL NERO CHE SCOLORA

Milovan Farronato

A sea of black & white photos, re-photocopied images obsessively portraying the same subject: Matera. The ancient Lucan town perched on a hilltop and partially dug out into the rock face.

The images are repeated in three different formats. Steep winding paths leading up and down, and details of windows and doors each peeping out from behind another. Stairways taper off and up in a sort of Piranesian *reverie*. Lastly, townscape views calmly draw all the elements together. This melange of views is brought together in an apparently random collage on the inner side of two wooden walls laid out to form an obtuse angle, the outside of which is covered with sheets of shiny black Plexiglas silkscreened with an image of a brick wall. The onlooker is thus faced with an obtuse angle on approaching the wall, forcing him/her to make a choice. It is up to us to decide: shall we take the left or the right? The most important thing is not to end up like Buridano's donkey!

The images thicken like a cloud of dust within this

geometry: frenetically blurring into one. From the distance, this iconic grey nimbus appears somewhat disjointed, chaotic, bereft of centre, silhouette or shape. In actual fact, its centre is to be found in the corner: Ugo Rondinone started out from that point from which to orchestrate the construction of the whole, before defining the groupings of doors, paths and stairways by relative order of format. There is even a definition of the edges to indicate the delicate margins of this cosmology/cosmogony: a series of childish drawings (also photocopied) showing a crow – representing the artist himself – waking up, washing, leaving the house, crossing the road, walking through a park, resting on a tree, settling down in a nest, only to then go through the same sequence backwards, falling asleep in that bed from which his day began. The determination in terms of 'shape' is given by the corner, which is set out dialectically with regard to the space. Despite starting out from a single point, it remains an open structure. In terms of compositional harmony, there is a sense of archaic and obsessive repetition, akin to the initiation music of Terry Riley. The path of the crow and the ceaseless randomness of the images reflect the eternal return to the same.

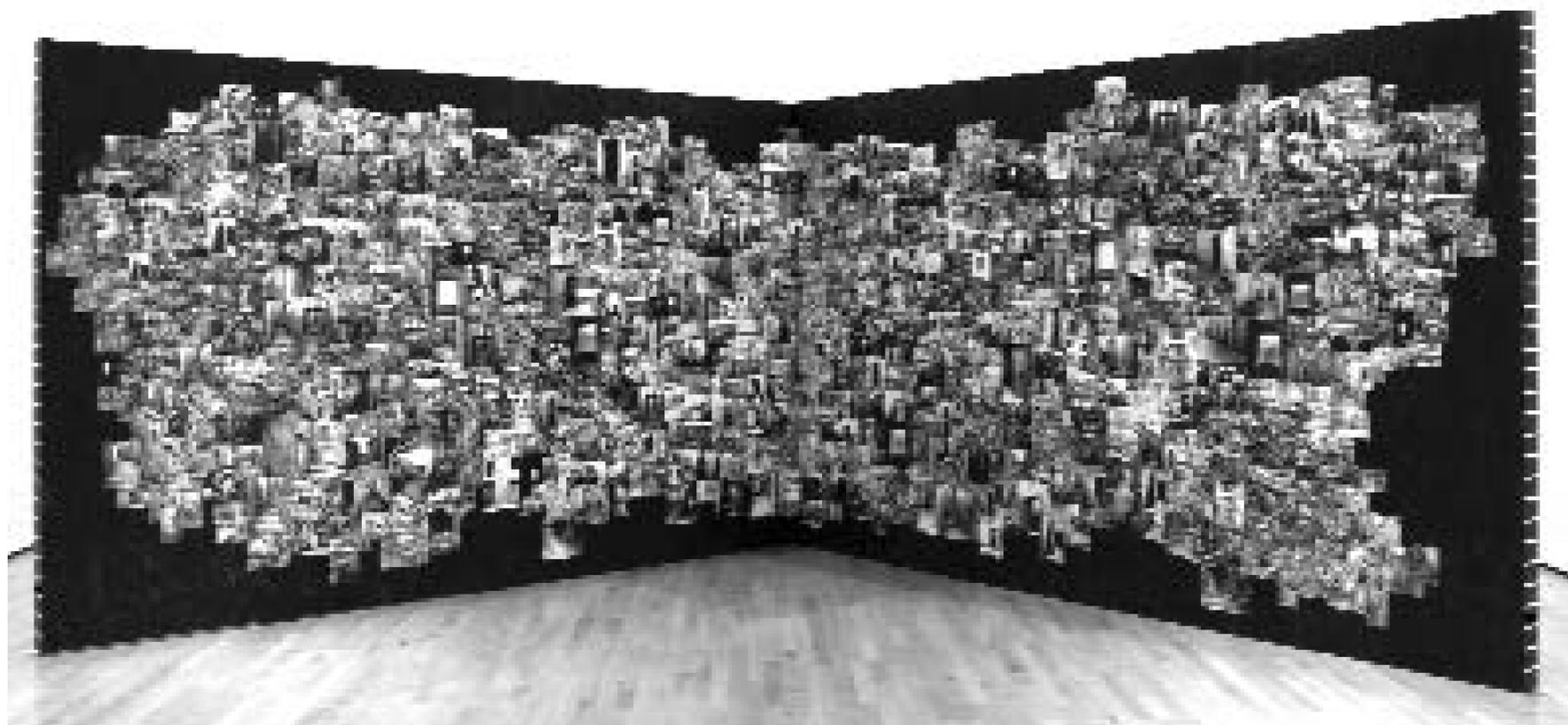
Matera, in the life of the artist, represents the homeland of his soul. It is found in the black spot on the map where the artist deliberately sets out to rediscover the roots of his family, and not just those of his parents. As the crow's path does not go full circle in a single dull day, meaning a path reiterated day after day, thus the nest – the underlying ideal – is found in the middle of the path. Not at the beginning, nor at the end. It is an origin which rears up as a sort of revelation after following a hard, tiring and labyrinthine pathway (like that pieced back together in the collage, which is designed to be an example of order within chaos). It is a fragmented yet harmonic vision, a telescope turned around and a kaleidoscope.

Truth or hallucination?

The Lantern of the memory is offered to light up the

dark corners, yet it sheds just as much light on the powers of imagination. The ego is dressed up, stripped bare and re-disguised cyclically; the psyche is always expressed confusedly as it is always mixed up with other things... memories always revolve around the same old centre, that hypothetical 'nest'. *Nesting Round* –the title of the work might suggest a personal sense of recognition, otherwise insinuating illusion. It is as if we are witness to a crying out, a *crescendo* which starts off inaudibly only to become unbearably deafening.

The walls open out like the pages of a diary; they are set out like a prism refracting a shaft of light which pours forth from the point in which the light of *Mneme* is at its weakest, where the black of the half-asleep (or half-awake) consciousness starts to fade.



Ugo Rondinone, nesting ground, 2006, Holz, schwarze Beize, Acrylfarbe, Lack
240 x 400 x 400 cm, Ed. von 2 + 1 AP, ©Ugo Rondinone, Courtesy Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich

On Evolution as a Strategy of Art or Art as a Strategy of Evolution

Rudolf Polanszky

Most theories on art have the shortcoming of a comprehensive approach. Reading Lamarck's 1809 work „Zoological Philosophy“ has confirmed my deliberations towards seeing a hypothetical approach in an evolutionary strategy of art. The analogy to the biologicistic hypothesis of evolution, which is to say the development of and change undergone by animate objects becomes conclusive when development is understood as inventive play and information as a structuralizing, coded system. In a roundabout way, Lamarck's theory of a direct transfer of „acquired qualities“ is, thus, rendered „true“ again. A mechanism generated

Through the „trans-aggregate structure“ allows for direct information transfer to other individualities capable of decoding incoming signals. In a virtually reconstructive process, received information is now rendered biologically manifest. Via the connection points of trans-aggregate structures and the adaptive increase of structuralizing elements (ad-hoc synthesis), a structure of information is thus infiltrated and changes its previous state. I see art as a particularly suitable vehicle for transporting „new“, as yet unadapted development qualities and individualism as its evolutionary prerequisite.

A Fictitious Dialog between Rudolf Polanszky and (J.)B.L.

Continues On Page 36

Continued From Page 35

Rudolf Polanszky: Individualities, as we know, are a superfluous effort on the part of nature because, according to evolutionary facts, there is no chance that during their short life spans they will manifestly develop in any other fashion than is determined by their predisposition. Endeavors at self-understanding are meaningless, as they cannot be transferred on the biological level.

Jean Baptiste Lamarck: What a sinister theory. As an extinguished individual, I have made every effort to prove that precisely those changes in an individual, which are attained, for instance, on the basis of accurate observation of its environment and living conditions can be passed on, be it through the upbringing of the young, filial generation, or be it that they even manifest themselves in biological structures. As far as that goes, his efforts were not in vain! There's no denying that an individual must adapt to its environment and that's the anti-individual aspect of the given facts. My colleague Darwin's additional thesis (the fact that I put forth the original and fundamental one usually goes unmentioned) that the fittest survive could, in turn, be credited to the individual, if the fittest were not also the most adapted.

RP: In every social environment there is a pool of conditioned, well-adapted conformists that line up against the superiority of strong individuality that dissociates itself. The leap in evolution that brought about individuality, therefore, has something tragic about it. The term adaptation, however, must not be construed to merely imply weakness. Adaptation also carries the meaning of expansion, improvement, etc. Biologistic developments, however, are of no importance for my considerations, I'm not interested in this thrownness into a dreary, endlessly long process of incessant repetition and blind, incremental change. The scheme followed by those observing nature is a terribly boring matter, cut out for people who lack any powers of more abstract thought and imagination. The classic scientist with his vasculum is a bean counter; no wonder then that Mendel's Laws were demonstrated on this plant.

JBL: I strongly disagree with this position as these newly established laws serve as a shining example of the power of abstract thinking achieved by this exceptionally gifted man of God. Imagination is the creative capacity to generate new ideas. With the help of thoughts it processes, the organ of reason is able to attain this capacity if it contains a large number of ideas and when it is habitually trained to mould them into complex ideas.

Meta-Lamarck: But where would this creative ability be located? Does it not amount to just another deviation from habitual ways of thinking when all of a sudden a new

connection flashes through the mind, one between details that hitherto have not been associated with each other, or when analogies suggest themselves, transferring context from one area to the next?

RP: Understanding or rather inventing intellect and reason as its projecting machine of the world as nature, which is to say the rational understanding of the animate world as a machine analogy, led the early explorers or rather inventors of the philosophy of nature into a frenzy of defining newly established terms of categorization. The projecting machine dissected the world machine on the basis of science's apparently uncompromising method. Art was regarded as some kind of outpost of cognitive possibilities, as an anti-rational reaction. Questions as to its nature were moved to the fringes of scientific interest and broken down into its dissectible components.

JBL: Well, it's nice to hear you can imagine yourself in my shoes and my era to such an extent. Especially your repeated mention of the dissectible. The machine-like properties, which you intend to bestow on the whole world or which you apply to get things moving, all this is nothing new to me, a dissector of systems, the materializations of which comprise, for example, the webbing of water birds and its elasticity that adapts to their fluid environment. The fuzziness of these connections and the sheer number of involved parameters, however, make things difficult for a mechanistic approach. What, then, is chance based upon when it allows for successful mutation to take place or makes it possible? To a determinist, chance merely signifies ignorance on the part of the observer.

RP: It was during your lifetime that the machine metaphor had its heyday. Nevertheless, scientific thought has never succeeded in developing a reasonable theory of art; at best, it has tackled its manifestations in archaic, metaphysical forms of usage, which are aimed at circumventing rational insights and endowing art with the romantic aspect of privacy that is connected with this approach.

JBL: Science itself is a curious strategy of our species, and your complaint raises the question of whether it suits the quest of science to engross itself with something that virtually stands as its vanguard, an avant-guard that prepares the field by bringing together and loosely connecting models to gain elements that can be linked. What's interesting to me in this context is just how you want this archaic, metaphysical type of application to ply science with its wild type of thinking and its self-concocted symbols. Are these outgrowth processes, as it were, they develop in dealing with their environment, which, tailored to their lifespan,

they intend to pass on to nothing other than their work? So, how are we getting on with evolution as a strategy of art, or rather, how do we proceed with this strategy?

RP: The advantage of evolutionary, developing artistic procedures lies in their overcoming of rational semantic criteria and the resulting methodical constraints. Rational understanding regressively trivializes creative autonomy. The anarchist, destructive strategy of creative procedures implies a transformative shift on the semantic level, their references and interpretive hierarchies resting with something that is yet to be invented. The creative act, therefore, is antisocial and self-inventive. It follows that returning its outcome to the realm of understanding is always reconstructive. The disruptions of understanding, which are accounted for by the informational quality of trans-aggregate structures resulting from individual transfers, is channeled through the translational feedback in existing structures and recoded. Here, the trans-aggregate procedure, thus, evolves the re-

spective targeted state.

JBL: It's wonderful to see how your evolving syntactic structures and word formations on the verbal symbolic level reflect your assertions on the capacity of artistic activity to generate symbols. I don't quite understand, though, why your rational approach to the insights gained into living environments and creative processes is apparently scorned, that is to say why the anarchistic impulse in your creative activity plays such an important role. As a theoretician of evolution, I can perhaps understand that a rigid, stringent error prevention strategy could be understood as something opposed to mutations and evolution. But isn't anarchy just a means to an end in the field of art, something aimed at gaining new elements through deconstruction and destruction, from which the synthesis of one's inner imagery is derived.

RP: Now that's a promising cognitive approach. Think of nonsense as the anti-rational side of understanding. Art could be seen as a counter strategy to methods of



understanding and perception that result from deductive-rational approaches. Through the trans-aggregate structure, as it were, the mind manages to escape into matter.

JBL: Understanding is the rational element. The anti-rational side is not-understanding. Where does this view leave anti-rationalism? Is it maybe a pernicious spirit that enters into matter much in the way the foul spirits entered the biblical herd of pigs.

RP: Being a trained materialist, you ought to know that the anti-rational approach consists of salvaging the spirit by transferring it into matter.

JBL: Doesn't this raise the question of who is salvaging whom?

RP: With your specialist education, all this Cartesian dualism that seems to show through in your argument is something you should have shrugged off long ago. In this case it wouldn't make any difference, though. The attack on rationality was only launched because rational thinking always and only leads to rational results. You never get anywhere that way. In your era,

you invented reason; we must make further headway towards some kind of hyper reason and allow the mind to use new tools in projecting the world.

JBL: You're starting to philosophize with a hammer, that's what I call this tool. My speculative latecomer-friend Wittgenstein also liked to draw on this bag of tricks. But just a minute ago, you were talking about evolutionary shortcuts, which become possible in the realm of art in just the same way as on every level that provides an adequate set of symbols, or that's my theory at least; here, anti-rationalism runs into some difficulties again when it comes to an adequate repository of rules, which administers what can be made of symbols. Calculations themselves may well be vital elements of an evolutionary world. You see, errors and mutations are only possible as far as full-fledged systems exist. Didn't you just argue that meaning is only rendered possible where it can be gained from nonsense, that understanding must, therefore, always apply itself to nonsense, and one could say that

nonsense is only possible where systems that generate meaning exist. Aside from this, there is the third possibility that understanding is only possible where there is something to understand, where there are regularities. How could you arrive at the superlative form of your trans-aggregates if you had not already developed an awareness of the state of their present existence and the components they are made up of?

RP: Due to its suitability for rational assessment, reason even forbids us to take the unreasonable path. „Behave. No nonsense!“ is the instruction given by reason, which thus stands as merely the administrator of convention. The anarchistic conclusion is to follow nonsense in order to enter realms that lie beyond the reach of reason. It's probably time to drop the term „art“, as far as it only represents anti-rational methods, which is contradictory, of course, because this concept reaches much further than that.

JBL: Well, you said that. Could art not define itself as a field of unbi-

ased experiments, too, which, of course, requires a minimum of rational deliberation with regard to its test arrangements and their results?

RP: One could even say that we are dealing with a kind of codification of the trivial and banal that represents itself in an encrypted, enigmatic manner.

JBL: But that would render any interpretation in vain!

RP: Every interpretation is a regressive attempt to reintroduce order; one could almost call it reactionary. Contrary to other systems of order and mediation, the trans-aggregate structure gives priority to weakly referenced basic patterns, to purged mental prototypical models of transformation, so to speak. In a quantum-like manner, its dependence on states oscillates in a kind of unstable back-and-forth movement, passing coded patterns of information on to the adjoining structure which, as a result, reorganizes and reconstructs itself. Thus, information patterns virtually become physiologically manifest in the new „host“.

JBL: Well, that does sound damn rational to me! All this adopting of models, the drawing of analogies, as it were, forms the starting point of all scientific heuristics. It is precisely for this reason that we have developed the supreme discipline of mathematics; it provides us with the tools you have just complained about, allowing us to search unexplored terrain for regularities on a trial basis. When theories are built correctly, they are geared at predicted events, which are subsequently confirmed through experiments or observation. By the way, mathematics itself is a highly evolutionary system that continually produces new calculations by making modifications to old calculations and introducing new axioms etc.

RP: Extrapolation from nonsense, of course, means taking the long way to avoid deductive, which is to say usage-dependent functions that must correspond to a preformed structure of rules in order to justify their use.

JPL: Now, is that a proper tenet that exemplifies itself? When you talk of usage, do you take nonsense to mean devoid of meaning? Or does meaning consist of usage, of regular usage, that is?

RP: Quite the reverse is true, there's no denying that nonsense is related to wits and humor, which, aside from their many other meanings, serve as relativizing agents to meaning. Also, their entertainment value is in close reach here, and this could be further extrapolated to an attractor of attention which, by the way, is the main function of art that degenerates into a spectacle.



Rudolf Polanszky
Models of trans-aggregate structures
Hypertransforme Skulpturen, 2005 / 2006
Metall, Holz, Plexiglas, Federn, Schaumstoff,
Farben, Courtesy of the artist



Toby Ziegler, *Reverse Cowboy*, 2007, wood, glue, gesso, 220 x 140 x 100 cm, Courtesy Simon Lee Gallery

At the end of the rue Guenegaud, as you come up from the river, you find the Passage du Pont-Neuf, a sort of narrow, dark corridor connecting rue Mazarine and rue de Seine. This passage is thirty yards long and two in width at the most; it is paved with yellowish flagstones, worn and loose, which always exude a damp, pungent smell, and it is covered with a flat, glazed roofing black with grime.

On fine summer days, when the streets are baking in the oppressive heat, a whitish light does fall through the dingy glass roofing and hang dismally about this arcade, but on nasty winter ones, on foggy mornings, the panes send down nothing but gloom on to the greasy pavement below, and dirty, evil gloom at that.

To the left open out dark, low, shallow shops from which come whiffs of cold, vault-like air. Here there are booksellers, vendors of toys, cardboard dealers, whose window displays are grey with dust and slumber dimly in the shadows; the small window-panes cast strange greenish mottlings on the goods for sale. The murky shops behind are just so many black holes in which weird shapes move and have their being. To the right a wall runs the whole length of the passage and on it the shop-keepers opposite have hung narrow cupboards, where on flimsy shelves painted a horrible brown colour are displayed a lot of nondescript odds and ends that have been mouldering there for the last twenty years.

From *Therese Raquin* by Emile Zola, 1868



Toby Ziegler, *Pathetic Fallacy*, 2007, wood, plextol, gesso, horse hair, human hair, coffee, 130 x 215 x 95 cm, Courtesy Simon Lee Gallery

Agnes Kohlmeyer

Hamsterrad

– wie ich es sehe, im Zusammenhang mit meinem Beruf, als Ausstellungs-Kuratorin und als Lehrende an einer Kunst-hochschule, aber auch als jemand, der seit mehr als 20 Jahren hier vor Ort ansässig ist und die venezianische Biennale hautnah miterlebt hat, mit eigener Biennale-erfahrung – die Zusammenarbeit mit Harald Szeemann im Jahr 1999. Alles dreht sich, endlos, geht weiter, immer weiter, Diskussionen zu bestimmten Themen wiederholen sich oder werden wieder aufgegriffen, eine Notwendigkeit, ein unermüdliches

Fortfahren. Ein Aussteigen gibt es eigentlich nicht mehr.

Diese Überlegungen betreffen das Ausstellungsschaffen heute allgemein, das Erschließen neuer und "anderer" Räume, das steti-ge Sich-Öffnen der Möglich-keiten, der Sichtweisen, der Horizonte. Die ganze Welt "läuft" inzwischen mit auf unserem Rad. Die Künstler müssen heute nicht mehr nach New York, Paris oder Berlin gehen, um "entdeckt" zu werden. Es sind inzwischen auch die anderen, die Kuratoren, Direktoren, Sammler, Galeristen, die durch die Welt reisen, auf der Suche nach neuen Künstlern und neuer Kunst. Und kein Ort wäre zu klein oder unbedeutend, als dass er nicht doch Neues, Spannendes und Bedeutendes hervorbringen könnte in der

Kunst. Kein Dschungel ist mehr zu dicht, keine Wüste zu weit, kein Kriegsgebiet zu gefährlich, keine Großstadtperipherie, keine Favela zu elend, als dass nicht doch die interessanteste und wichtigste Kunst dort, aus solchen Gegenden und ihren inhärenten Konflikten heraus, geboren werden könnte.

Das Publikum für die Kunst wird immer größer, Informationen werden immer reichhaltiger und leichter zugänglich, Bilderwelten, ganze Bilderfluten ergießen sich durch unsere Fernseher und Computer. Kunst treffen wir auf den Straßen an, auf Baustellen, in Untergrundbahnen, in funktionierenden städtischen Strukturen. Kunst kann sich in jedem Museum einen Ort schaffen, heimlich oder ganz offiziell, man findet sie in Parks

und mitten in der freien Landschaft, und mehr und mehr in alten, für ganz andere Zwecke errichteten Gebäuden.

Und auch das ist neu. Die so genannte "Umnutzung" von überschüssigen, verlassenen Arealen und Gebäuden in kulturelle Einrichtungen hat in vielen Teilen der Welt in den letzten Jahren bereits massiv stattgefunden, so in den stillgelegten Kohlenabbauge-länden im Ruhrgebiet oder in den vielen aus alten Fabriken ent-standenen Museen in England. Auch in Italien gibt es immer mehr Beispiele für großartige Umge-staltungen von Bauten und ganzen Landstrichen, die die Faszination der alten Architektur und deren

Continues On Page 40

Agnes Kohlmeyer

Continued From Page 39

Geschichte bewusst in Neunutzungen mit einbezogen haben.

Dies kann oftmals der geeignete Moment für das zeitgenössische Kunstaussstellungswesen sein, das sich seit langem nicht mehr nur mit dem weiß gestrichenen Museumsraum begnügt, sondern sich mehr und mehr in den Alltag, das ganz normale Leben und dessen spezifische Räumlichkeiten begibt. Einzelne oder periodisch wiederkehrende Kunstausstellungen bieten noch den Vorteil, dass sie temporär sind, also bestimmte größere Entscheidungen zunächst einmal aufgeschoben, Nutzungen nur erst erprobt werden können, bevor eine längerfristige Lösung gefunden wird. Ein Beispiel hierfür ist das Gelände des Arsenal in Venedig, auf dem seit der Szeemann-Biennale 1999 mit relativ wenigen baulichen Veränderungen die Biennalen stattfinden, während sich Militärmarine, Stadt und Staat erst nach und nach einig werden über eine zukünftige Nutzung des restlichen, noch immer riesigen Geländes. Langsam werden die fantastischen ehemaligen Speicher- oder Fabrikräume in wunderbarer Lage neu genutzt, als vermietbare Ausstellungsräume, Theater- und Konzerthallen, Cafés und Restaurants, Buchläden und vielleicht – es wäre nur an der Zeit – sogar für eine internationale Kunsthalle.

Meine Überlegungen betreffen in erster Linie die Stadt Venedig, diese Stadt der Biennale, der ältesten Biennale überhaupt und der so genannten "Mutter aller Biennalen", die rund um den Globus geboren wurden – in Sao Paolo oder Sydney, Santa Fe oder Istanbul, Berlin, Moskau, Lyon, Johannesburg, Gwangshu, Prag, Athen oder Thessaloniki, Cuenca in Ecuador, Sharjah in den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten oder Ushuaia in Feuerland, Patagonien. Provoziert wohl auch durch die Aktion des 1995 amtierenden Biennale-Direktors Jean Clair, der zum 100. Jubiläum der Veranstaltung die Abteilung "Aperto" für die jüngeren Künstler rundweg strich – nicht weil er diese Abteilung etwa als überholt empfand, sondern ganz einfach, weil ihm die allerjüngste Kunst zu wenig interessant erschien.

Denn was speziell Venedig

betrifft – trotz aller unbestrittenen Problematiken dieser ersten Biennale, trotz aller eventuellen Rückwärtsgerichtetheit (so die Ausstellungen bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges), trotz der stets viel zu knappen Zeit zur Erarbeitung der jeweiligen Ausstellungs-Edition und infolgedessen häufig mangelnder didaktischer Hilfestellung und auch sonst spärlicher Ausstattung an logistischen und Dienstleistungseinrichtungen im Sinne der Ausstellungsbesucher – diese Stadt und ihre Biennalelandschaft üben eben doch eine ganz besondere Anziehungskraft aus, zumindest auf das alle zwei Jahre anreisende Kunstpublikum. Wie viel dabei auf das Konto der Stadt, ihrer ganz besonderen Schönheit und ihres Zaubers geht und wie viel auf das der Ausstellung, ist wohl kaum noch auseinander zu halten. Die ganze Stadt ist mit dieser Ausstellung und all ihren sich mehr und mehr verzweigenden Nebenaktivitäten verflochten.

Da gibt es zu Biennalezeiten kaum noch einen Palast oder Garten, kaum einen Campo oder Platz, der nicht auf irgendeine Weise miteinbezogen und ausgebuht wäre. Ganz zu schweigen von freien Betten und Möglichkeiten zu Speis und Trank, vom Aperitivo bis hin zum großen festlichen Empfang in einem der schönen Paläste der "Serenissima".

Alles und alle in dieser Stadt sind zumindest während der Tage der Pressevorbesichtigung auf die Biennale und ihre Besucher bezogen, und die Nachfrage nach immer neuen Orten zum Ausstellen und Feiern wird jedes Jahr größer und beharrlicher, der Phantasie sind keine Grenzen mehr gesetzt auf der Jagd nach immer neuen Ausstellungs- und Veranstaltungsorten.

Stellt sich noch die Frage nach dem "Warum"? Warum glaubt die "ganze" Kunstwelt so sehr an diese Stadt, an ihre Kraft, was die Präsentation der neuesten Kunst rund um die Welt anbetrifft, sprich warum üben die Stadt und ihre weit über hundertjährige Biennale noch immer eine derartige Faszination aus?

Die Kunst allein wird es nicht sein, denn das Phänomen der riesigen Nachfrage sowohl bei Besuchern wie "Machern", aber auch bei vielen Künstlern aus aller Welt selber, nach Möglichkeiten zum Bleiben, Ausstellen, Sehen und Gesehenwerden ist keineswegs von irgendwelchen

Qualitätskriterien der gebotenen Kunst abhängig. Ich denke, dass in erster Linie dieselbe Faszination eine Rolle spielt, wie sie für alle übrigen Besucher der Stadt gelten mag: jeder will Venedig gesehen haben und von der Stadt träumen, zumindest eine Weile in ihr verbringen und sich dem unverwechselbaren Charme dieser "kleinen Großstadt" hingeben, die durch ihre Bauten und Brücken von der Vergangenheit erzählt und durch die ganz besondere, in stetem Bezug zum Wasser stehende Lichtsituation und die manchmal ganz unglaublich stille Atmosphäre besticht.

Wahrscheinlich ist es genau die richtige Mischung aus all diesen Komponenten. An Publikum, dem "richtigen" Kunstpublikum fehlt es jedenfalls nicht.

Und dann ist da noch das wahre Hamsterrad, die "berühmte" Nationalitäten-Frage, die pünktlich anlässlich jeder Venedig-Biennale wieder auftaucht. Denn nur hier, in dieser ganz speziellen Ausstellung wird die Tradition der nationalen Beteiligungen beibehalten, und alle zwei Jahre gibt es wieder einen speziellen "Goldenen Löwen" für die beste nationale Beteiligung.

"Nationale Identität" in der heutigen Kunst im Allgemeinen ist zweifelsohne eine interessante Frage, wird aber mehr und mehr angezweifelt, seitdem so viele Künstler "Nomaden" geworden sind: Kunstschaaffende, die es ablehnen, sich auf einen einzigen Wohnsitz zu beschränken, es auch, was ihre Kunstproduktion anbetrifft, genauso bewusst ablehnen, noch mit ihrer Ursprungsnationalität in Verbindung gebracht zu werden. Einige stehen ihrem Ursprungsland und dessen Kunstpolitik eher kritisch gegenüber, sehen sich nicht mehr unterstützt und geliebt im eigenen Land, ja manchmal in Vergessenheit geraten. Andere suchen

neue Arbeitsmöglichkeiten oder sind weggegangen, weil in ihrem Land Krieg herrscht oder die politische Situation unerträglich ist. Dies alles mag dazu beigetragen haben, dass bestimmte künstlerische und mit nationalen Traditionen verbundene Positionen heutzutage nicht mehr so einfach zu bestimmen sind. Positiv erscheint die Tatsache, dass wir alle die Kunst der ganzen Welt immer besser kennen zu lernen in der Lage sind, gerade weil wir sie, vielleicht erstmals bei der documenta 11 Okvui Enwezors,

mehr und mehr auf sämtlichen Großausstellungen rund um die Welt entdecken können.

Aber warum dann auch heute in Venedig noch immer diese unglaubliche Ernsthaftigkeit, mit der sämtliche Pavillonbesitzer das Schicksal ihrer Vertretungen betreiben, die Sorgfalt, mit der sie ihre Künstler auswählen und die oft immensen Gelder, die zumeist für eine solche Präsentation auch aufgetrieben werden können? Warum dann eine stetig ansteigende Nachfrage nach dem letzten freien Platz, auf dem weiterhin nationale Pavillons entstehen könnten bzw. warum dann diese erstaunliche Verzweiflung ob der Tatsache, dass inzwischen einfach kein einziger freier Quadratmeter mehr in den ganzen "Giardini" zu finden ist? Gibt es eben doch noch ein Interesse und geradezu ein tieferes Bedürfnis für nationale Kriterien?

Sicherlich wird dieses Bedürfnis eher auf der Seite der Länder und ihrer diplomatischen Vertretungen liegen als auf Seiten der Künstler, denen es um ihre individuelle Freiheit und die bestmöglichen Bedingungen für ihre Arbeit geht. Trotzdem, ich kann mir keinen einzigen oder nur sehr wenige Künstler vorstellen, die eine Einladung ihres Landes ablehnen würden, dieses auf einer Veranstaltung wie der venezianischen Biennale zu vertreten, und die in diesem Falle nicht sehr bewusst daran denken würden, wie und mit welchen Arbeiten sie ihr eigenes Land am besten vertreten könnten.

Auch dies ein sich stetig weiterdrehendes Hamsterrad, das manchmal das Tempo verlangsamt, um dann, nach ein wenig Nachdenkzeit für uns allzeit "Rennende", mit noch rasanterer Geschwindigkeit fortzufahren.



schmissig gequirlte Scheisse auf Dachdeckersohlen von Brüdern in Deine seichte Süsmäntel gewickelt mein Herz kommt bleiern gestuckt bitte sehr bitte schön hauptsache dick und vom Sockel fliessend und dann duftet der Ali schizoid zerstäubt angezeichnet wehe Du reibst Dir die Augen weder das was tobias gerne sagt, noch das was wolfgang gerne säuft. auch nicht das was florian frisst und das Ali an den fingern klebt nach einer langen nacht. fast gibt es ein flirren in der umkreisung, ein einfangen aber es ist immer porös, es ergibt sich eine öffnung. eine umschlingung. eine verschlingung. eine doppelhäutigkeit, das wasser läuft in dem zusammen das der mund umschliesst. Vom Kopf zerschmetterte Lithurgie und postwendent zurück klebrig gelockert hinein in einen Nachmittag in Erdbeereis gerührt von dem endlosen Schleichwerbefutzies bestottert, gern komm herein, setzt dich und kaue dich dumm an meinem Gabriel geknebelt mit Tulpenstaubküchentüchern aber die Liebe die nichtsgebeugte Schweisskanone stolz bis zum Lammhaxenrichtfest mit Dir im langweiligsten Sonnenuntergang, Du Presswurst.

Häuser wie Vögel, Schokoriegel wie Schwimmbäder, Bücher wie Autobahnabsperungen, wens nach mir ginge wäre der Kanzler ein kleines autistisches Mädchen.

mein trans-fett ist nahe an der kurve und ich klebe wie eine hundsstulle im gummistiefelabsatz eines x-beliebigen. ruf an 0049 172 9070009 spei mir einen Fixpunkt aufs Revier meine Silberbüchse sabbert und das mädchen das ausrutschte und ihr gughupf aus drei eiern flog über die friedhofsmauer.

so bleibt Dir unverwechselbar das Seidengestüpp erspart Unheilvoller Dein tropfendes Stirngewimmer lächzt nach Sieben die triebverwunden locken, wer hackt hier wem ins Geflüster, das Gerede vom Unmöglichen bleibt für immer hinter dem zurück,

pack sie, Taxi, zerhack sie. Was muss passieren damit es mal richtig fremd wird, wir langweiler.

Idiotie, Oligophrenie, Amentia, Schwachsinn, geistige Defizienz, er. Sie, als ob ich, bloss wie, zerhexelt, ausgefischt, mitgefuchst, eigentlich ist alles gleichlaut, Würstelköniginnen, Platzhirschen, schönes weichsaufen, nix und wiedernix geworden, sodala jetzt wurmversäucht an Lattes und Grundwassergehältern, nur fünf Minuten ohne Angst jeden Tag.

wenn nun aber der Textexegetiker dem schnulligen Euphorotiker versucht das Hirn aufzustemmen sprängt der silbrige Ontoprachialgenetiker das Gewächshaus der periornothologischen Steckrübensuppe ein letztes Mal siegwärts das Genick, dreh dir den Hahn zu, mach mal auf dicke Hose, vergifte, so a mal b mit c auf d ins m rüber

zum k hinein in q zurück, Getreidegassenhäschen hast mich gefeilt, zerquetscht, gehäuchelt, komm ich näh dich zu, neues geöffnet, kannst Dir holen, unersetzbar, gelichtet mit meinem Alltag, hereinspaziert, mal umgeschaut, grüss gott gesagt, Schnitzel gewürzt, Tische verprügelt, Lust verloren, durch Siebe gedrückte Hoffnungstropfen gegrillt, geläuterte sabsche gekühlt, Seiblingskind hat Sud im Mund.

Sieg heut abend, das Alte kommt zurück, der Suff erbricht sich leiser.

Aufwärtstrend mit ihm gelacht, erstlingwerk erniedrigt, Saumagen gelurcht, untenrum ernuchtert verzweigt, wochenlang die Augen verbunden, im Kopfstand gegangen, kein Wort gesagt, Batterien in beiden Ohren...

Schluss aus ist es mit uns, warum ersetzbar geliebt, Schüssel raus.

Gabriel Loebell





Rudolf Polanszky, models for trans-aggregate structures, 2005 / 2006, Video 11 min, loop, Courtesy of the artist

Rudolf Polanszky *models for trans-aggregate structures*

A romantic interpretation of my work methods

Structure here is a metaphor for something "made evident", "trans-aggregate" here means the instable construct of a subjective reality, pointing beyond a seemingly stable condition.

My work is an attempt to reorder correspondences to imagination patterns, to change them and to rearrange my thought structures. I assume that there are habitual structures adapted from repeated habitual processes of experience which can be recurred to in identifying what is perceived.

In the play of perception and experience, it seems one is supposed to decode the external image that is offered, and one makes use of the mnemonic material, the available patterns of similarity, which are moulded until an apparently congruent model of reference ensues.

The convention on the interpretation of experience is on the one hand empirical via the senses, on the other hand organized and pre-formed by rational, deductive structures in the cognitive system.

In my work, I try to modify the basic material by distorting and exaggerating just these mental imagination patterns and to eschew the imprisonment of the biologicistic, adaptive conditions of sense. Thus my work is the expression of a kind of perpetuum of continual reorganization via my mental invention machine. The fewer cues for making sense I include in the material and its use, the harder the "invention machine" has to work to invent an order as a bridge to an understanding of the "new".

What "points outward" in the "trans-aggregate structure" of course itself always remains "inside", and so the "artifacts" thus produced, as the objects of my work, are my remaining outposts.

est mental imagination pattern

FROM THE STRUCTURE OF COGNITIVE REVOLUTIONS

Y. M. Guttman

Syncopation as a cognitive revolution

On the importance of cognitive revolutions

The artifact nature of forms is revealed in periods of *cognitive revolutions* - when the human race proves able and willing to project on experience new forms, incommensurable with old ones. In such periods, the 'hold' of old forms lessens and that of the new ones, still weak. Consequently, the citizens of these times become acutely aware of the fact that a certain aspect of their vision of the world was based on *convention*. Much of the *raison d'être* of revolutions in the cultural field stems from this point - Every form, responsive and open as it might be, is in danger of being eventually atrophied. The negative potential of such developments is not limited to culture; when the dominant forms become degenerate human subjects lose their ability to self-reflect on their cognitive activities, namely, tend to confuse their own products and projections with what is external and real. As a result, they can no longer live up to the commitment to critical thinking, namely, refrain from metaphysical reification. The ability to change forms at will is thus of the highest significance to mankind; it is also the greatest manifestation of one's inner *freedom*. In Kandinsky's words:

Freedom is manifested in the effort to free oneself from those forms that already achieved their purpose i.e. old forms, in the effort to create endlessly diverse forms.

No strategy can save old forms from this fate other than one bent on initiating the next revolution of form. In the cognitive domain, that often means finding a form *incommensurable* with the old ones. Incommensurable forms, vying for projection into experience, tend to cancel each other out, as it were, giving rise to a moment where experience seems sensible bare. Only during such magical moments mankind is afforded a glimpse into its own cognitive machinations. Cognitive revolutions, in conclusion, are necessary for the very possibility of expanding the cognitive abilities of the human race, in general, and, genuine self-reflection, in particular.

Syncopation and incommensurability

One historical episode we deem a cognitive revolution hap-

pened as the result of the introduction of *syncopated beat*; under the influence of ragtime and then jazz, the human race learned to 'carve' an entirely new type of temporal or sequential patterns onto experience.

Syncopation, immanently described, is a rhythm composed of two sources: a 'strong beat' - usually European 'two step' - provides the 'rhythmic skeleton' and a second 'weak beat' is described by jazz musicians as an attempt to *play off* of the first, connecting before or after the accents of the latter.

The two sources of rhythm are usually *incommensurable*; they have no common divisor or denominator and, for this reason, cannot be given *unified* presentation. (In the manner in which a rhythm of 'two fourths' and one of 'two thirds' can be both presented as fractions of twelve, for example.) Before the introduction of syncopated rhythm, music that combined different incommensurable rhythms, was considered necessarily *dissonant*. It was taken to be an a priori truth that a manifold of sounds that cannot be 'unified' in the manner indicated - arranged according to a single beat, - *must* be disagreeable to the human ear. In the realm of sequential patterns, 'unity in diversity' meant finding a single divisor for all the rhythmic patterns found in the sounds.

For this reason, the aesthetic reception of syncopated rhythms required a *conceptual revolution*; whether we say that the maxim of 'unity in diversity' was flaunted or, different concept of unity emerged, instead, the foundations of rhythmic unity had to be reformulated. It was no longer possible to regard the requirement that a single overriding rhythm found in a manifold of sounds as a necessary condition of its 'rhythmic unity'.

Syncopated music taught the human race the pleasures of incommensurable rhythms and frequencies. Indeed, the syncopated rhythms we listen to so often nowadays are invariably made of incommensurable beats 'taken in' and 'held together' as one. In the advent of syncopation, the human mind learned to instill musical unity of an altogether different kind within his manifolds of sounds. The lesson learned from syncopation was that strategically deviating from a pattern does not necessarily amount to its destruction; quite to the con-

trary, syncopating to a strong beat furnishes the subject with a new means for establishing a *correlation* therewith.

Syncopation as a new cognitive ability

It seems safe to say that the ability to hold incommensurable rhythms together as a single rhythmic unity did not exist in Europe prior to the end of the 19th century. This cognitive ability was imported, through music, from the slave communities in the Caribbean islands. The origin of the advanced state of the cognitive systems of the latter was probably the result of the fact that the slaves, tied together to each other, 'chain gang' style, had to learn to follow the 'strong beat' of the group while, at the same time, engaging in separate activities of their own. Doing so required of them an ability wholly absent in Europe, namely, to follow simultaneously two incommensurable rhythms at the same time.

The large scale acquisition of the ability to assimilate together a number of incommensurable frequencies had highly important consequences; the human race became vastly more 'cognitively sophisticated'. For all intents and purposes, holding together incommensurable frequencies amounts to finding for them an *infinite* divisor. One could say then, that, espousing syncopation, the human tribe became accustomed to infinite operations on its manifolds of experience.

The social implications of syncopated music

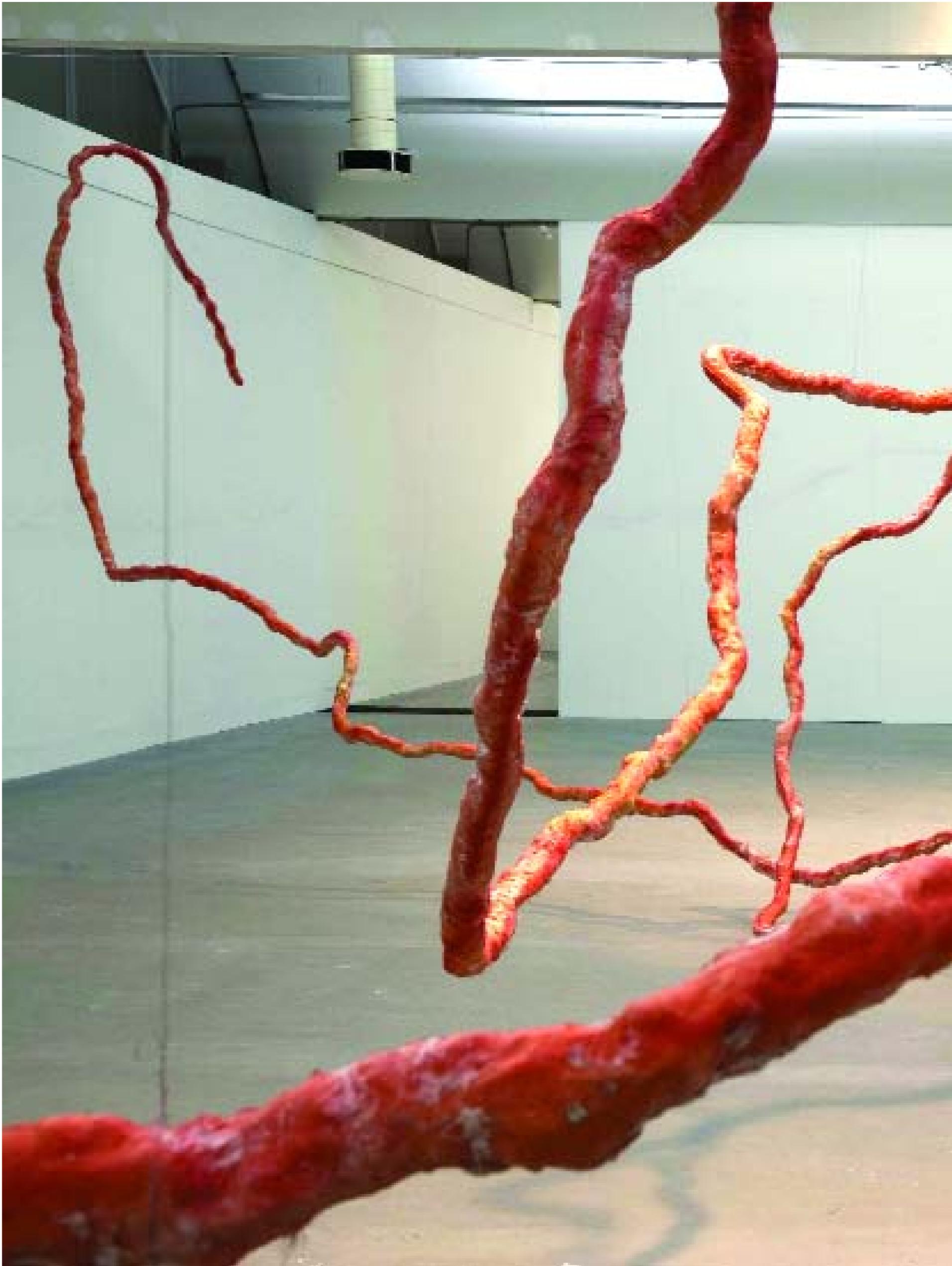
One could say that, assimilating jazz, the modern wage-slaves of the city listened to the cognitive advice of an older subservient tribe. Through syncopation they learned how to inject a measure of individual style and 'attitude' into their highly regimented life. Indeed, from the very beginning of the twentieth century, youthful metropolitan types adopted syncopation as their own. The new conception of musical unity was immediately applied by scores of jazz fans to different aspects of their life.

The aesthetic revolution that followed the ragtime craze of the mid 1890's was one aspect of the generation gap that opened at the time - it helped the young generation to define itself viz a viz the older one. The larger cognitive implications were obvious - the youth was completely con-

scious of the fact that, having assimilated the principle of syncopation, they thereby acquired a new cognitive ability that changed, in no metaphorical sense, their cognitive relation to their environment. Jazz showed them how to project rhythmic patterns onto manifolds of sound their fathers experienced as insufferable cacophonies. More specifically, they were introduced to a method that taught them how to make the syncopated sounds sounds of the metropolitan environment not only acceptable but agreeable - transforming them into something to which they could dance. Syncopated music was thus considered a quintessentially *metropolitan* form.

One aspect of jazz that was particularly important and appealing was the cognitive solidarity and unity in groups of syncopating musicians. Once jazz became well known and appreciated, one could conceive of any multiplicity of anarchic sources who play off of the same 'strong beat' as a unity of a brand new type. To be united, the individuals did not have to march in step; unity was consistent with a measure of strategic individual *deviance*.

The social implications of the syncopation revolution were perfectly clear in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Some were not willing to be 'cognitively reformed'. The Nazis, in particular, disliked syncopated music. Apart from its association with Afro American culture, jazz provided an alternative to their military conception of collective unity according to which, *absolute* obedience was required. The bolsheviks, by contrast, accepted jazz enthusiastically; they understood instinctively that the 'music of the jungle' - as many referred to it early on - reconciled collectivism and individual creative freedom. Indeed, it is not sufficiently acknowledged that, in the early decades of the last century, jazz was part and parcel of the culture of the communist. It provided a much needed proof that shedding off the solipsism and solitude of bourgeois existence in order to become immersed in a collective did not necessarily entail the loss of freedom and, individual style.



Urs Fischer, Spinoza Rhapsody, 2006, Epoxy resin, pigment, enamel, Ed. of 2 + 1 AP, Approx 400 x 950 x 1500 cm, © Urs Fischer. The Dakis Joannou Collection, Athens; Ringier



Collection, Switzerland. Courtesy Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

DARSIE ALEXANDER

The *Hamster Wheel* may be the best metaphor yet for the furious race against time that characterizes Venice during June of every odd year, when the city becomes the ultimate destination for a hungry art public seeking something to sink its teeth into. Here amidst rambling canals and cool church interiors congregates an overwhelming populous of artists, art enthusiasts, curators and collectors working to keep pace with the constantly-changing tide of talent and product brought on by the contemporary art world. Fortunately, Venice itself demands a certain slowing down of frenzied spectatorship, since its very layout promotes both discovery and wrong turns. What may have started as an afternoon devoted to finding an installation at the Lido may become a prolonged stop along the way, distraction being the name of the game in a city filled with visual and culinary digressions. Returning to the *Hamster Wheel* idea as a curatorial proposition, one is faced with an exhibition that makes plain the fact of circles, tangents and unexpected encounters; artists choose each other, curators intervene as commentators, and friends do their part in oversight and organization. "Encounters, not constructions of signification, are the important thing," reads the exhibition prospectus — appropriate in this place of meandering paths and unforeseen connections.

All paths and encounters require starting points and mine begins with Franz West, an artist whose work seems destined to circumvent any adequate description by successfully being many things at once, some of which don't belong to obvious art categories. To

list a few (and they are *things*): tabletops, resting spots, embedded bottles, dirty drawings, amorphous rocks, pictures as objects, objects as pictures, little slapping devices, a place to pee, plaques with people's names on them, screens to hide behind, low-lying aluminum dildos for outdoors, plaster faces with mouths agape, oversized lamps, models of things already made, white touchable objects that resemble body parts and instruments of torture, respectively. Like the hamster wheel, this abbreviated list offers no particular order but draws a circle, with each "development" feeding another or, just as likely, spinning a new riff on something made years ago. There is a chronology to the work, of course, but a random itemization gets more effectively at the bouncing back and forth of his practice, and the prospect of its changing with each new installation or conglomeration. Some works are disassembled by the artist and reincarnated as something new; others live on with an army of curators and conservators fighting to preserve the inevitably perishable materials of plaster and papier-mache. These attempts cannot suppress the fact of art's inherent fragility and life span, which West's work powerfully embodies in its materials and conceptual framework.

Life's routine also has its place in West's world, and though the work rarely repeats itself, the references to everyday habits are very clear. The early work (1970s-1980s) speaks to time spent in cafes and music taverns, where animated conversations and exaggerated gestures enacted to the sake of communication sparked some inter-

est in the art that would similarly engage bizarre gesticulation. Later bodies of work allude to the acts of drinking, sleeping, defecating (more on this in a moment) and having sex. And, of course, eating. Foraging for food, feeding his staff and supplying constant sustenance to those in his midst is an everyday concern for West. Daily excursions to a favorite Chinese restaurant in his neighborhood,



Photo: Darsie Alexander

often followed by prolonged stops at an outdoor market, are part of the productivity, albeit in the form of refueling. Virtually anyone can show up at the table and get a seat, though a core crew of handlers, fabricators, and builders are his lunchtime staple. Conversations unfold, food gets sent back (West himself isn't a big eater), and people stop by to chat. Talk drifts from one end of the table to the next; someone asks about the Lemurheads, plaster-turned-aluminum sculptures with gaping and oversized mouths. Suddenly it's 3pm and the interview hasn't begun nor the checklist confirmed nor the flights booked. Wouldn't it be nice to stop by the other studio to check on the progress of one of the sitting pieces? Absolutely, it's exactly the thing to be done as we pile into a very compact blue car playing very bad music that no one

seems to notice.

West's second studio, like the main atelier in Vienna, is full of activity, with assistants sandblasting tables, tweaking Styrofoam models, and welding aluminum. The floor carries the marks of these tasks, and I can't take my eyes off the kaleidoscopic drips. Baselines come into view: feet, pedestals, points of contact. A huge diamond-

shaped work rests on a single tiny rod that is its support. It all seems startlingly precarious, very possibly about to tip over and fall apart, but it simply never happens. Gravity is masterfully commandeered by fine engineering, and the work holds its own against the pressure of constant dabs, slaps and add-ons, not to mention the periodic and accidental knock from passersby. The work begs to be touched at every stage of incarnation, from the formless mass of gray papier-mache to the hardened and rocky surfaces that constitute, in some circles, West's aesthetic signature. The impetus to manhandle goes back to the very earliest interactive work, which he meant to be picked up, worn and circumnavigated. Nowadays primary physical contact comes in the form of one's backside, since sitting is integral to the leisurely



Photo: Darsie Alexander
 Franz West (untere Hälfte) beim Bemalen eines Teils der Figurengruppe "The Fragile on its Cloak"

experience of West's newer outdoor work.

At one point in his a career West wondered aloud if his work constituted furniture masquerading as art or art masquerading as furniture, and the question seems a good one to ponder from the seated position. If West's work incites bodily moves of interaction, it is now frequently with knees bent and derriere properly placed, bottom down on some plastic platform that may or may not be appropriately "fit" the anatomy in question. Here in his studio, sitting releases a barrage of information straight from the artist's mouth, as if settling one part of his body makes room for the activation of other decidedly verbal parts. On my own receiving end, a conventional form of learning takes place in response to the talk, with scribbled notes marking themes as they are discussed, leaving the details to be taken by a small digital recorder resting on the table. The challenge, as always, is background noise, since people come and go from the studio with regularity, doors slam and cell phones ring. In fact, the experience of background noise and unavoidable distractions is, in its own way, relevant to the aggregate nature of West's work, with its various permutations and piled-on materials. A work that makes the theme of

distractedness rather explicit is *Clamp* (1988) an enclosed room that features walls lined with newspapers, a sofa, and several freestanding "telephone sculptures." One imagines the prospect of some pressing incoming call, the voice on the other end asking that unsettling question, "Are you sitting down?"

The situational aspects of West's work, in particular the onus it puts on the viewer/participant to sit, think and act, is also a feature of the collective boy-group from Vienna, gelitin, whose events prompt physical action in the extreme: body-on-body contact, mud baths and rollercoaster joy rides are among their recent escapades. For gelitin, participation demands a certain letting down of one's guard, and recently the literal dropping of pants. In addition to brown clay "paintings", new work includes the *Shitplex* (2006), a tall wooden structure that leads, according to a Kunsthau Bregenz catalogue, to a "small booth where you really should take a shit. You really must, because it is so exciting." Simultaneously a kind of indoor tree house and lavatory where nature can take its course from on high, the *Shitplex* is also a viewing station complete with mirrors allowing for posterior revelations. In a related project, the artists systematically documented their

own scatological triumphs with a camera. The resultant shit-pictures, as they might be called, turn out to be more than a little gross though in some ways fascinating, if you think about how the subject itself as history as opposed to specimen. Manzoni canned his shit in 30-gram doses in 1961, for example, charging buyers the price of gold for his authentic waste (though the question of whether or not he actually canned the stuff remains open...). Beyond the obvious humor of selling crap to collectors, Manzoni's endeavor exposed the bathroom as perhaps the most compelling site of originality, since no one's shit can be exactly the same (leading to the inevitable question, is some shit better than others?). Gelitin's effort is at once communal (all have "contributed") and wide-ranging, with the artists weighing in amongst themselves on whose style is the more arabesque and whose the more geometric. Their personalized approach is underscored by the fact that each "draws" a letter in his shit to form a collective alphabet. Unlike Manzoni, though, the 'actual' shit of gelitin is photographed rather than canned, turning action into documentation and in so doing packaging their private three-dimensional acts for a two-dimensional spot on your wall.

Beyond the historical explanations that one can throw at their art, the fact is, the boys want to have fun. It's an unavoidable consequence of being around them, wallowing in their mud baths and perusing their website (www.gelitin.net) where animated descriptions of pink bunnies coexist with text on installations designed to "feel like a humongous implosion, sucking you into deep and profound chaos, instability, joy and pure wonder." Camping out on an artistic

playground built years ago by Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley, among others, gelitin engages all forms of extreme (and extremely bad) behavior while winking out of one eye. No subject or person is above reproach, least of all the artists themselves, who feature prominently in their own work and engage its oozing pleasures and flagrant absurdities as much as anyone else. Often they put themselves as the center of something that might go terribly wrong (crushing bodies? burnt flesh? beaurocratic mayhem?) and tempt chance with their impromptu antics. A 2005 project at the Shanghai Biennale presented numerous logistical obstacles that the artists seized as part of their work (limited access to a much-needed building resulted in their creation of fake entry passes that the artists distributed amongst themselves and whoever happened to want one, causing momentary mayhem). Upsetting systems of order is an old game in the performance art world, but it is played to new and comical extremes in smart work that revels in its capacity to thwart, offend, and thoroughly indulge those it engages. Somehow not surprisingly, the members met at summer camp in the late 1970s.

There are certain logical parallels that can be drawn between Viennese artists like Franz West and the gelitin guys, who similarly work with crews of participants and makers, who occupy spacious studios in old buildings, and whose work deals to a greater or lesser extent with the psychological effects of bodily experience. One might assume these parallels to imply spheres of influence, but this can be an extremely difficult phenomenon to substantiate. Exchange may be the bet-

ter model, since it is integral to the thinking of Franz West, who has teamed up and swapped works with other artists throughout his career. However, exchange can also be amorphous and subconscious, played out in fleeting conversations or jointly held experiences that may be quietly forgotten. *Hamster Wheel* takes up these matters as an underlying concern, dispensing with thematic or monographic exhibition models to pose a few provocative questions: "Is it chance that brought [these artists] together? Serendipity? Old boys' networks? Pitfalls on the career trajectory between dementia praecox and dementia senilis?" To this I might add that personal proximity, the very fact of being someplace with someone or something, probably does more to inform artistic and curatorial decisions than anyone would like to admit. As everyone knows, familiarity does not breed contempt but opportunity.

When it comes to exhibitions, organizational rationale can run the gamut. Does the inclusion of every work need a page-long justification? Most curators and historians are trained to answer with an unequiv-

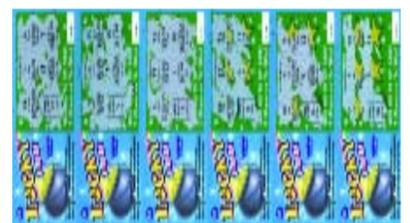
ocal yes. But as *Hamster Wheel* illustrates, the rules are loosening to allow for the addition of works deliberately situated to upset thematic balances and airtight arguments. More critics are paying attention to the unpredictable associations that can be made between works that are fundamentally "about" different issues. Geoff Dyer recently published a book on photography, *The Ongoing Moment* (Pantheon 2005), that addresses the unpredictable associations that can be made between works that otherwise have little in common. Hands, blindness, people's backs, unmade beds, and deserted rooms are among the subjects he takes up, using examples from different artists and eras that communicate across time. The experience of seeing commonalities between randomly assembled objects is likewise a reality of curatorial practice, since the very system we use to store and organize works of art (by nationality, then last name) is the same system that allows random serendipity to take place and be observed. Thus we may notice in the B box of a collection vault that Jill Baroff and Astrid Bowlby are obsessed with quasi-

organic patterning. In the same box, though, can be found radically dissimilar objects that are no less powerful in their complete disregard for one another, as if each were made to disprove the other's point.

Tamuna Sirbiladze, who lives in Vienna and is married to West, could arguably provide the counterpoint to the artists already discussed, the fly in their ointment. Her large paintings of floating bodies against an aqueous world of purples, blues and oranges are graphic and emotionally raw. This comes in part from a deliberate speed of execution – if content is not delivered quickly enough, it is dropped. Thus paintings of reclined women, a figure puking into a sink, and a mountainous landscape, all come from something like a birthing process that follows a long gestation period. Overheard phrases like 'it never happened' find new articulation in the visual language of her paintings. It's as if certain words lodge themselves in the artist's memory bank and can only be released by painting them out, emptying them onto her canvases. The works have a kind of poured-out gut wrenching honesty

that stands in deliberate contrast to the more tongue-in-cheek strategies of her peers, and they are also more narrative. One is left to ponder the prospect that in some ways these figures are real women staring at each other in the mirror, and we are left to construct their stories as if they were our own. But of course they're not.

The idea of straying lines of inquiry is at the very core of *Hamster Wheel*, much as it is central to the experience of the art in general. The inclusion of an artist like Sirbiladze into the mix does much to challenge viewers who might expect conclusions from group shows like this one. In the end, no amount of reasoning can succinctly explain why these artists belong together. Yet in the simultaneous pulling of different directions that their works offer, the project persuasively illustrates the fact that, for the most interesting artists and exhibitions, tidiness is never an option.



IMPRINT

The Hamsterwheel project devised in Vienna by Urs Fischer and Franz West will be inaugurated at the 52nd Venice Biennale on 7th June 2007. It will take on a new dimension at the 7th Printemps de Septembre show in Toulouse, from 21st September to 14th October 2007. Many historians, critics, gallery owners and leading figures in the art world have had a hand in this project.

Locations:

Tesa Della Nuovissima 105, Arsenale di Venezia
www.hamsterwheel.eu
Printemps de Septembre à Toulouse
www.printempsdesseptembre.com

Thanks to:

Darsie Alexander, Carola Annoni, Ben Bazalgette, Edith Bergmann, Günther Bernhard, Bernie Bernsteiner, Klaus Bliem, John Bock, Achille Bonito Oliva, Karoline Brand, Jean-Marc Bustamante, Enrica Calebich, Valentina Cancelli, Anna Caruso, Marcus Coates, Sadie Coles, Sadie Coles Gallery, Anna Colin, Livino Corradi, Roberto D'Agostino, Pauline Daly, ddkern, Marco Eneidi, Milovan Farronato, Urs Fischer, Peter Fischli, Katharina Forero, Glenn Frei, Maike Fries, Frikki, David Galloway, Gagosian Gallery, Wolfgang Gantner, Olivier Garbay, Günther Gerdes, Alison Gingeras, Sara Glaxia,

Matthias Goldmann, José Ruiz Gonzalez, Douglas Gordon, Antonietta Grandesso, Carol Green, Georg Gröller, Martin Guttman, Bruce Haines, Marie-Frédérique Hallin, Christoph Harringer, Rachel Harrison, Heiri Häfliger, Alanna Heiss, Susanne Herder, Georg Herold, Peter Isler, Urs Jaeggi, Ali Janka, Christian Jankowski, Philippe Joppin, Renate Kainer, Sophie Kinkel, Jutta Küpper, Mark Leckey, Simon Lee Gallery, Thierry Leviez, Erik van Lieshout, Gabriel Loebell, Veit Loers, Sarah Lucas, Schuyler Maehl, Midori Matsui, Albert Mayr, Emanuela Mazzonis, Christoph Meier, Christian Meyer, Jonathan Monk, Mundi, Greene Naftali Gallery, Maria Nievoll, Michaela Obermair, Nansi O'Conner, Blandine Orfino, Antonio Ortega, Paola Pivi, Rudolf Polanszky, Eva Presenhuber, Printemps de Septembre Team, Sam Pulitzer, Philipp Quehenberger, Lindsay Ramsay, Stefan Ratibor, Florian Reither, Olivia Reither, Luca Rento, Markus Rischgasser, Ugo Rondinone, Galerie Thaddäus Ropac, Johannes Schlebrügge, Karl Schneller, Elfi Schnöll, Tamuna Sirbiladze, Ewald Stastny, Francesco Stocchi, Annika Ström, Una Szeemann, Markus Taxacher, Patrizio Telesio, Johanna Tilche, Nicola Tonutti, Ines Turian, Alexandra Tuttle, Andrea Überbacher, Piotr Uklanski, Tobias Urban, Kara Vander Weg, Salvatore Viviano, Suzanne Weenink, Hans Weigand, Kerstin Weiss, David Weiss, Dominique Wenzel, Franz West, Franz Wingelmaier, Nicolò Zen, Toby Ziegler, Ralf Ziervogel, David Zink Yi, Thomas Zipp

Organisation:

Valentina Cancelli

Publication:

Layout: Albert Mayr
Print: Herold Druck
© by the artists and the authors.
Für namentlich gezeichnete Beiträge übernehmen die Herausgeber keine Haftung.
No parts of this publication may be reproduced without permission.
All rights reserved.

Published by:

SCHLEBRÜGGE.EDITOR
Museumsplatz 1, quartier21/MQ
1070 Wien, www.schlebruegge.at

Edited by:

Firma Renate Kainer
Eschenbachgasse 9
1010 Wien, www.meyerkainer.com

Printed in Austria