

#1

WALL TO WALL
Egill Sæbjörnsson &
Karolin Tampere

WHAT IS MY NAME?
Lorenzo Bruni

#2

#3

TOWARDS
CONFLUENCE
Kamila Wielebska
& Remco De Blaaij

TIME-CHALLENGER
Adnan Yildiz

#4

#5

AFTER ALL,
EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT
IN THE END
Jens Maier-Rothe

LEADERS WEG??

Karolin en gil int zwart gans?
op rug zwart en groen invertenn?

adnan foto s in tekst in 49% grijs zonder
caption?

112%

pnr???? mss kan het wel in kleur v curator
waar best past in marge, in toc dan ook in klur
of overall dezelfde plaatsing op paginas en
aanwezig?

cleane, spierwitte offset, cfr meivis colleted
work --- papieren bespreken met marie-anne,
formaat al communiceren

tussenschotten nog bezien, kan
koeler,centreren?
ontwerper erbij.

vossie poster eerst op recto, dan full verso

Condensed bold voor intro etc?

TOC en m&m en hans in stijle titels m&m
hoofdletter, dan inspringen en onderlijnen

‘toc’ weg of voluit in univers zoals titels txten

txt hans en m&m kleiner?

TOC

INTRODUCTION

Maaïke Gouwenberg
& Maarten Vanden Eynde

TEKST

Hans Martens

CURATOR #1 CURATOR

WALL TO WALL
Egill Sæbjörnsson & Karolin Tampere

CURATOR #2 CURATOR

WHAT IS MY NAME?
Lorenzo Bruni

CURATOR #3 CURATOR

TOWARDS CONFLUENCE
Kamila Wielebska & Remco De Blaaij

CURATOR #4 CURATOR

TIME-CHALLENGER
Adnan Yildiz

CURATOR #5 CURATOR

AFTER ALL, EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT IN THE END
Jens Maier-Rothe

COLOPHON

As a typical Enough Room for Space project CURATOR CURATOR emerged out of a marriage between an open space or question, and a personal specific interest or focus on a problematic contemporary issue. In this case the Higher Institute of Fine Arts (HISK) in Ghent, offered the open space by a direct request from artistic director Hans Martens, who gave carte blanche for a project to take place in the exhibition space of the HISK on the first floor of the building. Our proposal, CURATOR CURATOR, gave the opportunity to upcoming/emerging curators to develop a project within and with the only post-graduate visual arts Institute in Belgium. We gave curators the chance to experiment en develop a project which might have been difficult to realize within the context of a regular exhibition venue. We opened the space for projects where the curators could test their curatorial ideas without being tight up to rules and boundaries of a regular contemporary art institute. The only tights at the start of each project were the basic principals of the HISK: to experiment and finding possibilities to develop oneself. We generated space with as little 'professional / institutional pressure' WAT BEDOEL JE DAAR MEE? as possible.

Embedded in this set up for international curators were studio visits to the resident artists of the HISK offering the possibility to include one or more artists in their exhibition project. This direct exchange and collaboration has proven to be very successful for both the curators and the resident artists as some of them are still working together. In addition to that direct collaboration with the artists, also the process of designing the invitation and promotion material for the exhibition was offered in an experimental way by introducing a young graphic designer to the curator in an early stage, thanks to collaboration with the Graphic Design department of the Sint Lucas Institute in Ghent. With very little external support the designer and the curator had to work together to come up with a suitable and matching invitation for the exhibition. Sometimes the collaboration was very fruitful and is still continued up to today, but with others the road was so bumpy or seemed to have an unavoidable dead end that it was hard to see any positive

learning experience. Both situations and every variation in between were of course part of and inherent to the experimental open structure of the project as a whole.

Based in the idea for CURATOR CURATOR where questions as Is there a difference between a curator and an artist? If so, what is it? Can one person do both? Can you curate a curator? HIER MOETEN WE NOG IETS VERDER OP GAAN

The first project WALL TO WALL was directly related to the question 'Is there a difference between a curator and an artist? Curator/artist Karolin Tampere (NO) wanted to test the boundaries of a working process of a curator with just one artist in the preparation of an exhibition. Together with artist Egill Sæbjörnsson (IS) she managed to make it impossible to call it a solo show in the end. The dialogues and correspondence between curator and artist became part of the exhibition and made the presupposed roles dissolve. The result was sharp. Two walls, which don't face each other and thus don't see what's going on the other room, are having a conversation. They talk about live, the universe, the different objects in the room (like a fake Donald Judd, a poster of Harry Potter, an Internet kid,...), but also each other and even the spectator. They sing and cry and make it impossible to forget that one is part of this very emotional and extremely funny interaction between two walls. The conversation between Egill and Karolin continues until this very moment, and comes to the surface in various forms.

Lorenzo Bruni (IT) proved that with a little bit of imagination and a lot of goodwill, power play, networking and bluff you can even invite the biggest artists of today to make your dream show come true. With artists like Rirkrit Tiravanija, James Lee Byars, Peter Coffin, Bas Jan Ader, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Jonathan Monk and 12 others he made the biggest show concerning the amount of works. Twenty-nine minimal, and in many cases conceptual artworks where spread over the entire building. With What is my name? Lorenzo Bruni was the first curator to test the limits of the physical exhibitionspace at the HISK, involving even the postman to make a work by Dan Rees (The Postman's Decision Is Final). A kids-choir sang the results of this weeks Belgian soccer league (Jonathan Monk) in order

to generate 'new consciousness of perception of space' by the visitors of the exhibition.

For the third exhibition we decided to push the possibilities of the project to its limits. Because of two, almost identical proposals, we invited both curators to join forces and make the exhibition together. Remco de Blaaij (NL) and Kamila Wielebska (PL) first visited each other to touch upon the notion of different worlds, different languages and different identities. Together they developed the project Towards Confluence, a search for why things come together or why some things are separated and will never meet. With the river as a metaphor they meandered through different perspectives shown through a wide range of international artists, with the cube of artist Erno Rubik (Rubik's Cube) as a central work in the exhibition, unlocking the different ways in which it could be seen. 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence'. VAN WIE IS DIE QUOTE? WEL GOED OM EVEN TE NOEMEN.

Remco and Kamila are developing a new project together

Adnan Yildiz (TR) had the advantage of being present during the Open Studio's at the HISK, prior to his project. He could speak to the artists for a long time and see their work and working method in the most ideal circumstances. He adapted his concept because of these encounters and in the end invited three artists of the HISK to join the exhibition, Time-Challenger, An exhibition about critical reconstruction. Adnan took over the HISK and even more the HISK-team with an incredible combination of the charm and the persuasion of a Persian cat: impossible to resist. Technically it was the most complex exhibition so far and was touching the absolute borders of the possibilities within a post-graduate art institute as the HISK. But the (critical) reconstruction of the exhibition space, the baby-pink wall and four mini-mac's were worth it in the end; Adnan managed to challenge time. And those who were not open for it could always count on the warm sensation of Adnan purrrrring on your lap, convincing you to be open to it.

The last show contained only sound as the base of the project. Easy job, we thought. We thought wrong. BEN IK HET NIET HELEMAAL MEE EENS... After All, Everything Is Different In The End by Jens Maier-Rothe (DE) was for sure the most challenging production in the series. Twelve

artists 'showed' how sound can be perceived in many different ways and how everyone has a subjective notion of synchronicity. There were 8 different press releases written by 8 different people. Next to the show there was a performance by Tisha Mukarji on the stairs of the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent, a film program at the OffOff Cinema and the piece Radio Dinner by Raimundas Malašauskas, broadcasted by Radio Urgent FM in Ghent.

Jens Maier-Rothe gave a great finale of the CURATOR CURATOR project and caused for a lot of verbal fireworks within and outside the HISK, resulting even in an article in a Japan. We will definitively hear more from him in the coming years... DAT ZULLEN WE VAN VEEL VAN HEN.. IS DAT NIET EEN BEETJE RAAR OM TE ZEGGEN?

We're looking forward to Jens his next project dealing with sound, and challenging the boundaries of other international spaces.

Besides the limitations, the small budget and the given space/location, CURATOR CURATOR offered a platform to try out new kind of presentation or collaboration models between curators, artists, graphic designers, producers, initiators and audience. Between these different players it was at times a very sensitive ballet on a very thin rope, and at times an eclectic and ecstatic gathering culminating in beautiful new artworks and presentations. The freedom to test ideas and to experiment in a way you never could can be frightening but it mostly gives food for thought. This process of making shows and trying to find new ways of dealing with all the ingredients through practice is what Sarat Maharaj calls 'Thinking Through Curating'. And that is exactly what we wanted to do from the start: to bring together different thought by ambitious curators and artists and by doing so giving them the opportunity to do an active, process based, thinking through what curating is now and what it could be for that specific curator.

The opportunity to participate in CURATOR CURATOR was greatly appreciated judging the 54 applications from 22 different countries we received after an open call in the second year. After three exhibitions in the first year there was unfortunately only time and means for two more shows which made it extremely difficult to make a selection in the end. The series gave us as initiators a lot of food

for thought. Not only on a conceptual basis related to the different projects but even more to think about curatorial courses and what format could fit best within the Belgian context and connected to the HISK. We got very much inspired to think about how to connect CURATOR CURATOR on a more structural basis to the HISK. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have the first postgraduate institute in Belgium where curators also have a space to work, make projects and exchange ideas with artist colleagues? What a blessing that could be for both curators and artists! Our wish is to continue the project by always giving one or two studios to a young curator, working simultaneously with the artists in the HISK for about four months, preparing a project. During those months this curator has the possibility to get to know the artists at the HISK, give lectures and do research for the project, and last but not least, will also receive feedback from visiting artists and curators. This being present in the HISK at the same time in the same building with the artists is important for the development of both the artists and the curator. It could offer fresh perspectives in the creation of vital new works and shows.

Maybe both practices, artistic and curatorial are not entirely different but maybe very much the same.

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On a bright curatorial future at the HISK!

Maarten en Maaïke

1. Van Droomschip tot Nachtmerrrie Wanneer de Titanic vertrok op haar eerste reis, haar maiden voyage, van Southampton naar New York op 10 april 1912, was ze niet alleen het grootste passagiersschip ooit, maar had ze ook de meest geavanceerde culinaire faciliteiten aan boord. In drie grote paleizen werkte een staf van 96 man de klok rond, om er de ongeveer 6.000 maaltijden per dag te bereiden. Voor de passagiers waren de maaltijden dan ook de hoogtepunten van de dag. Het grootste schip ter wereld, onzinkbaar geacht, botste tijdens haar eerste reis op een ijsberg en zinkte. Vele beroemdheden uit die tijd kwamen in deze ramp om, alsook honderden immigranten die hoopten op een nieuwe start in de Nieuwe Wereld. De eerste les van de twintigste eeuw begon. Het verhaal van de Titanic is zo boeiend, omdat ze niet alleen een schip was, ze was ook een symbool. In 1912 was er reeds 100 jaar vrede, en een eeuw van verbazingwekkende industriële vooruitgang. De ramp met de Titanic brak dit alles aan diggelen. Mensen die die periode meegemaakt hebben, beschouwden de Titanic ramp dan ook vaak als het begin van de verandering, en het einde van een tijdperk. Die periode ligt u ver achter ons, toch blijft de Titanic ons boeien, en vragen we ons af waarom? Is het omdat ze op haar eerste reis verging? Dat is wel vaker met een schip gebeurd. Of omdat ze zo groot en luxueus was? Of omdat er zoveel mensen bij de ramp omkwamen? De periode tussen de eeuwwisseling en de eerste wereldoorlog is vol met scheepsrampen die duizend of meer slachtoffers eisten. Dat de Titanic nog steeds mensen boeit, ligt waarschijnlijk aan het sterk tot de verbeelding sprekende beeld dat opgeroepen wordt door dit grote schip dat zinkte in de nacht. Men kan op zoveel manieren geïnteresseerd zijn in de Titanic, er is voor elke smaak wel iets: het drama dat zich langzaam ontvouwt op het zinkende schip, het menselijk gedrag in bijzondere situaties, de mikrokosmos van de Edwardiaanse wereld met z'n strikte klasseverschillen, z'n obsessie voor de etiquette, en onvermijdelijk z'n liefde voor lekker eten. Of eenvoudigweg, terecht of niet, iets willen herbeleven van de 'goede oude tijd'. In elk geval is de belangstelling voor de Titanic onzinkbaarder dan haar bouwers, eigenaren en

opvarenden ooit hebben kunnen vermoeden. Het reproduceren van het heerlijk tafelen aan boord van de Titanic, is een van de beste manieren om die vergane tijd van luxe en vrije tijd opnieuw te beleven. Met "Last Dinner on the Titanic" geeft het Diavolo Chamber Orchestra een levende historische recreatie voor diegenen die graag lekker eten en houden van die typische en charmante muziek van weleer: een mengeling van opera, ouverture, fantasie, wals over Music Hall tot de laatste hit van de toenmalige populaire muziek. Dit alles lekker gekruid met een beetje ragtime en cake-walk. Negentig jaar nadat ze zinkte, betovert de Titanic ons nog steeds. Als een van de eerste oceaanschepen dat van voedsel een prioriteit maakte, wat afgeleid kan worden uit de enorme proviandlijsten, bezat de Titanic een ongezien grote bergingsruimte. Die bestond uit drie verschillende koelkasten voor elk type van voedsel dat aan bederf onderhevig was, zoals vlees, vis, fruit, groenten en eieren. Verder waren er nog afzonderlijke koele bergingen voor wijn, en alcoholische dranken. Zoals men hield van lekker en uitgebreid eten, zo hield men ook van drinken. De Titanic had dan ook een zeer grote en uitgelezen keuze van wijnen en champagnes. Een schrijver vertelt dan ook dat er 70 verschillende champagnemerken aan boord waren, 54 verschillende Bordeaux wijnen en 48 soorten Bourgogne, Moezel en Italiaanse wijnen. Helaas is er tot nog toe geen enkele wijnlijst boven water gekomen. De proviandruimten van de Titanic bevatten o.m. 10.000 pond granen, 5 ton suiker, 800 bundels verse asperges en 1.390 kg oesters. Rond 7u 's morgens werd voor de eersteklas passagiers in hun slaapvertrekken koffie en thee geserveerd, alsook vers fruit en vers gebakken broodjes met jam en marmelade. Rond 8u rinkelde de ontbijtbel. Een Edwardiaans ontbijt was een enorme maaltijd dat bestond uit schelvis, gevolgd door gegrild vlees (steaks, koteletten en worsten). Daarna kwamen de gepocheerde eieren, en als slot, om de indigestie compleet te maken, aan het spit geroosterde kip en houtsnip. Zelfs in de tweede klas was het ontbijt bijna net zo overdadig, en ook in de derde klas mocht men zeker niet klagen. Passagiers die na de lunch nog iets wilden nuttigen, konden terecht in het Verandah Café, waarvan er één was langs elke kant van het dek, juist

achter de rookzaal. Met het Verandah Café wou men de illusie wekken van een veranda in open lucht, in een eigenlijk gesloten ruimte. Men kon ook terecht in het Café Parisien, waar de sfeer beoogd werd van een café op een Parijse Boulevard, waar men koffie of een aperitief dronk, of een kleine honger stilde met een sandwich van het buffet, terwijl flarden muziek te horen waren van het strijktrio dat in de eersteklas ontvangkamer aan het spelen was. 1. Van Droomschip tot Nachtmerrrie Wanneer de Titanic vertrok op haar eerste reis, haar maiden voyage, van Southampton naar New York op 10 april 1912, was ze niet alleen het grootste passagiersschip ooit, maar had ze ook de meest geavanceerde culinaire faciliteiten aan boord. In drie grote paleizen werkte een staf van 96 man de klok rond, om er de ongeveer 6.000 maaltijden per dag te bereiden. Voor de passagiers waren de maaltijden dan ook de hoogtepunten van de dag. Het grootste schip ter wereld, onzinkbaar geacht, botste tijdens haar eerste reis op een ijsberg en zinkte. Vele beroemdheden uit die tijd kwamen in deze ramp om, alsook honderden immigranten die hoopten op een nieuwe start in de Nieuwe Wereld. De eerste les van de twintigste eeuw begon. Het verhaal van de Titanic is zo boeiend, omdat ze niet alleen een schip was, ze was ook een symbool. In 1912 was er reeds 100 jaar vrede, en een eeuw van verbazingwekkende industriële vooruitgang. De ramp met de Titanic brak dit alles aan diggelen. Mensen die die periode meegemaakt hebben, beschouwden de Titanic ramp dan ook vaak als het begin van de verandering, en het einde van een tijdperk. Die periode ligt u ver achter ons, toch blijft de Titanic ons boeien, en vragen we ons af waarom? Is het omdat ze op haar eerste reis verging? Dat is wel vaker met een schip gebeurd. Of omdat ze zo groot en luxueus was? Of omdat er zoveel mensen bij de ramp omkwamen? De periode tussen de eeuwwisseling en de eerste wereldoorlog is vol met scheepsrampen die duizend of meer slachtoffers eisten. Dat de Titanic nog steeds mensen boeit, ligt waarschijnlijk aan het sterk tot de verbeelding sprekende beeld dat opgeroepen wordt door dit grote schip dat zinkte in de nacht. Men kan op zoveel manieren geïnteresseerd zijn in de Titanic, er is voor elke smaak wel iets: het drama dat zich langzaam ontvouwt op het zinkende schip, het menselijk gedrag in bijzondere

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CURATOR

opening:
12/09/08

at
18:00 u

CURATOR

from:
12/09/08

to
12/10/08

WALL
TO
WALL

Egill
Sæbjörnsson

in
collaboration
with

Karolin
Tampere

open:
thursday
to sunday

from
14:00 u - 18:00 u

address:
Higher Institute for Fine Arts
Charles de Kerchovelaan 187a
9000 Ghent/Belgium



objects. In your sculpture / installation 'Three Stones' (2007) you make three stones float and take on different colors. I experience these stones as your volcanic Iceland, resembling something ancient.

Talking about Moving Rocks, there are those at Death Valley California. The reason why they move along the 10,000 year old dried up clay lakebed is still a mystery. Several teams of scientists have tried to explain the movement, but the actual moment of migration of the rocks has never been witnessed by anyone as far as one knows. This is a very interesting phenomenon. Experiments have been done to separate rocks 'walking together'. By moving them long distances away from each other, but after a long period of time, the rocks have still managed to locate their 'partner', and continued their journey. One can see their movements because they do leave tracks. There are trails moving up-hills and in directions not made possible by the wind for example ... The size of these rocks are also quite amazing, they are not small stones ... (<http://mmmgroupp.altervista.org/e-rocks.html>).

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K: What about dragons?



E: I was thinking ... that dragons might have been still existing around the year 450 ... Maybe we killed them all. I think that Loch Ness did exist too. I think that these myths might be true.

Who knows? And I think that all of these creatures have something to do with us. We are all related, I mean, there must be an original start of all living forms ... right? ONE forefather, a kind of a god ... but he or she or it is more theoretical than real ... just like the genetic Eve and Adam are theoretical, not real ... and cyberspace is kind of theoretical.

K: Who are Wall to Wall?

E: They might be the same person. I am not sure. I guess they have taken on a life of their own. We have created a Frankenstein figure ... a Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde, doppelganger phenomenon. The doppelganger is a well known phenomenon in literature and as well within visual arts when we pose two objects together. They also represent the left and the right hemispheres of the brain. When you are in-between Wall to Wall you are dealing with yourself ... we are always facing ourselves as we face others.

Best,
Egill



Thank you Diego Fernández for editing assistance.

CURATOR CURATOR

is a project initiated by Maarten Vanden Eynde and Maaiké Gouwenberg (Enough Room for space).

Check for more information:
www.enoughroomforspace.org

ontwerp: Raf Vancampenhout



Sweet Simulacrum

I saw Egill play, but I also saw him study.

He was investigating, live, what to make of the dichotomy between reality and fiction, between fact and fantasy. The two performative acts I witnessed (in Amsterdam in October, 2007) simply juxtaposed these principles on stage, not so much to fool the senses but rather to unveil the spectacular contradictions. As if by softly rubbing the real with the represented he might tease us into imagining a new realm of possibilities. might we be able to satisfy

Conversation #1 WALL TO WALL

And:

(I have much grief because my brother the Neanderthal is dead ... but I am happy that my brother the cat is still alive. Last night I had a talk with my grandfather the tree ... he spoke through wood ... and leaves ... he spoke the tongue of dragons).

K: Hei Egill, It looks like we have come up with a collection of some common threads, in different colors and qualities, and that we now found a possibility to put it all into a combination. So, let's start knitting some nice patterns and paths.

While playing with the forces of the earth's magnetic field of gravity through combining objects and video animations, in one of your pieces 'The Ping Pong Dance' (2006), you talk about something that I believe is the core of all of your work. You say: "I get pleasure out of playing with the expectations we have and breaking them. Finding new ways of living life interests me. I think that is a very old human wish to find new ways".

E: For me the quotidian life and every day objects is what I deal with the most. In other words: my own normal life. The walls in the room, chairs, tables, doors, things I see in the street etc. I think that the everyday situation is what everyone deals with, even if it is a high philosophical discussion, new theories in mathematics or politics. All of it is connected to the life we live. If we are poor or rich, from the east or the west, south or north, we all deal with the same dilemma: two hands, two legs, one head, left and right hemispheres of the brain, heart and a stomach. I think we are all cells in the same body, the human body. It is not many individual bodies, it is more or less many copies of the same body.

our hunger with a projected apple, could we possibly lay our head to rest on a pillow of light, can we play a tune on a non-existing guitar?

As if he were just amusing himself and improvising in front of us, Egill was actually presenting us, the audience, with a complicated junction. A cross-roads between what we know to be possible and what we desire and dream to be so. The having and the wishing brought together for moment as if magic exists.

Camila Marambio

The same origin multiplied. We are all part of the same system. There is only one human being. That is us. There is only one animal kingdom. That is us. There is only one world. That is us. There is no division. I find it interesting to work with everyday objects such as buckets, ping pong balls, lamps, cardboard boxes etc. I am also trying to bring in new ideas for the future to realize. If we turn and twist reality we find new ways. We are not only investigating what exist, we are adding to it, we are creators.

K: Finding new ways of living life, creating your own universes through your artwork, or really transform these into real life? Have you broken any of your own expectations lately?

E: No I am mostly stuck in the same situations over and over again. I think though that with in the span of like, 5 years, certain things do change. Some things advance while others stay still.

K: What about mathematics?

E: Mathematics are logical, but they are fiction as well. They do make a model of the world but they also create new things. In mathematics we are creating new worlds that didn't exist before. We are inventing new spaces as we make new formulas ... like we are creating new space inside the internet. The internet is just as real as the physical space ...

K: You mean what we call cyberspace?

E: Cyberspace is theoretically larger than the universe ... NASA is going to spend more money on investigating the internet in the future, than investigating outer space. Since cyberspace is simultaneously theoretical and real, who knows if the physical world isn't as well? We have seen a lot of movies about these things, and according to 'What the bleep do we know', we are

not speculating right now, but rather creating. Meaning that when we think these thoughts we actually affect the world.

K: So, you mean that with our little interview here we are creating a new world?

E: Yes ... he he he ...

K: What about the theory of relativity?

E: Albert Einstein invented the theory of relativity ... it is not a final explanation. Einstein said that the world is endlessly crazy ... and that we will never discover what it is all about. He said that all theories, even his own are like photographs of the world, not the world itself. As an example if we take a photograph of a coffee mug on a table, we see a two dimensional reproduction of the actual mug not the mug itself ... the photo is never the object itself and is always incomplete. The same is to be said about all theories, they are an image of the situation. They are always incomplete because they are not the situation itself.

K: And what about the use of a Donald Judd sculpture within your work?

E: The sculpture has the same role as the portrait of Harry Potter, or the statue of the Internet Kid. It is a transmitter of information. I do that to bring in the point that all styles and all objects have an effect on us. The Donald Judd sculpture, just like the other objects in the room has affected human mankind. All the people that have read Harry Potter have a 'Harry Potter' point of view on the world, even though it is supposed to be 'a fiction'. We all know that scientists today, are hugely influenced by old Science Fiction books such as 'Brave New World' by Aldous Huxley.

K: So you mean that Donald Judd sculptures actually do radiate information that can change the world, like the books about Harry Potter did?

E: Yes.

K: I got a bit interested in a quote I found from you talking about your piece 'Lampi' (2007):

“ Looking at an object is a mixture of memory and the new experience. Half of what we see is constructed from information based on former experiences stored in the nervous system. This information helps us to identify what we see, and help us to find our way through the world. Because of this we don't see everything in the environment. Reading the environment is a great talent that is trained communally by the human race. ”

E: Yes, I think that we are trained. I am tired of the everyday sometimes, because it is so much repetition. I feel obliged to be kind and prudent. Being revolutionary seems so bloody difficult and so bloody hard to stand up to.

K: That is something that 'Mr Piano & Mrs Pile' (2005) are discussing, the daily life, the repetition in their existence, issues related to the core of the materials they are made of. A situation one can look upon as limited, but while observing them, it opens up for something more. Perhaps a new way of looking at things? Like here for example (excerpt from Mr Piano & Mrs Pile's dialogue):

“ – Mr Piano, how is it like to be a Piano?
– Well, I don't really feel like a piano.
– No?
– No.
– No?
– No ...
– How do you feel then?
– Me?
– Yes, you ...
– Well I, I feel a bit fake.
– Right.
– Do you ever get the feeling that you are never really what you are, that you are not really a banana if you are a banana, or an apple if you are an apple?
– Right.
– That the whole world is just a projection, and that our three-dimensional world really is not there.
– I know what you mean, today I feel completely two-dimensional I feel like I was made out of chip-wood.
– But we are Mrs. Pile!
– I suppose so. ”

E: Yes. Mr Piano & Mrs Pile talk about everything they can talk about which is their environment. Using dialogue in that piece was also to point out that talking is one of the languages. Using colors is another. Or using forms is another. A Donald Judd sculpture is a pouring non-verbal dialogue. It is a shower of words, radiating at a slow but constant speed into modern society. Everything talks, a painting talks, walls talk, every day objects talk, people talk etc.

K: In the work 'You Take all My Time' (2002) which is an installation-stage-like-world inside a bubble, in the middle of the floor, based on one of your songs, you point out that there are visual elements that take on our preconceived ideas about certain icons from history, and the way they can control us through fear and myths.

E: O yes, it is kind of showing how certain images and issues control us even though we would have liked to have nothing to do with them.

There are elements in the piece like the atom bomb of the Cold War terror, fear of being a racist, etc ... The work is also pointing out myths and preconceived ideas of modern life.

K: About fear and myths, it was really funny to read your email about the Snowman, because I had just been thinking about it, of course, still while I was walking in the mountains, but also before that. I like the Yeti, the huge found foot-prints, the big hairy creature. I clearly remember the first time I got to know about Yeti, it was through the 'facts pages' in a cartoon, I think it must have been The Phantom. There were detailed drawings and a text about the Yeti that during that time had been seen in the Himalayas. For me it was kind of amazing to read this on the 'facts pages' as a kid, I mean, I really wanted to believe in it. Still Yeti foot-prints sounds surreal, the idea of a huge hairy man in the mountains. But it is, I guess, narrow minded to not believe in the existence of these creatures ...

E: The Yeti is also a bit of a 60's and 70's phenomena from the James Bond era of the Cold War. No one really believes in it anymore. But then I saw an article in the newspaper about scientists that recently found hairs in the Himalayas that they cannot genetically identify to any other animals of that area. And there have also been found large footprints recently. So the myth of the Abominable Snowman still keeps groups of scientists on their toes. If we would find the Yeti and he stopped being such a myth he would just become one of the animal kingdom and no wonder any more. We would say: Ah, yes and then there is this big monkey in the Himalayas that they only found 2008, incredible they found it so late.

K: From my point of view I still have expectations from those childhood far away places, cities one only know by name, small dots on the map, that in the core of the expectation remain containing something magic, different and real.

E: Exactly, I also think it is nice to have expectations and to hope and dream ... what a boring world it would be without it. I have always wanted to rewrite 'The Little Match Girl' by H.C. Andersen, I wanted to change her fate. It seems like we are living in a story someone wrote. It is all a hoax. We are merely two-dimensional figures, an illustration in a book. Who cooked me up? I guess Dali did.

K: I was thinking of stones, in several of your sculptures, you have been combining animation onto objects, creating projections with light, shadows and colors on the wall, which, along with a soundtrack, often created with sounds created using the same objects. In your sculpture/installation 'Three Stones' (2007) you make three stones float and take on different colors. I

experience these stones as your volcanic Iceland, resembling something ancient.

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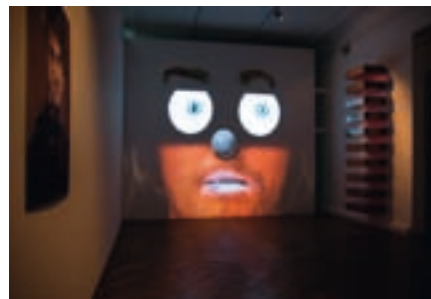
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we pose two objects together. They also represent the left and the right hemispheres of the brain. When you are in-between Wall to Wall

you are dealing with yourself ... we are always facing ourselves as we face others.
Best, Egill



Conversation #2 PHENOMENON OF THE MIND AND HOW WE SEE THE WORLD

K: You describe a loop in your production: while working with objects you see music; in the music there is a possible 2D image, which you then present in another way through projections. Like drawing music videos, so music becomes an image again? The work is in a constant state of flux. Like you, also changing positions, formats, and personas as the subject and performer in the center of it. I'm curious to hear a bit more about how you started to develop your music. What do you think was influencing you and why?

E: I am born 1973. So already in the 80's there were news of artists such as David Byrne who were working both with music and art. I somehow knew very early on that this was my thing. Or it seemed to be the thing to do if you wanted to be an interesting artist. Classical background interested me as much as new media from early on. I guess I try to give responds to what I have seen of art that has already been made. I made a piece for an exhibition in Kunsthalle Wien in 2000 that was called "The thinker exists between theories" which shows that we take in everything we see and read and try to make something of our own. So it is normal to be interested in many subjects at the same time I guess? Multi disciplinary approach is also very Icelandic or "small village like". For example my grandfather Oddur Andr sson was a farmer, a tree planter, an organist a church his whole life and he started three male choirs. He would bike 30 km to a rehearsal sometimes and he had very little tuition in music.

K: Did you play in a band as a teenager?

E: I played guitar in a band from the age of 14 until around 16. Then I left music entirely, as I was deeply into Tibetan studies and trying to empty my mind of all the "pollution" of culture.

K: Why? What happened?

E: My master or teacher of Tibetan studies forbade me to play or listen to rock music, or actually any music at all. I took it very seriously then. Nevertheless, I made music secretly. I had an electric guitar and a Marshall guitar amp stack that I played very loud in my room.

K: So when did you release your first album?

E: In 1998. At the end of the same year, I moved to Berlin. There I got to know people who had also recently moved there. We used to hang out in certain clubs. Most of them were musicians. I felt like giving the visual arts a break. In Berlin I finished The International Rock n'roll Summer of Egill S bj rnsson, which I released in Iceland on my own in 50 homemade numbered copies. I had made the decision to be a virtual pop star, with no concerts on stage, only music videos.

K: Did you want to become a pop star?

E: I adored all the pop stars I grew up with in the 1980s, so I was definitely thrilled by the idea. When my videos got played on MTV, I felt like I had reached the top of my life. And actually I had hoped that something like Virgin Records would contact me. And they did. It's so strange how wishes come true. But when they suddenly came I felt overwhelmed.

K: So you didn't sign up with Virgin, but still you kept on making music?

E: I continued making music, releasing a few self-made records and collaborating on music with a few visual artists and friends like Klaus Weber, Susan Philipsz and Daria Martin.

K: What about music as part of your sculptures and installations?

E: Many of my works include a layer of interpretation as music scores. That is just like an extra bonus. It is not the aim of the pieces. Well, but actually in some of them I have explored it quite directly such as in *Various Projections*, 2007, *Monkey Music*, 2004, *Sónata í G-dúr*, 2006, and *Ping-Pong Dance*, 2006, to mention a few.

K: You often work with everyday objects.

E: Yes. I think that the biggest questions and answers are right in front of our noses.

K: Sound and music could be a good way of reaching people. I mean, it has this recognizable language and it enters through other senses than the retinal. Your songs, melodies, and lyrics are something a larger audience can relate to. They're both sad, humorous, mocking, and beautiful. The music allows for more experimental possibilities?

E: I would not say more possibilities for experimentation, but music today reaches more people, that is true. I find that most pop music today is not as radical as it was in the 50's, 60's and 70's when it was more related to social behaviour, sexuality and image. But message is still conceived very strongly through music. It is great. Wonderful. I guess exploring music is exactly the same as exploring visual things. And even nowadays we even use similar tools for making music and videos and things.

K: Do you write a lot?

E: I'm very interested in language. It is also something we can take apart and continue developing. There is immense areas that lie in the future of language. HUGE, the size of Sahara. Just visualize it and then you see it. They say that before there were words for things there was only melodies and emotional input. Printed text is a limited source isn't it?

K: Stones are an important element. They're often manifested in your lyrics, sculptures, and videos.

E: I think stones are just something lying around that you can take with you. It's easy to do something with them. They're somehow a basic material, just a mass of Planet Earth.

K: Working in multiple layers, either with vocal harmonies, projections, or sculptures, one common denominator is space. You're claiming a space of your own for everything you do, animating the in-animate. A parallel example is your interest in the expansion of the human mind. And that is what you're actually experimenting with in some ways. Challenging the mind and, of course, the preconceived ideas we have. Dealing with the wonders of the universe and science fiction about the future.

E: Yes I am interested in the phenomenon of the mind and how we see the world from the ideas we have. We don't see the world from other points of view, even though there are plenty of them. We simply haven't seen them. There is new Americas across the ocean to be found. Plenty of them. Endless New Worlds. Isn't it?

K: I remember you saying, "A person has to be like an acrobat. Acting like a monkey in a tree, holding many branches at the same time, while reaching in

many directions and learning step by step."

E: We need to activate many other human skills that have been abandoned or regarded as unimportant since the beginning of the technological revolution. Obviously an academic can solve many things, but we need more than that. I see the modern person as an acrobatic monkey in a big tree. It looks backwards and forwards, up and down, and has to connect many skills to be able to climb in the tree. Nothing is still.

K: Challenging the mind through expansive thinking, with the irrational and surreal. Like in chemistry, where elements transform from water into ice and fog, then back into water again. As we're coming to the end of this conversation, I'd like to ask you one last question. I remember we once talked about shape-shifters. What is your interest in that phenomenon?

E: Shape-shifting is a common theme in mythology and folklore, as well as science fiction and fantasy. It's about the ability of a person or a animal to change their physical appearance. In fact, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is about the transformation of species. Species are supposed to have changed over a span of time. That is a transformation. We are all shape-shifters ... slow ones.

This is an edited short version from the text '7 Minutes and a Red Guitar' – a conversation between Egill and Karolin, Berlin vs Sørfinnset. (Full length text is to be found in Egill Sæbjörnsson 'The Book' published by argobooks, 2009).

Conversation #3 THE JUNGLE, THE FUTURE AND HOW EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

K: I would like this conversation to give our reader some more meat on the bones concerning the process behind *Wall to Wall* and show how this piece is intertwined and closely related to your practice in general. It would be interesting to manage mediating the process of how it came to be, how it was firstly presented, and how it continued to grow into its current state. Perhaps it this is the moment to reveal the absolute first idea I had when thinking of inviting you to join thinking with me for the 1st Curator Curator exhibition at HISK in Ghent?

E: Yes, it started with that you wanted to do a show with many of my pieces together in one space. Some sort of a jungle exhibition, where the works would kind of mix up with each other. Inspired by this, I came up with an old idea of two trolls, that on each end of a space, would be talking to each other.

K: We should perhaps describe the installation a bit for the reader to picture it better?

E: Yes, there is a Donald Judd sculpture, a Harry Potter poster and an internet kid sitting in front of a computer by a table in the corner, plus other objects. The walls also see the visitors that enters the space and tries to understand who they are and what they are doing there.

K: Exactly. And the Walls eventually end up talking about the evolution of mankind and the evolution of things on Earth.

E: Yes, right? And to add to this we took elements such as burgundy

painted walls, objects in glass vitrines and paintings, to make it look more museum-like. That puts the spectator in a place that he knows. It is good to start in a place we know and then try to draw a line that goes somewhere far off.

K: And then there is the found objects, actually most of them from the flea market. It could have been anything. Anything can be seen as abstract and be connected with prehistory in some ways.

E: Exactly

K: Is the Wall to Wall piece finished now? Like, is the final touch made, or do you look upon it as still as something organic, continuing to grow or change?

E: I think it is more or less finished. But what we did for the show at Reykjavik Art Museum was to adapt the piece to the exhibition space.

K: Right. If one decide to spend the time (63min) and follow the whole conversation between the walls, it is quite entertaining. Rewarding fun. The speech is based on a text we co-wrote. A process part of the production I really enjoyed being part of. Most of your characters have some kind of verbal language as an significant part of their character. As well as working on these, you also work on your song lyrics. What inspires you to write dialogues?

E: Since I was a boy I have been making up stories with my brother. So writing comes very easy for me. One could say that I go into a trance like when two kids are playing together.

W1: Tell me
W2: Yes
W1: How is it to be over there, on the other side?
W2: The other side?
W1: Yes the other side
W2: What do you mean by that?
W1: Well, you ARE on the other side of the room
W2: And ...?
W1: Isn't it different?
W2: Yes, what do you mean?
W1: How does it look over there?

W2: Here?
W1: Yes
W2: I dont know, I suppose I see more or less the same things as you. I can see you but you cannot see yourself. And you see me but I cannot see myself.
W1: Aha ... yes ... that is right ...
W2: Why are you asking?
W1: Well ... I had to ask something...
W2: Aha ...

K: Perhaps what the walls are discussing is a lot about how we think things will look in the future? Each generation has its ideas and projections onto what the future can bring. How do you think art will look in the future, in lets say 30 years? What would you think is important, what and how will artists deal with the concept of art?

E: Well, it is difficult to predict. I think I am unable to do that. But I made a huge discovery recently when I took my age 36 and divided this time from the birth of Christ, which we know is the beginning of our timeplan, with that number to see how many 36 years are to that time. And to my surprise I found out it is only 55.8 times my lifetime. I imagined it to be SO LONG time ago. But 56 lifetimes is somehow not so long. The same with the time to the first cities on earth. It is only 333 times my age away. What about you? How do you think it will develop?

K: I wish art would develop more in the direction of ideas and less about market value. And it would be interesting to see what happened if contemporary art became as popular as sports... there we have my future vision.

E: I see ... why should art be popular?

K: To make people think more. More awareness would create a better world?

E: I agree. More education. More talking. Like the walls ... he he

K: You are known in Iceland to be part of the Fun Generation? What is that?

E: It is very understandable that some people have called my generation the Fun Generation. Fun was one of the things that was missing in art at the time I was studying. So I guess we just wanted to do something that was not being done. To be against. To shake up things. There was no fun, there was no music and there was no narrative material. The minimal approach had somehow stripped down and wiped out the wild. Using music with videos was considered unserious. And narrative was either literature or film, not art. I guess we were also sensing the atmosphere of the 90's where fashion was being explored (such as Purple Prose and Silvie Fleury) and Pipilotti Rist came about, and Beck Hansen (grandson of Al Hansen fluxus artist) was a big influence. The 90's was a big moment for music breaking through into arts with works such as "Rock my religion" by Dan Graham that I remember seeing at Centre de Pompidou in 1995 for the first time. I was an exchange student in Paris 1995 – 1996 and at Pompidou I also saw "Heidi" by Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley which is a kind of a fun take on Wiener aktionismus. I consider myself a part of this generation of fun but I have always been aware of the banality of mono-channelling one's practice. It is in my nature to not like too much categorizations. Afterwards when I look back on the minimal art that was happening in Iceland at the time I can see a lot of fun also in this. A playfulness that I was not able to see at that time. I guess I was lacking the overview.

K: Perhaps you could say something about how you see art intertwined with society, our surroundings, our imagination as well as our ideas? How is

everything connected?

E: The Walls are trying to see how we are stuck inside a narrow image of our world. We have to know about the past to be able to position ourselves. By looking at ourselves on a timeline knowing what happened before we can better predict the future or what is more interesting is to understand what we are capable of and continue emerging. It is also interesting to look at statistics. Like the walls talk about themselves it is 99% sure that in the future there will be species that are different from the ones today. That feels surreal and impossible today but in the large perspective it is very likely. Things like this makes me try to see the world with a more broad spectrum. See the magic in the world happening everywhere around us.





HORNS OF A RAM

Everything had to have something to be something. Something without a purpose didn't seem to exist. Rams had horns. They were their pride. They could use them to hit other rams when fighting for territories. If the horns would fall off they would usually not die but lose a part of their personality. The horns were an important part of their selfimage just like knowledge was.



SPIDER

Spiders had eight legs, a body and eyes. They multiplied regularly and the old ones died. They mostly crawled on the ground or in trees or on walls. There were millions of different kinds of spiders and they existed for a billion years.



FASCINATION

Person sat on stones contemplating. Because of their ability to think, humans created ideas about everything. They lived in a bubble of ideas interwoven with reality. As we could see in this little image over here the world was a rounded place with mountains, sky, grass, houses, animals and stones.



PUZZLE

Cities started forming about 12,000 BC. The image on this puzzle showed a city that was called Hong Kong by the end of the 20th century AC.



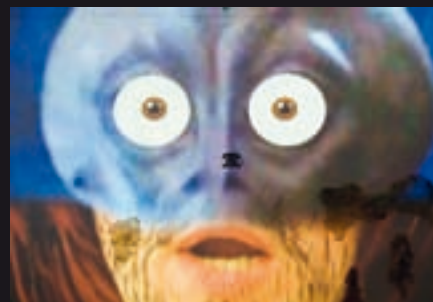
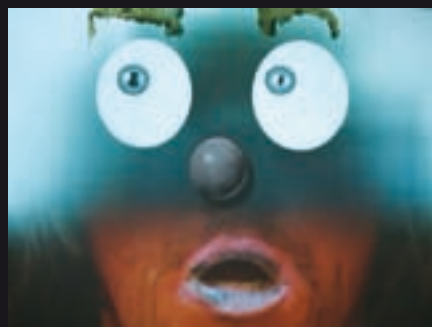
HEAD

This could be a sculpture of a face or an idea of a face or just a pile of ceramics.

#1



#1



#1

#1

**THIS TRICKSTER
IS GOING TO MAKE JERKY
OUT OF YOUR SOUL**

Diego Fernández and Camila
Marambio talking about Egill
Sæbjörnsens's work

I recently saw Egill play at the ABC fair in Berlin, it was just him on stage, he had a silly blond wig and was strumming an acoustic guitar, he seemed shy ... a friendly gesture at such an event. I had to listen so hard to be able to catch the words of his song: "I Love You So" ...

I saw Egill at the Bowery Poetry Club in New York, smeared with some black stain, looking more or less like a hobo ... even though it was just a music show (no video) he managed to keep the audience captive from the moment he opened his mouth ...

... now I think he was almost trying to go unnoticed, to be invisible ... more precisely, he was being precarious ...

... well, you know, when Egill walks alone "he talks to stones" – a very Icelandic thing to do, I suppose – ... remember that video-sculpture piece with the volcanic stones floating down to the bottom of the screen, moaning until they finally match shapes and go AAhhhhhh? I really like that one ...

... wasn't it a branch? It seemed to be just a shadow on the wall but then you suddenly realize it is not a shadow, but instead a projection of the shadow's shape on the wall ...

... in any case, Egill is far beyond being "The Icelandic Beck" as someone once put it ... well yes, he is a very talented, multi instrumentalist blonde guy with a keen ear and a knack for eclectic weird voices and sounds, a sort of eternal down-to-earth feeling and a millenary wisdom that comes out of a soul geiser etc ...

... Egill is never what you'd expect, he is forever playing with expectations, faking them, twisting them. In Egill's work, you think you know what you're looking at, then, unsuspectingly, it all breaks apart and turns into ... a projection of light, something immaterial, surreal. You think he's playing the guitar and then the sound turns out to be a playback and the guitar suddenly dissolves and flies away ...

George, the dumb-wise guy, the naïve vagabond who joins the game eyes shut ...

the toothless black consciousness guy who's all eyes and mouth and wants to "have PHecSss!" ... Mr. Piano & Ms. Pile ... all of these characters break the mold of our Icelandic stereotype, they are at once funny, exotic flavors and abhorrent subconscious twists of the, again, I guess, Icelandic mental establishment (paradoxically, so called "globalization" exacerbates nationality, and yes, it's already hard to separate "the Icelandic" out of a guy called Eagle, Son of the Sea Bear).

And what about Egill's technique, his tricks on perception, a game of real and projected images, not a reality versus non-materiality but a symbiotic relation that speaks of the world we live in today, where The Real, The Body, The Voice, The Light and All References so often seem to coincide ... the magic of an assumed simultaneity constantly colliding before our eyes ...

... he's suggesting we should question our tools to recognize The Real and he does so by tossing at us heavy unanswered philosophical questions about what we trust to be the established truth from a scenario that appears too childish, playful, where trusting one's eyes and language seems obvious, sometimes even dumb.

Scene, Berlin: He enters as a ghost, his meditational non-thoughts become visible in color rings, his consciousness (or is it his soul ... is it God?) shows up and He is black (well, he's like a cartoon, he's Al Green, he's definitely not from Iceland, Egill plays characters from the history of movies and music with the natural approach of both an expert collector and someone plain, just bored, alone with his videoclub membership card ... a very contemporary self-imposed disease: being in charge of the "director's cut" and the "making off" of your own pathetic existence) they talk about desire, will, possibility, suddenly Egill starts bouncing a big red ball, LA LA LA LA LA, The End.

Loose ends and open discourses that appear to be mistakes (or mistaken, or misplaced) end up being wide doors opening unto very serious, interesting matters brought to the table while being – or pretending to be – silly in public.

The synchronicity between projections and the performer's body displacement (objects and voice too) shows us that it has been rehearsed

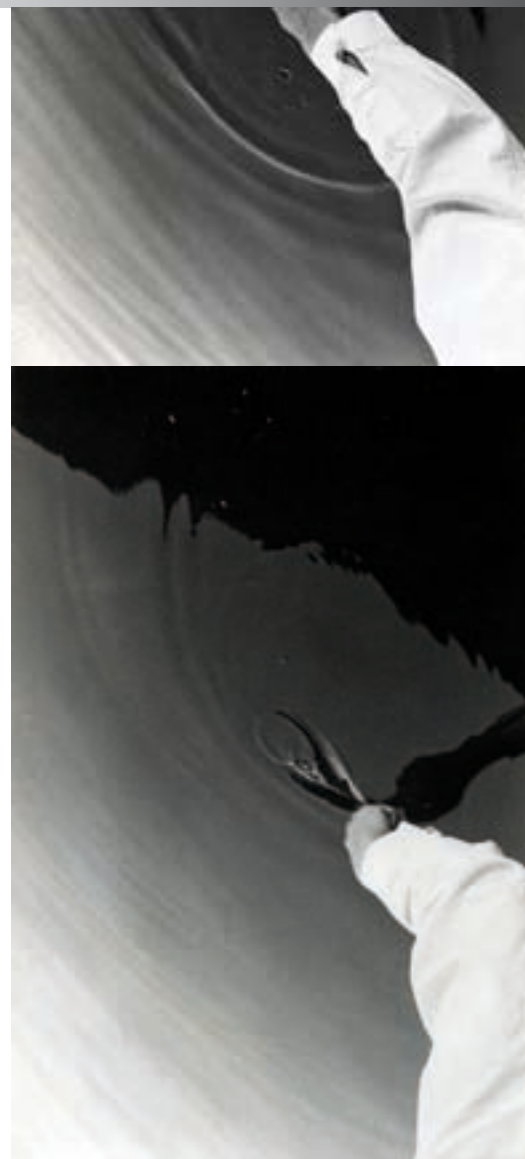
extensively, worked throughly and dealt with in detail, a very well resolved technical element that, once understood, leads you to abstraction and a quest for the deeper, unresolved meanings, enunciations and extensions of the play.

Bumping of temporalities and context switching, how do they coexist? Simultaneity of directions, of readings, of interpretations and focus points ... ways of perception ...

How is Egills work "honest"? Like a child is honest, in that he creates complex worlds, characters, realities and conversations that instantly dissolve and remain uncluded as soon as it's time to either go to bed or run off to lunch? How do our philosophical divagations connect with our daily problems when their overbearing presence becomes unimportant in the face of other, bigger, terrible, unexpected realities?

Egill's presentations have always at least one moment of complete awe (ooohhh) not necessarily the apex, but a moment of Real Magic, when things fly out of his mouth, when something that seemed to be clear goes back to be a mystery. This is when the game of overlapping projections matches the holes in The Real and we are forced to try and fill the empty parts of the picture ...

Maurizio Nannucci, *Scrivere sull'acqua* (Writing on Water),
36 photographs documenting writing on water, 1973



At
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www.hisk.edu

Curator Curator is a project initiated by
Maarten Vanden Eynde and Maaike Gouwenberg
www.enoughroomforspace.org



The Chairman and Members of the Board of Administrators
and the HISK team and Enough Room for Space, kindly invite you to the exhibition

Curator Curator #2

8 to 23 November 2008, Thursday to Sunday, 2 to 6 pm

Opening
Friday, 7 November 2008, 6 pm

What is my name?

Project on the incommunicability of the present communication

Curated by
Lorenzo Bruni

With	&
Mario Airò	Bas Jan Ader
Simone Berti	James Lee Byars
Rossella Biscotti	Félix Gonzàlez-Torres
Nina Beier & Marie Lund	Jiri Kovanda
Peter Coffin	Maurizio Nannucci
José Dávila	
Mario Garcia Torres	
Koo Jeong-A	
Jonathan Monk	
Dan Rees	
Lorenzo Scotto di Luzio	
Nedko Solakov	
Rirkrit Tiravanija	
etc ...	

WHAT IS MY NAME?

Project on the incommunicability of present communication.

Curated by Lorenzo Bruni

With interventions from: Mario Airò, Nina Beier and Marie Lund, Simone Berti, Rossella Biscotti, Peter Coffin, José Dávila, Mario Garcia Torres, Koo Jeong-A, Jonathan Monk, Dan Rees, Lorenzo Scotto di Luzio, Nedko Solakov, Rirkrit Tiravanija

With works of: James Lee Byars, Bas Jan Ader, Jiri Kovanda, Maurizio Nannucci, Félix Gonzàlez-Torres.

Why am I me (myself)? Am I me (myself) in respect to others and to the codification of the world or vice versa? Perhaps in this time we need a bit of oblivion regarding the way we communicate and handle the real in order to be able to reflect on how we perceive and communicate it and on who we really are.

The artists invited for this project, through small interventions and signs, aim to create in the spectator a new consciousness of perception of space in the precise moment in which he walks through and discovers it. The exhibition space of the HISK school is already in itself a hybrid between that of a place of memory and that of a new 'white cube' structure: between that of an intimate space as the home and that of a space emptied of all traces of everyday life. As a result, the works proposed of for this occasion are able to increase the possibility to make the 'public' reflect on what is intended as communication and on the relationship between public and private dimension. What is really intimate and personal or completely public

today? News about distant tragedies capture our attention in an intimate way as they invade our private space in real time through television and internet. Yet at the same time, we react to personal problems with the eyes of a distant observer. If man in the 1900s, as according to Sigmund Freud, was developed and could be analyzed by his relationship between public and private life, today we would find ourselves in front of an expansion of what used to be the limits of these two worlds. The phenomenon of Facebook is one of the many evident symptoms of this new way of personal communication, of the construction of identity live that permits a re-conquest of various layers of a past identity through regaining past acquaintances forgotten at the end of our adolescence without further communication if not that of chat.

In the writings of Zigmunt Bauman, from the end of the 90's the individual finds himself in contact with everything and everybody but is present nowhere and so ends up losing himself in everything. Taking action on this actual situation, What is my name? is a reflection on who we are as a result of what we communicate. The object is not an analysis nor a critique of the codes or of the ways en vogue that the individual citizen uses to charge and execute the false securities of complete control (that then confines itself to monitoring) of the events of the world. The object is to evoke and react through the need that man has always had to narrate, to listen and to have answers to understand better his personal and therefore collective identity. For this reason, each intervention plays on writing, on the relationship between words and their meaning, on the questions of who writes to whom and why, on putting attention to the presence of the other "different from oneself" and on the capacity to imagine and dream and not only to record.

HISK in this way is not a space that exhibits objects to observe passively, but it becomes a place of relationships between the people that pass through each time. This condition is aimed at making us think about what we intend by a work of art and by everyday experience and therefore also makes us question the current role of the artist and for what motives he realizes a show.

The yellow blob of Nedko Solakov painted in half on a wall with next to it written "I ordered this yellow blob from the exhibition assistant but later on I completely forgot the reason for this"; the postcards sent by Dan Rees with a double address that forces the postman to choose to deliver them to the show or to other neighboring houses; the folded pages inside different frames that create a perfect line by Nina Beier and Marie Lund perhaps revealed only afterwards to be political protest posters of the 70's; the light drawing of Mario Airò projected at the entrance, its composition taken from drawings in the desert of Nazca seen only from the sky (messages to whom?); the film of Mario Garcia Torres in which any spectator mimics and synthesizes in one minute a possible film narration; Jonathan Monk's performance with a children's choir that sings the results of a soccer game discussed the last week in Belgium; the sound installation of Rossella Biscotti broadcasts the words We will be here forever, forever and ever and ever and ever, do you understand that? forever ... for 50 minutes in continuation performed by a American rapper in Holland; these are only a few works of this project that render concrete and direct the concepts and the perplexities in question. In addition, these interventions demonstrate that the artist does not impose himself as one with truth in his pocket, but rather as the spectator as one that questions the world and the reflections on who we are and our identity. These

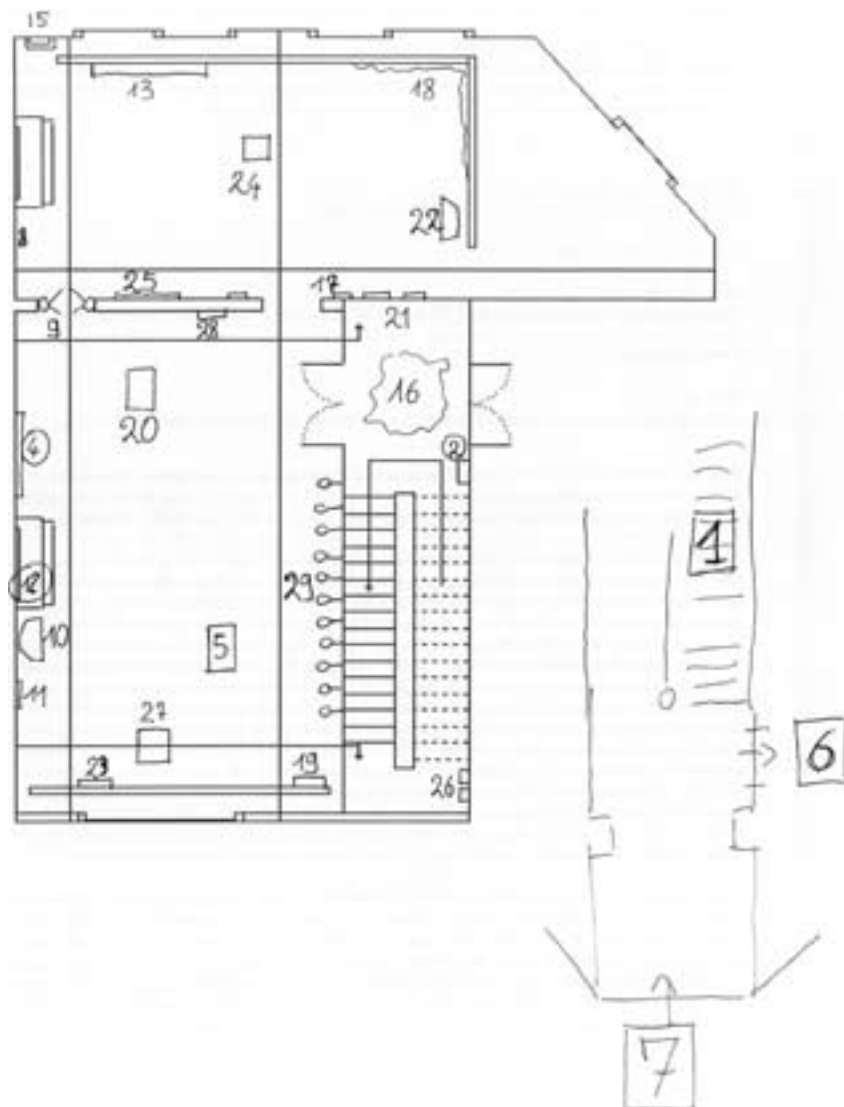
and other interventions, presences and possible narrations create in the visitor a condition of doubt of that which he sees by reevaluating his usual ways of interpreting signs and his perception of things, and thus stimulating an epiphany-like approach.

The idea of discovering our presence in the world, personal and collective, is that which these artists of different generations and backgrounds share in common and display their attitude on a conceptual matrix whose tautological or nominal dimension becomes contaminated by a romantic dimension of suggestion and evocation of the possible.

For this reason, in their context at HISK, there will be 5 images that are in confrontation and in continuity with artists of generations previous to them: the work by Jiri Kovanda from November 1976 “waiting for someone to call me ...”, the two clocks that tell time in synchrony titled *Perfect Lovers* by Felix González-Torres, the action photo from *Secret Events* realized during the second half of the 80's in which James Lee Byars is showing a gold sphere against the sky while hiding his gaze from the camera, the photographic sequence of action writing on water by Maurizio Nannucci from 1973 and the installation “I’m too sad to tell you” a film of Bas Jan Ader from 1971. These works allow further reflection on the idea of gesture and on the attempt in the 70s to eliminate the distance between the space of life and that of art. Perhaps today this intent appears to us all so ingenuous and yet appears to us so feasible the possibility to mix the cards between two worlds for more concreteness and for the possibility of a shared view and reflection on the real and on our presence.



Writing on water, 1973
30 photographs that document this action of the artist



Jonathan Monk – (Leicester, GB 1969. Lives and work in Berlin)

1. Meeting # 119

Voor het altaarsstuk van Van Eyck in de Sint-Baasabdij. 4 februari 1968 om 12 uur (Saint Bavo Cathedral in front of the Van Eyck altar piece. February 4th 1968 at noon)

Vinyl letters in varied sizes, 2008

2. Business card, business card, 2008. These will be handed out by the curator and the director of Hisk

3. Boyhoover, performance boy-choir that sings the results of this weeks Belgian soccer league, 2008

Dan Rees – (Swansea, UK, 1982. Lives and work in London and Berlin)

4. The Postman's Decision Is Final | Two postcards stuck together | 10 x 15cm | 2008

5. A Very Well Rubbing Of This Very Spot | Coloured pencil on paper | 29.7 x 21cm | 2008

6. Keep Your Art Soft And Sweet You Might Have To Eat It | Cake | 2005

Peter Coffin – (Berkeley, USA, 1972. Lives and work in New York)

7. Think harder, banner on the school facade, 2008

Koo Jeong-A – (Seoul, South Korea, 1967. Lives and work in Paris)

8. Drawing for Lorenzo, instructions to make a drawing, 2005-2008

Rosella Eliscotti – (Molfetta, Italy, 1978. Lives and work in Rotterdam)

9. We will be here forever, forever and ever and ever and ever, do you understand that? forever ... A phrase repeated for 45 minutes by an American boy transferred to Holland. Sound installation, 2007

10. The Map, film 15 millimetres in one take, 2007

11. Map, map of NY with the movements of Joseph D. Pistone, alias Donnie Brasco, in the time when he was infiltrated as an agent in the special group of the New York mafia from 76 to 82 made by himself in 2007

Simone Bardi – (Adria, Italy, 1966. Lives and work between Milan and Berlin)

12. Untitled, I thought about going somewhere else...but where?

Five science fiction book covers of free interpretation, 2007

José Davila – (Guadalajara, Mexico, 1974. Lives and work in Mexico City)

13. Mirage fireplace, mirror, measurements of the fire place in the space of Hisk, 2008

14. Carta di Atene, performance, 2008

Mario Airò – (Pavia, Italy, 1961. Lives and work between Genova and Venice)

15. Le voci del mondo, book, wood, microlamp, brass, 21 x 13 x 24 cm, 2003

16. Untitled (Thinking about the lines of the Nazca desert), light design, 2003-2008

Nina Beier and Marie Lund – (Aarhus, Denmark, 1975 / Hørsholm, Denmark, 1976. Living and working in London)

17. The Archives, Framed second hand peace posters, folded 2008

Nedko Solakov – (Cherven Briag, Bulgaria, 1957. Lives and work in Sofia)

18. Yellow blob, writing on the wall, varied dimensions, 2008

Rirkrit Tiravanija – (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1961. Lives and work between New York and Bangkok)

19. Pusca via bush, (Waiting for the American elections and the ending of the mandate period of Bush) neon writing, November 2008.

Mario García Torres – (Monclova, Mexico, 1975. Lives and work in Los Angeles)

20. One Minute to Act a Title: Kim Jong Il Favorite Movies, video 16 min, 2005

21. Today... (news from kabu), graphite pencil on the wall in varying dimension, 2005

Lorenzo Scotti di Luzio – (Pozzuoli, Italy, 1972. Lives and work between Genova and Berlin)

22. Tableaux vivants, video of a terrorist act against the museum of Madre in Naples for the occasion of his solo show, 2007

With works of:

James Lee Byars – (Detroit, USA, 1932-Cairo, Egypt, 1997)

23. Untitled, secret event, photography, last half of the 80's

24. Perfect in the Louvre, objects and photography from the performance made at the National library in Florence, 1991

Maurizio Nannucci – (Florence, Italy, 1939. Lives and work between Firenze e Basilea)

25. Writing on water, 30 photographs that document the this action of the artist, 1973

Félix González-Torres – (Guaimaro, Cuba, 1957-1996)

26. "Untitled" (Perfect Lovers), two clocks that show the time synchronised, 1991

Bas Jan Ader – (Winchoten, the Netherlands, 1942: lost in the sea in 1975 between Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Ireland)

27. "I'm too sad to tell you", film, 1971

Jiri Kovanda – (Prague, Czech Republic, 1953. Lives and work in Prague)

28. Xex Novembre 18, 1976, "waiting for someone to call me...", photograph 29x21cm, 1976

29. Vodka, spoons and vodka, installation of varying dimension, 2008

Bas Jan Ader



I'm To Sad To Tell You, 1971

#2

Jiri Kovanda



Untitled, 2006 Spoons with tiny holes, filled with vodka

#2



Untitled (Perfect Lovers), 1991
Two clocks that show the time synchronised

#2



Untitled (Secret Event), last half of the 80's
Photograph

#2



Mirage Fireplace, 2008
Mirrors with the exact measurements of the fireplace
in the exhibitionspace of HISK



Le Voci del Mondo, 2003
Book, wood, microlamp, brass (21 x 13 x 24cm)



Pussa Via Bush, 2008
Neon writing - waiting for the American elections
and the ending of the mandate period of Bush



Business Card, 2008
Business cards that were handed out by the curator and the
director of HISK

Koo Jeong-A

- A. close your eyes
- B. make a point with a pen somewhere at the exhibition space
- C. and go 75cm to the right direction without leave your pen at the surface
- D. and go 20 cm to the up sight direction without leave your pen at the surface
- E. and go 98 cm to the down sight direction without leave your pen at the surface
- F. and go 50 cm to the left direction without leave your pen at the surface
- G. and go 23 cm to the up sight direction without leave your pen at the surface
- H. open your eyes
- I. try to figure out, you are back to a point

Drawing for Lorenzo, 2005-2008
Instructions to make a drawing

Mario Airò



Le Voci del Mondo, 2003
Book, wood, microlamp, brass (21 x 13 x 24cm)

#2

José Dávila



Mirage Fireplace, 2008
Mirrors with the exact measurements of the fireplace
in the exhibition space of HISK

Mario Airò



Le Voci del Mondo, 2003
Book, wood, microlamp, brass (21 x 13 x 24cm)

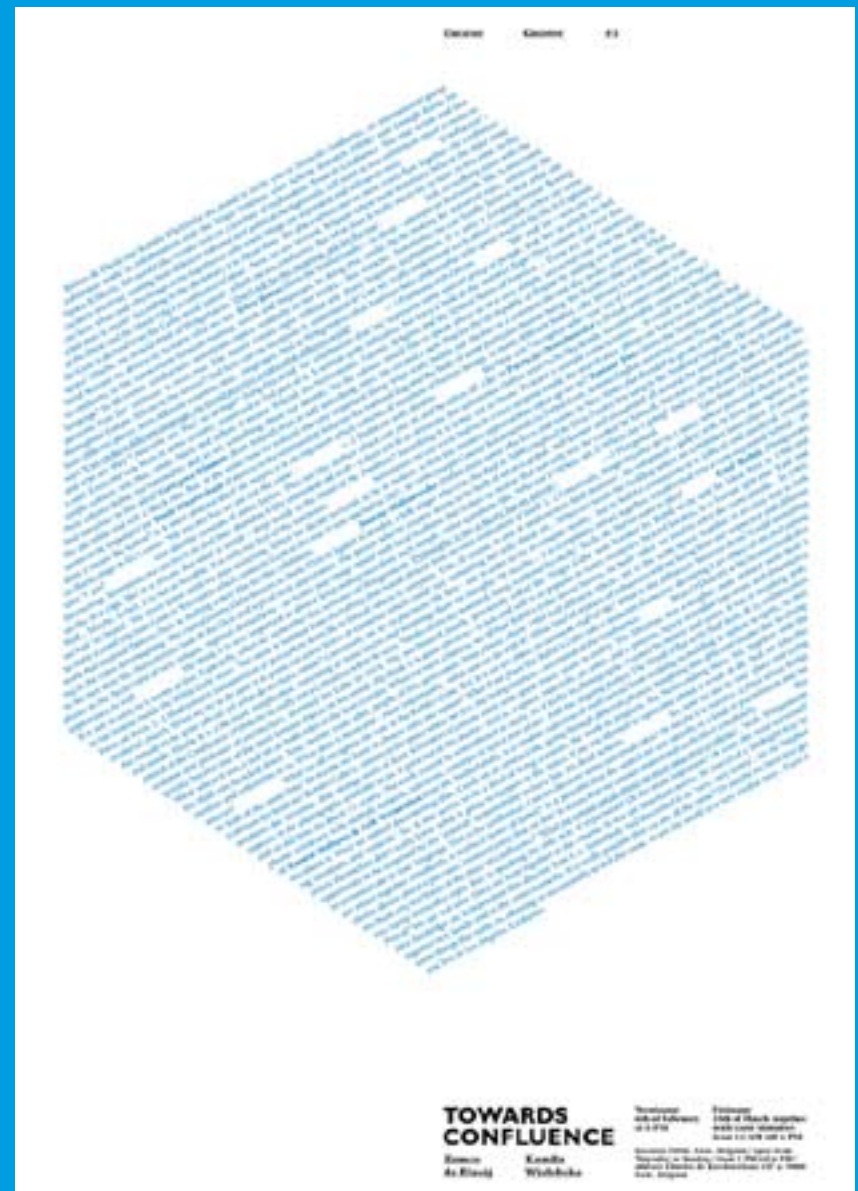
#2



Mirage Fireplace, 2008
Mirrors with the exact measurements of the fireplace
in the exhibition space of HISK



Le Voci del Mondo, 2003
Book, wood, microlamp, brass (21 x 13 x 24cm)





TOWARDS CONFLUENCE

Towards Confluence was an international group exhibition curated together by Remco de Blaaij and Kamila Wielebska and presented in the space of The Higher Institute of Fine Arts from 6 February to 15 March 2009. The nine artists and two curators involved, coming from different national and political backgrounds, met in one exhibition space in order to see how, when and why things come together or why some things are separated and will never meet. We would like to take you on a journey of exploration *Towards Confluence*.

‘Confluence’ – what does it mean? According to the dictionary it is about flow: ‘the place where two or more rivers flow together: *the confluence of the Rhine and the Mosel* / (fig.) *a confluence of ideas*’. Now, we are in Gent, Belgium where most historians believe the older name for Gent is derived from the Celtic word ‘ganda’, which means *confluence*. But what does it really mean for us now, in this time, in this space? Maybe, we should think of Wittgenstein: **‘Don’t ask for the meaning, ask for the use’**. Still, everything starts with the word because we always try to name what we see. Erica Boom (from the Netherlands) – in short – attempts to find words. She is interested in similarity, in the connections between naming, words and languages. In doing this, could she be looking for universal rules, whatever the language? In all events, confluences sometimes appear suddenly in her works... like miracles. Sometimes we can hardly believe that what she presents from her ‘archives’ is even true. She shows certain signs without any direct linguistic explanation. It is only a *Languagestream* flowing throughout Europe. Where is the source? And how can we recognize it, understand it? Can we really understand each other? Especially when we come from different places, from different countries and... languages. And as Wittgenstein (that Austrian-born philosopher who spent much of his life in England) says **‘If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world’**.

PROBLEMS WITH OTHERS

‘We’ and ‘Us’ – who are ‘we’ and who are ‘they’? And why are ‘they’ so strange? Using this word ‘we’ emphasizes that ‘we’ represent some special group of people, that ‘we’ in which we feel a part. Everyone was born in some country, sentenced to feel part of it. It sounds quite ridiculous but have a look at the national flags! They consist of a very few, simple colours: red, blue, white, black, yellow and green. It means: Poland, the Netherlands, Estonia, Belgium, Hungary and the United States of America... These are ‘our’ countries, their colours define our nationality and so say something about our identity. Yet the colours would like to speak about us in a very simple, universal way. Can we really find ourselves in this idea? Grzegorz Kłaman (from Poland) tries to add something extra. He created a new *Flag for the III Republic of Poland* by adding one more strip to the old white and red: a black one. But, at the same time he noticed one very important thing: what really builds our identity is a common life and day-to-day existence. What seems to be important for Tanja Muravskaja (Estonia) is the relationship between the national flag and the body of some particular human being, the *Position* that is taken. What does it mean: the nation? Is it some abstract idea? Or maybe it is an organism which consists of numbers of

human beings, of many different bodies. Like Johnny Cash (famous Man in Black) sings in U2's cover: 'We are one but we are not the same'.

PROBLEMS WITH IDENTITY But how can I recognize who 'you' are if I even cannot be sure who 'I' am? Our identity consists of many layers. They are like clothes which can put on and be taken off. Like in Patrycja Orzechowska's (Polish artist) series *Uncovering / Covering*. Sometimes we can try it on and later abandon it like unwanted old stuff – it does not fit us anymore. But sometimes clothes seem to be like bonds, uncomfortable situations keeping us like in a cage, like in a prison. But what is inside – deep inside in the *Heart of the Darkness*? Something it is better not to know. To leave it outside consciousness... It could be really scary... Well... Maybe, in fact, it is not so horrible. It is only our fear of the unknown. Sometimes we can even find such a nice surprise inside the search area, things we have never realized that we had 'on board'. We never know until we start searching. When we decide to travel, to be in motion, is that the moment opportunities open up for us? Tamara Dees (from the Netherlands) decided to make a canal trip from Gent to Terneuzen which connects Gent to the sea. It was opened in 1827. In 1899 Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski (a Polish-born, famous English novelist) wrote his most acclaimed work that inspired Tamara Dees in making a new film for this exhibition. Joanna Malinowska (Polish-born artist who lives and works in New York) also decided to go on a long journey resulting in the video *Umanaqtuaq*. She visited Jimmy Ekho known as Arctic Elvis in Iqaluit (Canada), a folk singer who was (he died in 2008) inspired by Elvis Presley but sang in the Inuktitut language. He combined in his own style the characteristic look of the Elvis and typical Inuk appearance. The person who he creates seems to be built of what is global, well-known and recognized all around the world (even in such strange places as the Arctic) and of very unique, regional distinctions - an iconic pop image mixed with local tradition that makes us realize that not only was he created by himself, but many other people had a hand in his appearance as well. We think it is very important to always keep asking ourselves such simple, naïve questions like: Who am I? Where am I? Where am I going? And try to find some honest responses... It is not so easy as it seems at first. Especially, when we remember this sentence of Wittgenstein: '**Philosophy is not a theory but an activity**'.

PLAYGROUND Like Brian O'Doherty describes in his famous Inside the White Cube story: 'The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself. [...] Conversely, things become art in a space where powerful ideas about art focus on them. [...] Modernism's transposition of perception from life to formal values is complete. This, of course, is one of modernism's fatal diseases'. He compared a gallery with its laws and rigours to the medieval church. What we try to do now is to point out some layers of existence which could 'say' something not only about art... When we reach the building where an exhibition takes place, it seems on the outside to be quite official yet what do we have inside? Conversely, we try to put more life here - not in order to try to conquer reality - but to build a connection to it.

Official and unofficial. Outside and inside. Maybe it is a bit more complicated, consisting of more layers and meanings than we thought? Or maybe... it is completely mixed together, transformed into a non-separated hybrid – an animal of the Confluence. O'Doherty is really not a Columbus when he says: 'Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study'. Yeah, ok. But we want to play! Ern Rubik, (Hungarian) sculptor and professor of architecture, invented his Cube in 1974. The mechanical puzzle, previously called the 'Magic Cube' was licensed by Rubik to be sold by Ideal Toys in 1980 and quickly became one of the most famous objects in the world. We think it is quite obvious – it was and still is so popular in many countries, beyond borders, in a Europe split into 'East' and 'West' where it was a real hit on both sides of the Iron Curtain. When we were children, we all had Rubik's Cube in our homes, on both 'sides' we tried to solve the same puzzle... In 1989, the Wall was knocked down. Now, twenty years after, people of this generation, from places where 1989 had different effects, are in the same space, together in an area that is both familiar and unfamiliar to us. What does it mean and - more importantly - what can we do with it? What kind of relation of influences will we bring from our respective and different sources? What we all recognise for sure is the Rubik's Cube. But is it an art object or common stuff of life? What is the difference between them? Could something be both at the same time? Or maybe we have to choose only one option? What if we place the Rubik's Cube into a museum showcase, declaring it an object of art and cutting it off from the fresh air? Rubik's Cube is, similar to the space where we live, the living creature – an animal of the Confluence. Brian O'Doherty in his famous book also mentions the *Merzbau*, that strange work of Kurt Schwitters (German artist who spent many years in exile): 'The Merzbau was a tougher, more sinister work than it appears in the photographs available to us. It grew out of the studio – that is, a space, materials, an artist, and a process. Space extended (up-stairs and downstairs) and so did time (to about 13 years). The work cannot be remembered as static, as it looks in photographs. Framed by meters and years, it was a mutating, polyphonic construct, with multiple subjects, functions, concepts of space and of art'. And the ongoing project *The World Filled with Stuff* from *Æ* (a collaboration of Ramon Hulspar & Erik Vermeulen from the Netherlands), is a random selection of stuff moved from building to building or spaces to spots. As they say about it: 'Once we started documenting this, it took on an abstract life, going through different phases, morphing into different shapes due to changing situations and contexts'. So, it also seems to be a kind of living creature: the work in progress, the Never-ending Story. We, together with the artists themselves don't really know what is going to happen in the space, if we are allowed to speculate about a result at all. And we take this opportunity to be surprised by the 'childish' responsibility to have fun. It's dead serious. So, now we are in 'one' place and trying to communicate in 'one' language. This is the confluence. Can we discover some universal rules? Or maybe it is messier, a place where things are mixed together completely, a mythical tower of Babel? Is it possible that the search for

our identity is a kind of punishment and we always dream about a previous, innocent unity that we lost? It seems that we cannot understand each other completely. But are there any real limits in the place of Confluence? **'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence'**. Yeah, Wittgenstein was (quite ironically) right. But, is speaking the only way of expression? Or the most important? Or even the most universal? Primal? We are not sure. Once we went together to the cinema. It was an American movie, *In Search of a Midnight Kiss* by Alex Holdridge; an independent film director from L. A. Somebody had described it as 'very, very funny'. So we laughed together very loudly and at the same moments. It is really possible that we are all the same? Or maybe we have just got some things that unite us, allowing us occasionally to feel the same, to see the world in a very similar way... Even if you live in Los Angeles, California.

CURATOR AND CURATOR ASK EACH OTHER SOME QUESTIONS

KW: What is the most important for you in Towards Confluence? Certain ideas? Objects? Anything else?

RdB: I think more things are important, if it was only one I would seriously doubt the whole idea of confluence. Towards Confluence gives a possibility of interpreting the title in two ways. On the one hand, it is 'Towards' understood as heading towards new philosophical ideas, and on the other, it is 'confluence', the very point where ideas merge together. This phenomenon is very interesting to research at different levels. In our case we made an exhibition about that moment, so to speak, but we also invited people that we think might have something to do with the idea of confluence, it's quite straightforward in that sense and simple.

So, to me, neither the objects nor the exhibition is important in itself, but it helps me, and, hopefully others to understand confluence through the lens of the possibilities that art provides. Inviting artists and working collaboratively on an area of shared interest is one of the main factors that spark curiosity and demonstrate the potential of public space. Also a moment that is crucial to understand, because that is where new knowledge can reach out. In our job public space and responsibility for it is a

vital ingredient and feeder of our thoughts and actions, or at least, that is how I would like to see it, as an endeavor that makes us worry how and when to act when putting information and knowledge out on stage. A stage that is, to me, highly collaborative, as I explained earlier, and cannot be stepped on merely individually. The individual sense belongs to the artist, writer or curator themselves and is not placed in the limelight per se. Rather the knowledge and experiences that we are willing to share contribute to this public space, this stage.

That stage is the only place that offers us full access to the exchange of that very knowledge and if it takes place in public, another layer is added. Putting something on display is in that quite a useless effort if we don't know why or if we, through that display, cannot access our own imagination.

So that imagination, together with the mutual exchange of knowledge is one of the key elements to consider, especially when you search for a moment where supposedly different interpretations meet and come together.

KW: Can we really understand each other?

RdB: The question of confluence is, of course, a highly general one to ask, as you can talk about two rivers flowing together, but also about different national identities that come together in one person. I think we specifically reached out to understand that level of identity construction, something that was issued by

our own experiences coming from Eastern and Western zones in Europe, but from the same era. Understanding each other begins, I think, as well as a lot of immigration policies assume, with language. It's a classic example of being lost in translation when you don't speak each other's language. Of course, that language does not necessarily need to be a national one, as long as there is some way of communicating; a visual language is definitely part of that, too.

In contemporary society a lot of people realize the enormous loss in translation, I think, when theory becomes practice in their own backyard. Immigration is maybe the best example of that and has attracted a lot of attention for the last fifty years. We saw the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall built and removed and a growing need for a stable European political and social situation. Excluding and including what is beyond the national borders was and still is a part of this evolution. It's unclear why specific moments of this sense of uncertainty occur, and why it seems that necessary tools in dealing with this are just not there. Rather than talk about the necessity of the political realm and analyze its possibilities, I would strongly argue for the need of artistic processes as a contribution to understand uncertainties surrounding notions of immigration and evolving identities. Complex situations have been a common occurrence since the fifties and a response not only on the political field is necessary. Maybe art can provide instruments to bridge the gaps in society and offer imaginable possibilities to consider these changes in our times. The results of globalization in that sense are, of course, and artistic processes recognize that, very interesting to follow because, where globalization reaches out in a common understanding of the word, there are always individual and complex cases that don't comply with this mainstream understanding. Those exemplars need to be researched in order to understand a bit of why we came up with global solutions that have their effect on society. These are aspects that are mostly connected to identity and nationalism when we

have a look at the mobility of people and immigration. European physical borders have gone, and at the same time they have replaced physical encounter with emotional encounter in virtuality. A virtuality that can be accessed through imagination and can be put back into reality by means of art could become a very useful tool to understand each other, it might even be the only tool that is still left.

RdB: If you were to describe the notion of going towards something, the act of approaching, how do you see that implemented in your own practice?

KW: The notion of approaching is quite important to me not only in art. I understand 'going towards something' as a kind of process which is necessary when we would like to achieve something, to understand something, to move our way of thinking into another dimension – in other words, for me this is a primary process for every activity. The basis for 'going towards something' is to be open to changes. It sounds simple but, in practice, it is quite hard. Actually, this is a kind of experiment hinging on the magical sentence: 'let the energy flow'. This is a ubiquitous rule... If you ask me about my own practice, my work, I would like to say about two sorts of activity I deal with. Writing, especially writing about art is one of the most important things in my life. I always try to treat it as an experiment, not to be afraid of testing new things but to be open to changes. I can say that writing, for me, is a kind of never-ending story. But it doesn't mean that something like 'the perfect text' exists. Each time I try to write the best text for this particular moment. Life is changing so the texts should follow the flow.

The other area, organizing art exhibitions is more complicated because it entails working with other people. As a curator I am a freelancer, I am not connected with one single institution. I think we can call this attitude also a kind of experiment. When you freelance you should be especially open to changes as well as to the hesitation and uncertainty in various meanings. So I drift from one place to another in order to spread certain ideas, energy and

ask a few questions. Like a medieval minstrel... (laughter).

RdB: As we saw in the Rubik's Cube various elements can merge together. Games, design and even some social thoughts can come together in a product ready for a large audience. Do you think that this invention of the Rubik's Cube and the way it conquered the world because of the sophisticated organization and smartness, could be a blueprint for the much demanded need for audience in contemporary curatorial practices? And can we still speak of the West and East?

KW: I think that the Rubik's Cube is a unique phenomenon. Very complex and very simple at the same time. The Rubik's Cube is like a poem. And it is quite impossible to turn a poem into a law, make a rule from it. But, of course, we can be inspired by it... I think that the West and East (despite the fact that the Rubik's Cube and many other things spread everywhere) are still here. I see two main reasons. First, we (in Eastern Europe) still don't feel that our reality has become 'fully western'. Try to imagine the situation: we have been waiting for the West to come so long and now we are a bit disappointed. This is the West? Maybe not yet? Or maybe the West has always existed only in dreams of the Eastern people? Another thing is our experience, our memory, the burden, as we say in Polish "luggage". We should speak of the West and East until the last person born before 1989 has died.

RdB: Regarding the forming of identities, as we saw it in almost all of the works shown during Towards Confluence, what is the crucial discovery for you?

KW: Maybe I would not call it a discovery, it was rather a good opportunity to see it in practice. I mean, those things we had described in the curatorial text before the exhibition, where we drew our attention to the multiple layers that our identity consists of. Therefore, we tried, together with the artists, to build a construction based on these premises in the gallery space – not homogeneous but revealing different layers simultaneously.

Thus, this construction could be seen from numerous points of view. But we had had also a plan to spend time before the opening with all the artists, and it happened. Almost all of them were there in Hisk and I think that this 'international meeting' was really an invaluable part of our activity as curators.

RdB: How do you think those elements of play which are mentioned also in our text can or should be part of what you are doing?

KW: Plays are for playing. So in my work I would like, with the help of these elements, to provoke the situations of interaction with other people to involve them in something that is, in my opinion, meaningful or valuable. And the way to use the elements of play depends, of course, on a particular situation. I believe that art is a good 'place' to start interacting with people, because in contact with art they are usually more open than in other, everyday life situations. That is why so often people try to seduce each other in art galleries...

RdB: What is your experience of working in another country?

KW: Everything depends on the people not territory lying within given borders. And, of course, there are certain stereotypes which, in fact, sometimes work. It was my third exhibition, and each of them was a completely different story: different place, different people, different problems, ideas, indoor, outdoor... So every time I felt like a foreigner in a way. Like I was doing an experiment. But there is also this burden I mentioned above, so I think this time it was quite natural to compare 'Western' and 'Eastern' people in many 'un-touristic' situations, and I have made a lot of observations in this context. It could be really hard to tell you about them in only a few words. Some things are, of course, universal and appear under every sky.

Grzegorz Klamon, Flag for the III Republic of Poland, 2001



Grzegorz Klamon, Flag for the III Republic of Poland, 2001



Grzegorz Klamon, Wedding of the Black Flag with Baltic Sea, 2002



#3

E. Rubik Rubik's Cube, T. Dees, Tor Magnolia, E. Boom, Languagestream



E. Rubik Rubik's Cube,
E. Boom, Languagestream



E. Rubik Rubik's Cube



#3

Joanna Malinowska, Umanaqtuaq, 2007 DVD, 20 min



G. Klamon, The Internal Flag, 2001 Plexiglas, flag, black paint and pantyhose



Grzegorz Klamon The Internal Flag, 2001 Plexiglas, flag, black paint and pantyhose



#3

#3







TIME- CHALLENGER

an exhibition about critical reconstruction

GÖKÇEN CABADAN — ANDRÉ CATALÃO — ASLI ÇAVUŞOĞLU — OLOF DREIJER
FELIX GMEIN — LAUREN VON GOCH — ROMEO GONGORA — SUSANNE KRIEMANN
MAKODE LINDE — CHRISTODOULOS PANAYIOTOU — RINUS VAN DE VELDE
VIRON VERT AND A VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH ULUS BAKER BY ARAS ÖZGUN

CURATED BY ADNAN YILDIZ

a collaborative organization between Enough Room for Space from Rotterdam and HISK, a post-graduate program currently located in Ghent. The original proposal was based on the idea of opening a space-time for a discussion of how artistic reconstruction has been operating today through diverse conceptual approaches and contextual references in relation to current image politics. Recently, there have been numerous exhibition projects addressing artistic re-enactments, remakes, reproductions, and reinterpretations ... Time-Challenger takes into consideration the art historical and analytical framework of these projects while taking a different direction by connecting the discussion to Antonio Negri's concept of the "reconstruction of hope." Just after the proposal was selected by Enough Room for Space, I did a research visit to the exhibition space and engaged in discussion with the residents of the studios and post-graduate students there during the Open Studio Week. Finally, the proposal has been crystallized by these discussions and aspects of the artistic production at HISK and has now turned into an exhibition about critical reconstruction. The term "critical reconstruction" is borrowed from Gary Wolf (Venture Kapital, Wired Magazine, 1998) who writes about the reconstruction of Berlin following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Coincidentally, or perhaps as a sign of Zeitgeist, this proposal was completed in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighbourhood, the site of much of the most dynamic reconstruction in Berlin since 1989.



Exhibition view,
photo by Virginie Schreyen.

In *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005), Marina Abramovic acts out select historical performance artworks from 1970's artists (such as Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys etc.) including two of her own. The series of performances at Guggenheim Museum (New York) sharpened the tendency of questioning the tim-

ing of re-enactments, remakes and reinterpretations etc. in the art world. In an interview in the New York Times in early November, 2005, Abramovic explained the impetus for her most recent performances, stating that she "felt a strong need to preserve the memory of performances that

influenced [her] as an artist. 'There's nobody to keep the history straight ... I feel almost, like, obliged. I felt like I have this function to do it.' And this sense only grew stronger when she began to see ideas behind many important performances borrowed with no credit given, or appropriated by advertising and fashion."



Exhibition view,
photo by Virginie Schreyen.

Many artists today have been using similar approaches and strategies of reinterpreting art history as well as transforming world history and culture. Rather than framing the discussion as a form of artistic production through an art historical perspective, Time-Challenger aims to deal with the timing of these

productions to relate these tendencies to the repositioning of contemporary politics, image culture and digital-visual capital. As an exhibition about critical reconstruction, Time-Challenger reformulates the critique as an open-ended process of personalizing the situation, performing artistic know into a synthesis of many perspectives. To make things public, there always needs to be a personal position. The process of making things public in contemporary art practice not only brings together art works but also makes dialogues visible in order to create a physical experience for potential interactions.

To deal with the monstrous experience of global capital, Antonio Negri proposes the term "reconstruction of hope" in his *Time for Revolution* (2005): "how can a revolutionary subjectivity form itself within the multitude of producers? How can this multitude make a decision of resistance and rebellion? How can it develop a strategy of re-appropriation? How can the multitude lead a struggle for the self-government of itself?" He responds to these questions through reconstructing hope: "In the biopolitical post-modern, in this phase that sees the transformation and productive enrichment of labour-power, but on the other hand sees the capitalist exploitation of society as a whole, we thus pose these questions. As for the answers, I certainly do not possess them. But ... probably a few bricks toward the reconstruction of hope (or better, as in *Alma Venus*,

dystopia) have been laid. (144-45).” Time-Challenger shares a common conceptual ground with the exhibition project, There is no audience, an exhibition about public imagination (22.05.09-30.08.09, Montehermoso, Spain) and focuses on the same terms on a different level.* Here, Time-Challenger is more interested in the possibility of reformulating the discussion of artistic reconstruction in relation to the political atmosphere of our time and integrating the strategy of reconstructing hope into the process.



Installation view. Romeo Gongora, Pardon, 4 channel video installation (2007-2008), photo: Virginie Schreyen.

Through rethinking modernism, Time-Challenger will display some artistic reconstructions that challenge pre-given definitions and realities of our past and present time – related to the problematic of timing. In the exhibition, Gökçen Cabadan displays paintings that depict contemporary visions of family and health and transform the

ready-made images at an abstract level of reconstructive criticality. Developing a conceptual identity and an expressive quality, Viron Vert's drawings and collages include elements of history and culture through personal memories and attachments. Aslı Çavuşoğlu's video A Turkish Doctor: Ömer Ayhan ironically fictionalizes a success story reflecting the power of the media over content via an evening news program. Romeo Gongora's Prison is composed of monologues from four prisoners and establishes a critical dialogue on society and models of justice (punitive/rehabilitative). By using a level of abstraction through ready-made images and painting, André Catalão's installation is a reflection of the artist's cultural memory. Olof Dreijer's sound installation is composed of animal sounds and provides a fictional space through reconstructing the perception of nature and the elements of evolution.

As an unforgettable gesture, Felix Gmelin's Farbtest II, Die Rote Fahne, Colour Test II, The Red Flag is composed of the original shot and the remake of Gerd Conradt's tracking shot of students running through the streets of West Berlin from 1968. Gmelin's father had been one of those waving the flag, and the two-channel video loop directly

reflects on Negri's point. Lauren von Gogh conceptualizes a personal story, and reconstructs an everyday experience for the audience in order to create a social critique. Susanne Kriemann's publications presented on a table include different strategies of recontextualizing the form of images; they are unique examples of experimenting on the format of publication and reading images. Makode Linde's silk screen prints stimulate a contemporary critique of the history of culture and identity: logos from global sport industry delicately installed into the illustrative portraits of African figures remind us of the exploitation of labour. Christodoulos Panayiotou works with archives and personal memories of sound and image, recreating new dimensions in the perceptive levels of the audience through his installation. Borrowing the images from the world of exploration and discovery (in this instance, National Geographic) Rinus Van de Velde performs his artistic research through his charcoal drawings. There is also a video interview with Ulus Baker by Aras Özgün, What is an opinion? presented in the exhibition that opens a channel to the audience regarding the social process behind the construction of any opinion.

This discussion will be linked to the question: “how does any form of artistic reconstruction develop a level of criticality through its production process, and how does this criticality embody a public challenge?” within the framework of the exhibition, which is designed on the basis of Paul Virilio's strategic methodology: “Play at being a critic. Deconstruct the game in order to play with it. Instead of accepting the rules, challenge and modify them. Without the freedom to critique and reconstruct, there is no truly free game: we are addicts and nothing more.” (from the interview with Paul Virilio by Jérôme Sans).

by Adnan Yıldız

- **Like Time-Challenger the proposal for the exhibition There Is No Audience was also produced for an open call. That one was selected from 370 proposals, sent from 35 countries as Montehermoso 2009 Curator Grant.**

EPILOGUE

“ Dear Participants, Enough Room for Space team,

and HISK people, and friends who have been with us,

Hello from Berlin. I have been thinking about writing a long email to all of you in terms of sharing my reflections about the process. Several times, I tried to do it, however it was never the right time. As you might notice before, "Time-Challenger" is going to close down this Sunday, and we are going to keep the promises and the visions of our collective work as long as we are alive. First of all, I am so grateful to all of the participating artists, who allowed me to show their works in this context, and secondly the HISK and Enough Room for Space team for their involvement and dedication. In such a short time with a limited budget, we have manifested an exhibition, through which we gained some experience of space-time in order to come close to our practice and questions.

To be honest, from the beginning, it was a challenge itself to deal with the schedule of the show. When I look back to the process, there are several points – that I would like to bring to the table – immediately appear to me. Through this exhibition, my interest and focus has shifted to the process of installation and the creative labour that we put into our work during the installation process. My further research will definitely focus on designing an exhibition/experience design in order to reflect the cognitive and the collective process of the installation-days on the audience. The physicality of time and space, the decision-making process during the installation days, and the adaptation of the works into a new context are now next stations for me.

Ideas, projects, art works, basically exhibitions are of course significant in terms of stimulating a public discussion, and this is how we make things public. But this time it was very visible to see the influence of creative 'labour' in the process. Thanks to Ian, Jiri, Isabel, Hans, Toni, Bert, Andre, Makode, Assaf, and some others (forget my fish-memory) who were very much supporting us, "Time-Challenger" is possible today, and I hope you also enjoyed the process. As a personal note, it was really a very unique experience to hear many things from many people, and this is how I feel good about my work,

and I am really happy not to have a consensus on the final form of the exhibition except the installation is professionally well-done. I think, I even did not take it personal when a drunk guy was calling me an asshole at the party. When some people, who really meant it, were telling me that it was really a big energy on the air, I felt myself invisible at that moment. I believe that this exhibition moved into another direction during its production process; yes, it was a risk to lose the connections with the original proposal, but then it was also possible to trigger new questions within the context. There are several ways to make an exhibition; and I think this time I have chosen to work on the space and the context.

Maybe because I felt in love with the space from the first moment.

Secondly, we only can bring life to the institutions.

I remembered a conversation with Zygmunt Bauman with Maaretta Jaukkuri. "Thank God I am not a curator ... scapegoat, ... the curator is in the front line of a big battle of meaning under conditions of uncertainty". Art practice is based on the fundamental relationship between the artist and the audience, nevertheless curating becomes a more and more problematic form of this or that sort of culture or management conflict. In accordance with the changing territories of my enquiry, which have transformed the role of the artist and artistic/performative research as a form of knowledge into a discussion about the new audience, I agree with Bauman, that in a nutshell, curating is a dirty job. However, I still believe that we can create beautiful challenges for everyone.

And my basic motivation with inviting three artists from the HISK context was to create a dialogue between the institutional framework and the discussion. And now, I think that was the best decision. I wish we all would have spent more time together, and had the chance to organize proper studio visits or discuss things in a different setting. But time is a challenge, and it is really what you can get from it and how you contribute to the transformation of the knowledge through performing your

gaze.

So I would like to make a statement here. I feel that I did not chose or pick up anyone for this exhibition, or let me say it like this, I think I am not interested in picking up anyone for anything. It happens itself when you move on questions, and I think there were the questions ... looking for -not answers- new questions ...

*THANKS AGAIN for sharing your time with me.
TIME WAS and STILL IS A CHALLENGE WITH YOU!*

Adnan Yıldız

”



Makode Linde, Untitled, silk screen prints, 2009.

#4



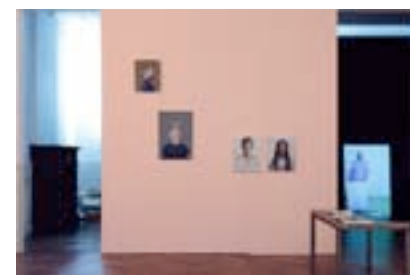
Aslı Çavuşoğlu, "A Turkish Doctor: Ömer Ayhan", (2004) video projection. Photo by Virginie Schreyen.



8 Gökçen Cabadan, Dream of a Bastard, oil on canvas, 2009. Photo by Virginie Schreyen.



André Catalão, Beauty Cream Bar, acrylic on canvas, 2009. Photo by Virginie Schreyen.

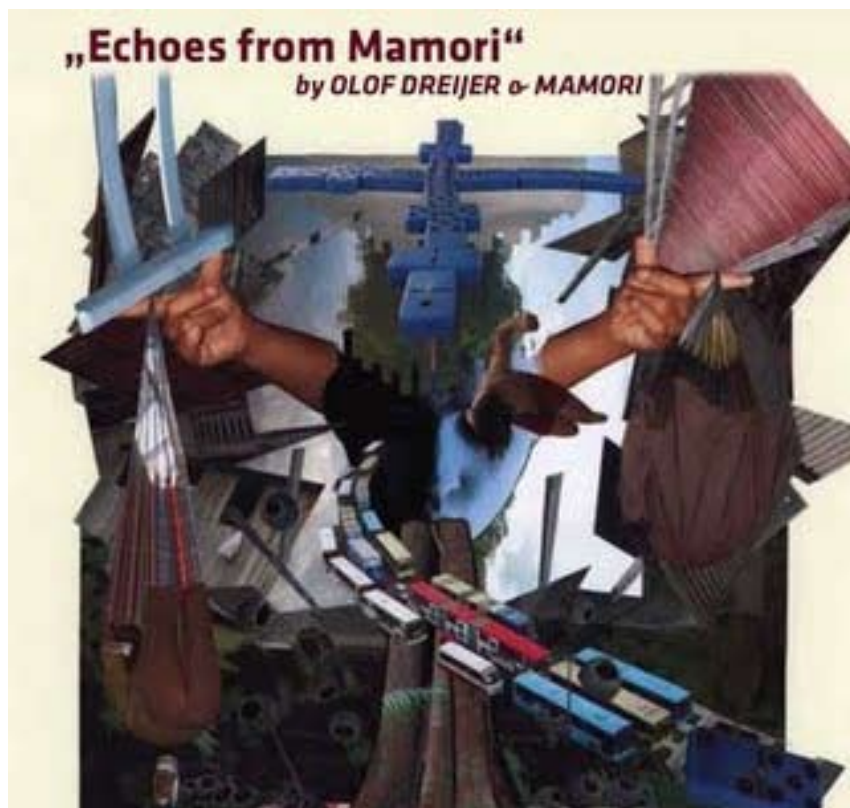


Gökçen Cabadan

#4



Makode Linde, *Untitled*, silk screen prints, 2009. Photo by Virginie Schreyen.



Olof Dreijer & Mamori
 Commissioned by: Adnan Yıldız / Producer: Montehermoso
 Cover: Viron Vert / Graphic Design: Frank Jentner



Shot from the performance by Lauren van Gogh.



Romeo Gongora Pardon, 4 channel video installation (2007-2008),
 photo: Virginie Schreyen.

#4



Rinus Van de Velde

#4



**AFTER ALL,
EVERYTHING IS
DIFFERENT
IN THE END**

**AFTER ALL,
EVERYTHING IS
DIFFERENT
IN THE END**

Curator Curator nrs
An Exhibition at the HISK
Curated by Jens Maier-Rothe

25 september – 19 oktober 2009
from Thursday to Sunday
from 14h00 until 18h00
Opening: 25 september 18h00

Artists: Mike Carremans,
Le Comissaireurs, Jean-Luc Godard,
Nate Harrison, Jeuno JE Kim,
Brandon LaBelle, Len Lye,
Raimundas Malašauskas,
Norman McLaren,
Joris van de Moortel

Tisha Mukarji, Sarah Pierce,
Ultra-red and Katarina Zdijelar

Supported by the Flemish
Community in the framework of
Curator Curator, a project
initiated by Maarten Vanden Eynde
and Maaike Gouwenberg
www.mnagbrasserspace.org

In collaboration with the HISK /
Higher Institute for Fine Arts
Charles de Waelhovestraat 187A,
9000 Ghent, Belgium
www.hisk.edu
Design: Joris Van Aken



After all, everything is different in the end

Mike Carremans / Brandon LaBelle / Gent Clapping Group /
Nate Harrison / Jeuno JE Kim / Raimundas Malašauskas /
Joris van de Moortel / Tisha Mukarji / Sarah Pierce /
Thus & Hence / Ultra-red / Katarina Zdijelar /
plus Jean-Luc Godard, Len Lye and Norman McLaren

September 25 – October 18, 2009

After all, everything is different in the end addresses itself to examine how listening as a simultaneous activity is subject to various notions of synchronicity. In other words, it faces the fact that, as Jean-Luc Godard once put it, one and one is not two but one and one.

Listening always coincides with other sensorial experiences and is itself a constant filtering and connecting of the multiple layers that constitute acoustic space. When we listen we constantly navigate between sensations in and out of sync. The twelve artists in this group show engage in a dialogue on the thinking processes behind these simultaneous levels of perception. They observe from different angles how listening has a unique ability to fabricate and deconstruct our common sense of synchronicity, and thus a desire for and against it. Together they set out a wide range of possibilities to turn these observations into a terrain for critical inquiry.

In an attempt to open up new spaces where critical thinking and perspectives on sound and listening can merge, the show breaches the boundaries of the conventional exhibition and listening space to explore unknown fields: events happen simultaneously at a distance far and close, a radio broadcasts the imagination of a broadcast, the audience is invited to shape invisible sculptures, one hundred people act as metronomes and sounds are teleported to spy out military grounds.

After all, everything is different in the end is the second exhibition in a series of Sonic Thinking. More information at www.sonicthinking.org.

Bonus tracks:

October 5, 20.00 Film night

Weekend by Jean-Luc Godard and short films by Len Lye and Norman McLaren

With an introduction by Hans Martens, Artistic director HISK

Art Cinema OFFoff, Begijnhof ter Hoye, Lange Violettestraat 237, 9000 Ghent

October 10, 02.00-03.00 Radio program

Radio Dinner by Raimundas Malašauskas

Radio Urgent FM 105.3 MHz in Ghent and nearer region

Online stream at <http://www.urgent.fm/luisteronline>

Curated by Jens Maier-Rothe

AUDIO, VISION, TIME

Dance inwardly — Life is moving fast. Don't miss a thing.¹

Every now and then, current debates on sound in contemporary art still show a marked preference for marveling at physiological and psychoacoustic aspects of auditory experience.² In doing so, they take marginal notice of other, potentially more critical, philosophical implications of listening. It is time for a turn that shifts focus from the *matter of sound* to the *organization of listening*, from asking *'what do we hear?'* to asking *'how is listening organized?'*. This turn is about time in two respects: it is time for a critically informed dialog on the position and organization of listening within contemporary culture — and we need to become aware of how we conceive the dimension in which organized listening takes place, which is time itself.

What grants access to the social and political dimensions of listening is less likely revealed by a fascination for the ethereality of sound, but rather achieved by exploring the organization of listening and its repercussions. Since the basic patterns with which we define listening situations — as private, public, collective, individual etc. — are intrinsically linked to the conceptions of space and time within dominant systems of knowledge production, they also ensue and rely on epistemological suppositions of time and duration. This is crucial as *"sound is irreducibly temporal"*³, without time there is no resonance. Sound is also inherently spatial, of course, for space allows sound to resonate in the first place. However, sound and listening are not so consciously alluded to in the critique of ideologies of spatial and institutional contexts. One might think of Brian O'Doherty's eminent study of the ideology of the white cube⁴, for instance, which does not mention listening at all. Whereas practitioners of institutional critique finally address the organization of listening in a way, if we read Andrea Fraser's opening speeches or Sharon Hayes' examinations of public speech and language of protest in that sense. Then again, the so called category of

'sound art' recurrently tends to take a different route. Most of all, the field of site-specific sound installations keeps pulling back with an unsettling routine into opaque and spiritual grounds, where notions of time and duration can be comfortably enveloped in an uncritical sensation of the intangible space-time continuum. These positions obscure the fact that time and space are not externally given entities but discursively, politically and ideologically produced conceptions.

As we currently experience a transformation from industrial production to digital circulation, critical thinking about the perception of time is momentous. Everyday modes of perception are constantly changing and proliferating, which has tremendous effects on our notion of time. This gives particular significance to the synchronisation of auditory and visual experience and implicates new challenges for counter-hegemonic struggles to critically address audio-visual representation. Seeking for ways to measure up to the new conditions critical inquiries into cultural representation are therefore compelled to fall back on questions rooted in phenomenological concerns: How do we come to perceive the world in the way we do? How do epistemological premises administer modes of perception? What role does time play in this context? What exactly are the effects of capitalist modes of production on audio-visual perception and what forms of resistance do they ask for? And consequently, how can we get from resistance to productive critique? The following notes gather some reflections on that matter, not answers.

Is your feeling mellow? — It's time to say auf Wiedersehen.

French composer Erik Satie famously took his performance instructions downright seriously.

No matter how odd some of them may seem even to his greatest admirers, Satie insisted that they should be respected and eventually forbade reading them aloud during performances. Naturally, he may not have been delighted to see his directions misused as chapter titles here. Though I am sure it would have had a conciliatory effect on him that this

essay engages in a critical perspective on listening and the commodification of time, for throughout his astonishing variety of work Satie himself aspired to open up the minds of his performers and audiences to discover the subjective notion of time. In his later years, he would even refer to himself as a *phonometrician*, meaning a 'sound measurer', rather than a composer or musician. In his widely known and to date controversially received piece, *Vexations*, rumored to have been composed as early as 1893, Satie suggests playing its theme 840 times in succession. This led to a 'marathon' of almost nineteen hours when the piece was posthumously performed for the first time in 1963 by a group of pianists including John Cage, David Tudor and others. In its irreducible original form, *Vexations* is known as the longest musical piece in history, with an undeniably exasperating effect as the title already suggests. As a matter of coincidence, the shortest record song ever, written and performed in usually 1.316 seconds by the British grindcore band Napalm Death, sounds like a response: *You suffer*. In this spirit, seizing on Satie's directions as intertitles is meant to show how 'time-less' his work continues to be today.

In the 1920s German poet, playwright, and theatre director Bertolt Brecht brought the distancing or alienation effect literally into play. At the heart of his 'epic' or dialectical theatre was the aim to break with the naturalistic construction of dramatic illusion and its ways to represent social conditions as a seamless whole. Brecht's idea of dialectical montage builds on various techniques such as the *gestus* as acting method, stylized language, inter-titles that disrupt the narrative flow, direct audience-address, to name just a few. According to Brecht, these techniques estrange the audience from represented situations and make the ordinary perceivable through the alienated, *effect-ively* showing that the prevailing social conditions are not as unchangeable as they appear to be. Altogether, this new realism would lead the activated audiences to critically reflect their own life conditions. The line of theorists and artists who adopted Brecht's ideas into their work is nearly endless, among the most prominent are filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, dancer and choreographer Yvonne

Rainer, or the Situationists International. In short, contemporary cultural production today is hardly imagineable without the influence of Brecht.

Both Satie and Brecht pursued the idea to interfere with normative models of representation, each at a different time and in a different way. In his critique of traditional realism, Brecht already assumes that new conditions always demand new forms of critical contestation. It goes without saying that power relations and cultural discourses have changed since then, as much as the perception of time has shifted immensely with huge technological advances over the past decades. Critical art practices will have to find ways to address these changes by directly challenging our modes of perception both in their spatiotemporal *and* in their non-spatial audio-visual dimension. For the latter it is crucial to examine how the temporal relations between the auditory and the visual shape a certain understanding of time. I want to suggest that a combination of Brecht's distancing effect with Satie's tactical assault on time may give us the appropriate means for this investigation. Inasmuch as fused together, their approaches allow for taking a critical perspective, at a distance between far and close, from where one can discern how audio-visual representation continues to define and mediate our conceptions of time. In other words, we can re-read Brecht while replacing the term 'dramatic illusion' with '*audiovisual time*'.

With your hand on your conscience — We make perception out of things perceived.⁴

Epistemological knowledge assumes to create a consensus about the state of the world and how to perceive it. Ambiguities evoked by sensorial experience are supposed to be resolved in foundational truth claims which in turn constitute our perception of it — a scheme that is essentially grounded on the idea that reflection follows perception, that sensation comes first. Shortly before the turn of the century, French philosopher Henri Bergson made unprecedented approaches toward a separation of an internal sense of duration (*durée*) from the dimension of space and the external

measurable time (*temps*) as a fusion of the other two⁵. It would be from there that Maurice Merleau-Ponty and other major phenomenologists began about 40 years later to challenge the sequential understanding of perception and its inherent fabrication of a temporal dimension. For time is what allows us to think of successively unfolding events in the first place, with perception being followed by thinking in reaction. Phenomenologist inquiries into the perception of time inspired a wide variety of thinkers to make attempts at linking perception and reflection more directly in their theories, or to even think of them as being one and the same process. The journalist and psychologist Rudolf Arnheim, for instance, suggests in his book *Visual Thinking* that “*perceiving and thinking are indivisibly intertwined*”⁶ and that it should be of essential importance to reconsider the split between sense and thought as expressed in the various divisions of psychology, philosophy, the arts and the sciences.

Our ‘capacity’ to perceive the world esemplastically is thus not only guided but also fabricated by prevalent systems of representation and their inherent forms of knowledge production and circulation. What in fact rather acts like a kludge, as Sarat Maharaj aptly termed the co-workings of the sense faculties⁷, is impelled to crystallize unitary truths from what it receives. In short, sensorial experience is preconceived in a way that matches certain knowledge paradigms. Critical practices have therefore repeatedly questioned the perceptive models and modes that adhere to these theoretical paradigms, with more or less success in history. In fact, the causality between perceptive modes and epistemological knowledge can only be probed by repeatedly shifting or interrupting it in operation, moreover by revealing its blind spots. The history of illusory techniques in visual arts however does not tally with a history of critical practice. From the ancient Greek legend of Zeuxis and Parrhasius⁸ and the famous fly on the *Portrait of a Carthusian* to Op Art, the aesthetic form which focused on perception itself as key subject always suffered from the reputation that it sought to merely beguile the senses, never going beyond the representational surface to deal with ‘real’ and more urgent matters. The

spectator, entranced in rapture by the *trompe l’oeils*, illusions and tricks would only find herself trapped in a passive and idle state of mind.

Such a dialectical opposition of the mesmerizing illusion against one genuine reality is nowadays obviously not applicable anymore; neither to cultural representation, nor to the social conditions it presumes to represent, nor to the various forms of subject formation at play. Obviously, there is no truth but many truths, and the notion of the *trompe l’oeil* itself is worn out. Or, to apply the map-territory relationship, the illusion has become constitutive for reality. When originally the map began to exceed the territory while at the same time being contingent on it, thus leading to a state of infinite regress, one could say that now the illusion exceeds the referent of the real while at the same time constituting it. This should then be rather called a state of infinite progress, since all that is left is the advancing illusion.⁹ The new media pervading everyday life on a multiplicity of layers make illusion virtually ubiquitous in all forms of cultural representation. At the same time, they make its continuous interruption and fragmentation predictable, since disruptive and distancing effects have been largely incorporated into mainstream film and advertising strategies. Brecht’s concepts have been co-opted and turned against their original purpose to a large extent. They now operate within a disrupted but nevertheless unitary *audiovisual* spectacle. The interrelation between notions of truth, reality and mimesis has inevitably grown more complex, creating a thicket in which distinguishing the one from the other has become a puzzling, if not obsolescent, endeavor. Truth claims, as different ways of making society intelligible, cannot build exclusively on the original referent anymore, particularly not on the visual document. Digital imagery effaced the ontological condition of the photograph, the truth of the image has left the building, so to speak. The evidence of experience¹⁰ puts foundational and anti-foundational concerns up to new challenges when debating discursive productions of reality. Against this background, capitalist modes of production seek for new ways of structuring time as sensorial experience to

generate a new and pertinent commodity form which “crystallizes modes of ideological perception”.¹¹

*Be an hour late — Power is articulated directly onto time, it assures its control and guarantees its use.*¹²

The commodification of knowledge involves its extended circulation and accelerated synchronisation. Technological advancements engender new modes of multisensory perception that synchronize information and keep it flowing in the desired way. The ramifications of these synchronisation processes are perpetually reflecting back on our sense of time. Since the early 19th century, when the rise of the railway as means of transportation made synchronised clocks and measured travel durations increasingly important to prevent train collisions, the perception of time has never been the same. The coordination of simultaneous events began to play a key role in industrial capitalism and its need to master the forthcoming dimension of production: circulation. Capitalism always had profound interest in unifying the experience of time as much as possible. Only if we understand the product, or at least internalize a desire for it, we become potential consumers. Thus, time must be reified and unified first, then fragmented again to create a desire for consuming it. “*This unified irreversible time belongs to the global market, and thus also to the global spectacle*”¹³, as Guy Debord already put it in 1967. With every mechanical and technological progress in the last century the perception of time underwent constant changes. Yet, these were small shifts compared to the groundbreaking effect which the information revolution — supposedly the greatest shift since industrialisation — would have on it from the late 20th century on. Particularly during the last two decades our notion of time experienced a tremendous shift, with a snowballing internet culture and mobile gadgets like the smartphone hurling everyday life into a new dimension of synchronized events and real-time circulation of omni-accessible information.

While at first this kind of technological progress seemed to bring contemporary

culture closer to the idea of democratic media, promising egalitarian access and self-control, it also helped to incorporate tactical media concepts into neoliberal networks and the commercialisation of knowledge and information.¹⁴ With digital information as the upcoming commodity form, we are navigating toward endless circulation at lightning speed and further into a modus of maximized synchronisation until finally, the perception of time — as we know it — might be abolished completely. Writers like the collective Tiqqun have indicated, intricately, that this may be the case as the various control processes shift from industrial to cybernetic capitalism.¹⁵

However, our perception of time remains highly subjective. Regardless of how much our everyday life is contingent on synchronizing mechanisms we seem to be able to stay aware of our inner clock. As a dimension, if indeed it is a dimension, time is to a large extent experienced as a tension between a ‘certain’ time and our sense of it — driven by an inner intuition of what Bergson would call *durée*. Above all, our notion of time is framed by death, by the end of that certain amount of lifetime which we say we own. In *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike*¹⁶, Alexander Kluge’s nine-hour comment on Eisenstein’s cinematographic vision of Marx’s *Capital*, Boris Groys describes biopolitical visions in Russia at the turn of the century: Only eternal life could release humanity from the last form of private property as key logic of capitalism. Who cannot die does not own a life, therefore no one can take it away. Only if the ownership of this certain amount of time could be abandoned there would be a way to make everyone participate in a socialist future. Should immortality thus become the goal for the next revolution? From a scientific perspective, such a proposal seems unrealistic, at least for the moment, let alone a hundred years ago. But the question of ownership might be rightfully posed once we think that this life-time is, to think along the lines of Foucault, essentially governed by a power-knowledge nexus. Even more so in times of a globally thriving neoliberalism.

Foucault’s writings shed crucial light on the mutual inherence of power and knowledge and furthermore disclose how the ordering of space

into visible and invisible domains is dominated by power and control. His examinations of perceptual visibles and invisibles, I would like to suggest, can be applied to the audio-visual as well. More precisely, to synchronized and unsynchronized time relations of sound and image. In a similar way as Foucault's panopticon structures the way we move through space, audio-visual representation structures the way we move through time. According to the common sense, only what is put in *audiovisual* order appears to be worth the time it occupies. A blurred audio-visual makes less sense, linguistically and epistemologically. It becomes noise, invisible and inaudible, empty of *audiovisual* time. Power, as Foucault argues furthermore, is able to manifest itself positively in the fabrication of discursive knowledge that empowers people to govern themselves. This seems to be the case when more and more communication devices allow users to create and control audio-visual situations. In that sense, mobile phones with built-in cameras become the readily available means to reproduce and spread the *audiovisual* world of representation, at any time in any place.

*Be visible for a moment — What is aura, actually? A strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close the object may be.*¹⁷

Although Roland Barthes clearly states that his *Reflections on Photography*¹⁸ are not applicable to film, I would like to suggest that his account for 'mad' photography at the end of his book, could, by the same token be extended to an entreaty to interfere with the 'tame' and synchronized *audiovisual* joint. Barthes' punctum, the detail that interferes with the studium of a photograph, is directly related to Benjamin's aura and thus indirectly to Freud's notion of the uncanny. When mapping out the notion of aura, Benjamin engages Freud to describe the psychoanalytic grounds of the phenomenon. Freud himself defines the uncanny as the recurrence of something that existed before but which has been repressed.¹⁹ It follows that the synchronization of audio-visual relations, propelled by the circulation, reproduction and the reification of knowledge, could be understood so as to

'repress' alternative, asynchronous, forms of temporal and spatial experience.

How these relations are fabricated can only be revealed in a dislocation of their elements, through a diffusion of the lens, a refraction of the line between sensorial experience and a subject's consciousness. Only in a moment of rupture we are able to experience what Barthes marks out in a photograph apart from the detail as the first punctum as a second one, "*which is no longer of form but of intensity, [...] Time, the lacerating emphasis of the noeme, its pure representation.*"²⁰ This interpretation is going far from Barthes' original point of reference, which is the essence, or noeme as he calls it, of photography. But it seems appropriate to move away from it since this noeme does not exist anymore. New technologies have rendered Barthes' main ontological condition obsolete that photography always carries a relationship between sign and referent which points to the real. However, does not the Lacanian Real staring back at us precisely point to this noeme? It does, and this is exactly what the production and reproduction of images and their circulation is haunting and at once hunting for by pretending to recreate it. We can find such a recreated real also in acoustic space, for example in the voice of infamous eighteenth-century castrato singer Farinelli, whose legendary singing voice has never been recorded and existed only in memories. Until recently, when his dead voice has been somehow resurrected to make it audible in a Belgian bio-pic named after him. What we finally hear as Farinelli's voice in the film "*is generated by engineers at IRCAM [...], following an intricate computerized splicing of two contemporary singers*"²¹

Taking a photograph, in the same way as recording a sound, is about transforming temporality. It expands the present with the possibility to look at it at a later time. As an attempt to counter the loss of time, the act of conservation is also linked to the fear of death. Millions of images, taken every moment all over the world, represent points in time in which one was not present and therefore could not participate. By making them visible visual culture continually constructs an ever-growing feeling of loss, and hence a desire to

consume time by suspending and extracting it. The experience of time, of a moment in the present, seems to be incomplete without the act of perpetuating it, without saving it from its loss. Taking a photograph becomes a form of reifying time and of adding an exchange value to it. Barthes illustrates this with the image of a hunter who brings home more game than he needs for himself. The excess of goods then encourages him to use it for exchange. The picture taking tourist, like the hunter, wants to produce exchange value and not only use value. Even if the tourist knows that she can find a better image of a sight or landmark online, she feels the desire to take a picture by herself. Only the act of preserving it renders the notion of presence real. The preservation sets it in relation to a possible future and inscribes it into one's personal life time. Consequently, recording is a form of consuming not only the technical recording device but also one of consuming time. Following the logic of consumerism, a moment becomes 'unforgettable' only when it is consumable as a whole, as an experience of the present, past and future simultaneously.

*Noiselessly, believe me again — every edit is a lie.*²²

One particular incident, or rather accident, often comes to my mind when I think about sound in film and the notion of the *audiovisual* as a whole. A couple of years ago I was sitting in a fairly old movie theatre when the scheduled film began, but the technician had forgotten to turn on the sound. It took him exactly thirty nine seconds to realize the mistake. With every second of complete silence in the room my enthusiasm was growing for this experimental, for a Hollywood production almost radical, composition. When the accidental nature of the 'soundtrack' was revealed by a film character who appeared to be speaking, I felt foolish at first. Apparently, I was not the only one in the audience who was kind of mesmerized by the experience. From the seats came numerous expressions of fascination and many guests would even go on to discuss the experience afterwards. This is even more remarkable, as it had been the mere absence of sound that left the audience dumbstruck for only a little

bit more than half a minute. Needless to say that it did not feel like the thirty seconds that followed when the technician restarted the film with sound. It made me think about how my personal sense of time has been influenced by audio-visual experiences in the past. Inspired by Barthes and Benjamin, I began to ask myself how my personal 'little history of audio-vision' would read like. Which audio-visual works had the biggest impact on my inner sense of time and where did it start?

From a historical point of view, the invention of film and the gramophone introduced the dimension of time to the relation between sight and sound. Their simultaneity and synchronisation quickly took up a central role for both technical and creative aspects in the following history of audio-visual art, which can be divided into three main periods: During the 1920s, experiments with the moving image were in the foreground. The auditory mostly had an accompanying function, music was predominantly composed to support the rhythm of an image sequence. With abstract film being in vogue during the 1930s this relation turned around. The composition of images was more likely to follow the rhythm of popular music scores. From the late 1960s on, sound and image in film became more and more independent from each other. In a brief synopsis, one could sum it up as a development from composing images *with* music and furthermore creating images *as* music to finally arranging images *and* sound. It struck me that two points in history seemed to play a crucial role in this evolution. Over a time span of thirty seven years they mark the opening and the end of an important chapter in audio-visual history. Moreover, these two 'films' have almost the same title: Walter Ruttmann's *Weekend* in 1930 and Jean-Luc Godard's *Week End* in 1967.

Ruttmann already created in 1921 what is known today as the first documented piece of abstract film: *Lichtspiel opus 1*. The term abstract refers to the fact that no concrete objects were seen, but rather a composition of geometric forms and paintings accompanied by a musical score. Early works of abstract film were often described as „moving paintings“ or „paintings with time“, possibly inspired by Ruttmann who was a painter himself. In 1927

he finished his opus magnum *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, and only two years later Dziga Vertov would follow with another monumental portrait of metropolitan life in the pioneering and breathtaking montage of *Man with a Movie Camera*. Inspired by the new technical possibility to print sound on film material, Ruttmann collected recordings over one weekend in 1930 in Berlin and created an eleven minute piece of photographic sound composition with a narrative character: *Weekend*. Only one year later would Oskar Fischinger begin to further examine the technical relations between sound and image on film. Captivated by the abstract forms which optical sound recording produced on film material, he experimented with direct drawings on the film reel's optical sound track, and so created *Tönende Ornamente* in 1932, which pioneered as the first film with synthesized sound and is known as an early precursor of noise and electronic music. For Fischinger this was the beginning of a forthcoming synthesis of sound and image: What could be seen was the same as what could be heard, played back on the same medium and machine.

This idea of a synthesis of sound and image was the reference for numerous film theorists and filmmakers who either arranged themselves with it or tried to get it out of the heads of their audiences. The majority of post-war mainstream cinema felt quite comfortable with a mere acoustic illustration of its imagery, which got stripped down to an unrealistically small amount of foley sounds and a dense musical score that guides through the narrative. Other more experimental filmmakers felt compelled to object to this kind of *audiovisual* narration. Certainly, the montage and music in the work of Sergei M. Eisenstein as well as the films of Fritz Lang, Carl Dreyer and the early Alfred Hitchcock stand completely on their own in this regard. Another major turn took place in 1962, when Andrei Tarkovsky's first feature film *Ivan's Childhood* () introduced audiences to an entirely new approach to narrative structure in film that abolishes the traditional *mise-en-scène* for a more associative, 'logic of the poetic', as Tarkovsky would call it.

Two other filmmakers and their groundbreaking experiments since the early 1930s

should be mentioned here, since they are less well-known in art historical contexts: Len Lye and Norman McLaren. Lye began in 1935 to paint directly on the film itself and thus invented what nowadays is known as direct film, handmade and cameraless films that often acted as visualizations of a chosen piece of music in the genre's initial days. For his earliest documented piece of direct film, *A Colour Box* (1935), Lye chose a popular Cuban song to which he composed a stream of fast moving and transforming series of abstract images. In contrast to other experiments in visual music Lye did not always try to arrive at a synchronous flow of music and images. His visuals work more as free interpretations of what can be heard. The capricious pictures and the sometimes exact and inexact overlays with the music reflected the style of modern jazz. For another film Lye used footage from a car factory and edited it into a one-minute sequence to the sound of African drum rhythms. Despite its short length, *Rhythm* (1952) is a true masterpiece of audio-visual montage, with jump cuts and repetitions in both sound and image. Lye's work had great influence on another film maker, Norman McLaren, one of the most well-known pioneers of animation. Inspired by Lye McLaren produced a few similar direct films to jazz and other music he synthesized himself. Next to his reputation as a sound synthesis pioneer, he also signed for one of the most well-known direct films, *Begone Dull Care* from 1949, which interacts vividly with music played by the Oscar Peterson Trio. In 1952 McLaren directed another animation film *Neighbours* which would win him an Academy Award, but to his and others surprise in the category for best documentary. Combining innovative effects with a strong social message and extreme violence, *Neighbours* somehow foreshadowed the portrait of a morally degenerated and consumerist society in Jean-Luc Godard's work.

When opening in 1967, *Week End* was by far Jean-Luc Godard's most radical film. Its unconventional montage unsettled the common sense that film was supposed to form an audiovisual whole for the sake of an entertaining and intelligible narrative. Far from these expectations, the absurd imagery of *Week End* depicts an apocalyptic outlook on modern

Western society afflicted by moral and social decay. The film's audio-visual language, for which Godard made excessive use of Brechtian techniques, influenced film makers, artists and viewers worldwide in their understanding of film as an experience that clearly addresses two senses simultaneously, the eye and the ear. Godard already implemented alienating effects of various kinds in earlier films, when having actors address the viewer directly or leave the frame while talking, for instance. One might also think of how Godard replaced the usual opening titles by an introduction variably spoken by a male and a female voice in *Le Mepris* (1963). Far more radical than his previous films, *Week End* completely turned its back on realistic narrative cinema. One intertitle cuts into a scene to suggest that the viewer is watching „a film adrift in the cosmos“. A feeling of drifting into chaotic anarchy indeed manifests itself during the almost two hours of seemingly incoherent events. The film's form and subject matter represent a radical stance on bourgeois society, countering all narrative conceptions prevalent in mainstream film at the time. Released in or shortly before 1968, *Week End* and *La Chinoise* (1967) were among Godard's most political films and even said to have anticipated the upheavals of 1968.

As some sort of epilogue, *Week End* marks the conclusion of a period in Godard's work that would stand in deep contrast to the years which immediately followed it. Both significant for this apothotic moment in Godard's life and work and anticipating its immense influence on film history, *Week End* concludes with the two titles „End of Film“, „End of Cinema“. Godard knew that from this moment on, everything would be different in the end. In fact, the film drew a dynamic chapter in the history of film to an end, since what Ruttmann's *Weekend* united technically, Godard's *Week End* uncoupled aesthetically: audio and vision.

*Looking at yourself from afar — Put yourself into brackets. Live in the exception of yourself. Well away from time.*¹⁵

If one had to complete the list of theorists and artists who challenged traditional modes of audio-visual perception, the register could

certainly go on forever. Besides Satie, Brecht and Godard the Situationist International and their practices of psychogeography and *détournement* would surely deserve another chapter on their own in it. They all have shown compelling ways to create epistemological breaks by interfering with cultural representations and commonly sensed forms of the *audio-visual*. Their work is of invaluable importance for contemporary critical art practices that aim at questioning the normative and foundational intertwinements of power, audio-visual perception and knowledge production. New critical concerns can build on their achievements and continue their project of resistance against the commodification of time, to make it visible and audible how „we are all caught within the scenario play of late capitalism.“¹⁶, as Liam Gillick puts it. I have tried to lay out that this is also an *audiovisual* scenario played out in commodified time. Inasmuch as whenever *audiovisual* representation appears to serve the fabrication of desires under the auspices of capitalism, it necessarily affects the perception of time. For time as commodity is largely structured as a simultaneity of the senses and thereby chiefly appears as *audiovisual* time: sound and image variably arranged in synchronous and asynchronous relations to form a cohesive whole.

That is, the *audiovisual* universe in which we are so well versed.



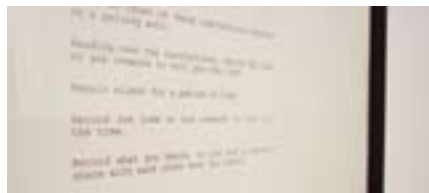
Sarah Pierce,
Sonic Pass, 2009



Mike Carremans,
Peninsula, 2009



Joris van de Moortel,
Un Jeu Graphique Pour Jouer Sans Panique, 2009



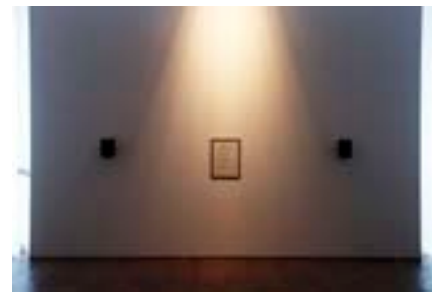
Ultra-red,
Protocols For in Front, Behind and Beyond, 2009



Jeuno JE Kim,
Cheerleading is All About Synchronicity, 2009



Gent Clapping Group,
Performance at the Opening and Finissage, 2009



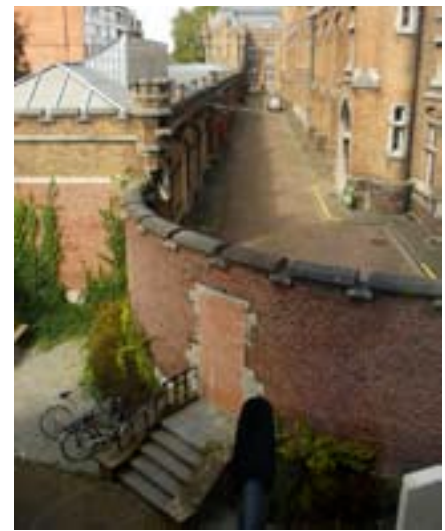
Ultra-red,
Protocols For in Front, Behind and Beyond, 2009



Joris van de Moortel,
Un Jeu Graphique Pour Jouer Sans Panique, 2009



Tisha Mukarji,
Metronome Series #2, 2009



Ultra-red,
Protocols For in Front, Behind and Beyond, 2009



Nate Harrison,
The (quick) Time Machine, 2003



Katarina Zdjelar,
The Perfect Sound, 2009



Ultra-red,
Protocols For in Front, Behind and Beyond, 2009



Brandon LaBelle,
Concert, 2004



Jeuno JE Kim,
Paris + English = Parish (2006)



Thus & Hence, Secular Rhythm, 2009

CURATOR + ARTIST = ARTIST - CURATOR?

A CONVERSATION WITH RICARDO BASBAUM

Being asked to reflect my experience during the *After All...* show for this book, I wanted to use the opportunity to write about my personal relation to curating which, if I had to define it broadly and at this very moment, bases on a potion of artistic research and collective thinking. The title **CURATOR CURATOR** already takes the institutional authority of the label curator with a grain of salt. At the same time it celebrates the poetic of its openness. Inadvertently, as I was assured by the organizers, the title also recalls an essay written by artist Ricardo Basbaum for the project *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated By an Artist*, a publication gathering diverse responses to the title statement put forward by curator Jens Hoffman in 2003. In his contribution *I Love Etc.-Artists*, Basbaum makes a somewhat ironic vocabulary distinction for which he forms various alliances between the labels artist, curator and other professions or responsibilities. The conventional curator who focuses exclusively on curating should thus be tagged as „curator-curator“, Basbaum suggests. Shortly after I was invited to contribute to this book, I met Basbaum by coincidence when he was giving an artist talk and workshop in New York. I figured that altogether this prompted more than enough reasons for a conversation with him...

JENS MAIER-ROTHE: I was interested in this conversation because I think we share a few aspects in our practices. Collective thinking and collaborative work play an important role for both of us, while they lead us to different models of blending art practice with curatorial techniques. Our different positions, you being a visual artist and me acting here as a curator interested in sound, also suit the concept of my exhibition *After All, Everything Is Different In The End*. The relation between curating and

art practice has been overly discussed in the past few years, which was in part driven by the major debate on art as a form of knowledge production. This frequently lead to a shift or even collapse of the line between the two roles with various intentions. Perhaps I should position myself in that context before we go on. I work as an artist and curator and sometimes I combine the two roles. This results in a hybrid which is often disregarded, particularly when mistaken as the one or the other. This certainly has its downsides, but can be productive as well. Collaborating and curating have always been part of my work as artist. Some artistic projects resulted in exhibition making and some group shows I curated came out as collaborative installations. About two years ago I began to research on the role of auditory experience in the art discourses. I realized very quickly that for this topic I would have to read across and experiment with extremely different practices, ideas and approaches of various artists, curators and thinkers. A mix of artistic and curatorial research seemed to be not only very productive but actually the only applicable method for this subject. Accordingly, I also had to find modes of production that would combine artistic research with exhibition making, collective thinking and writing. Following the idea that sound, as a medium and methodology, would be highly invaluable for critical art practices, I wanted to find new ways of collectively experimenting with modes of display for sound. The initial question has remained the same till today: What shapes the social and political dimensions of listening and how can critical art practice inhabit them? Concepts like sound art and audio culture still feature as first-hand alternatives to visual representation. Because listening is underrepresented in critical discourse many people attach a counter-hegemonic quality to it per se. But I think this is a simplifying way to think about it and there is more to it. I want to explore and try to articulate what else there is, but a single person should not try to answer that question. Collective thinking across all kinds of practices is necessary to avoid that this results in a discourse among experts. This is why I engage people with diverse backgrounds in conversations like this one. The majority of your projects

affects visual perception. However, your visual concepts often inspire me to rethink them in sonic terms. They seem to work in both ways of thinking. Do you see your work in any way connected to listening?

RICARDO BASBAUM: It definitely is, yes. I often work with music. I actually did a lot more earlier in the 80s, and now I try to explore it again. In certain talks or presentations, for instance, I recently mixed my speech with some sound work, but I just started experimenting with that. Somehow I have always been involved in musical contexts, I play the guitar and do sound experiments here and there. I got inspired by the work of John Cage and others, which made me think of all my speech as the sound of a singing presentation. So, what I would like to do is mix my writing with some sort of presentation that adds sound, to explore the sound of my voice, to repeat certain sentences as some sort of refrain and these kinds of things. But I've just started and I haven't done this many times so far, but it is definitely something that I want to explore more in the future.

J: What you describe reminds me of a performance piece by Robert Morris. In this piece *21.3.1964*, Morris gives a fake reading of a section from Panofsky's „Studies in Iconology“. In fact, he recorded himself reading beforehand and performs a lip-synch reading to his voice coming from tape. A very early lecture performance if you want. Actually, when you talked about your NBP project I had to think of sound all the time. You mentioned visual contamination, for example, a concept that reminds me of noise pollution and phrases like „the word is a virus“ and so on. I think contamination, in whatever sense, happens with sound very easily due to the pervasiveness of sound, and it might be interesting to compare how sound and vision contaminate our minds in different ways. I mean, sound travels in space and it links our bodies through resonant vibration. And then there is a kind of affect which you cannot really get away from because you cannot close your ears just like that. This all is very close to the notion of contamination and it makes me also think of a phrase by Arundhati Roy: „Once you see it, you cannot unsee it“, which works in

the same way like this: „Once you hear it you cannot unhear it“.

R: That is interesting. You know, I think you could say that all my work is somehow affected by music. It always contains certain aspects of music and all the situations around it. Even if I do not directly work on that I am completely aware that my work is somehow crossed by that all the time. Recently, I presented a talk and a diagram during a symposium called SITAC in Mexico. I was asked by the organizers to develop a diagram that would function as a discussion of the main topic of the symposium and as a logo for the event. In my presentation I stressed the role that rhythm plays, not only on the diagram as a drawing but also when it interacts with the audience. Here I used the expression „percussive politics“, in a way to describe that you always relate to the public and that this relation is always permeated by some sort of rhythm or layers of resonance. So, in some way most of my work has been crossed by music or topics related to that. I'm very interested in that, not only because I play guitar or because popular music is really strong in Brasil, but also because I think that curatorial work has some connection with music...

J: Music making surely is a beautiful allegory for the collective aspect of exhibition making. A curator could never do a show completely alone, she always needs to work with other people, otherwise we would call her an artist. I guess. Even though in practice curating and making art works are mostly seen as separate, collective thinking is inscribed into the essential meaning and contemporary understanding of the term curating. If it doesn't have that aspect it's something else, at least for my understanding. In that sense, I also find a curatorial aspect in your work, for example when you collect and organize other people's reactions to an object you send around, like you did with the NBP shape. Versatile like a curatorial concept it is a container for an idea in relation to which people position themselves. That is where I see a parallel to my project, with the difference that I use an abstract idea and not a material object. I propose a certain way of thinking about auditory experience, that is, that

we use the prevailing systems of knowledge production and their foremost visual paradigms to access and foster a sonic thinking instead of generating new vocabularies that then become preconditions for sound related debates. In short, there is a lot of complex visual theory out there, let's use it in the most direct way. That's what I'm trying to say, and I'm curious how people respond to that. Another difference between your project and mine is that you appear as an artist, whereas my approach is received as a curatorial technique.

R: I am not sure if I see that connection between our projects. Could you describe a bit more what you exactly do? How do you build your project that you consider it similar to mine?

J: So far, I ask various people to respond to the idea of sonic thinking in different ways, for example in conversations like this one, or in the form of a contribution to a show, in an audio essay which then exists as reading and sound piece while both can be completely different from each other, and so on. I operate with these materials in different ways, in group shows that I curate, in installations, I use them for radio broadcasts, and so on. Over time, an archive emerges from that which then shapes and continues the initial idea and creates new responses. In your NBP project you send this shape or object around and invite people to do whatever they want with it. You send an object and I circulate an idea. Two discursive processes that are very different but somehow similar.

R: The results and their presentation are also different, I guess. How do you think of the „display“ of sound in your work?

J: Sound is always not so easy to exhibit, because one source can easily dominate the space and contaminate the rest of the works. That also exists on a visual level, of course. Just think of the radical shift from a traditional hanging of paintings to Salon style exhibitions, where the visual spilling from one painting to another was the desired effect. The spilling of sound is a lot less controllable, of course,

but it is definitely an interesting thing to work with when you create an exhibition. When you participate in a group show as an artist it's different, you don't have a lot of choices then. Other artists are very often afraid that your sound might interfere with their pieces. They are extremely reluctant to an unplanned simultaneity of sounds and images, whereas they are more likely to trust in the sequence that a show builds in people's mind, however planned or not that might be or even can be in the end. When you curate a show with a lot of sound works, a lot of things happen accidentally. That can be a good and a bad thing. For example, I did a project where I considered the whole exhibition to be one big sound sculpture. That worked perfectly well with the concept in that case where the show was about sound recycling. But it can also be problematic when you can't predict the behaviour of the single works, simply because some of them are too long to try it out in the space. Then you have to create some sort of hierarchy from the start.

R: Do you consider yourself as a composer when you organize those sounds?

J: Not so much, actually, because I want to get away from the notion of music and toward a more general understanding of listening. But the comparison works in a certain way, of course, since an exhibition organizes its space and the sensorial experiences within it. Either way, there is always room for accessing a space in a different way, so if you want to use that trope it would have to be an open composition. I see myself more as a researcher and what happens in my shows often surprises me as well. I learn from that myself every time, which is totally ok I think, because how sound is received in exhibitions still needs to be tested out and treated in an experimental way. And as I said before, sometimes it's almost unpredictable how the works sound together in one specific space. What about trying out some of your projects with a sound instead of a shape or visual element? Did you ever consider doing that? Would it even be possible, you think?

R: In this project with the NBP specific shape,

I prefer to use that expression. I see myself much more as a visual artist, even if I had been doing many multimedia projects at that time. With that object I had several experiences using sound as well. It has been used by a composer in Argentina for a concert, by a Turkish musician from Kassel who recorded sessions where he used it as a percussion instrument, or by a group of kids from Mangueira during a participative action in Rio de Janeiro in Brasil who also played drums on it. So, this object has been used in different ways to produce sound. But in the 1980s, before I was working with this shape, I worked in another project with a logo which looked like an eye. I spread this image on stickers to interfere with other objects and the architecture in public space, and there was a moment in 1987 when I did a large scale project with this eye during a residency at the university of Campinas in São Paulo. I invited the musician Sergio Basbaum to translate that image into some sort of sound logo, and he composed a short piece that lasted only seven seconds. This piece was then played from time to time at a certain point on the University campus, where I invited art and dance students to perform later on the same day. I haven't tried this with the NBP specific shape, to create a sound equivalent or anything like that. In the 1980s I collaborated with Alexandre Dacosta in a performance duo. We composed short popular songs using nicknames to appear as a different characters. In these songs we made comments on our work, on the art scene of Brasil in general, as some sort of art criticism. These songs also worked as some kind of memory devices, because popular music has this very direct effect on people's memories. There is also one song in which I comment on my NBP project, but I haven't released that one actually, I'm still working on it.

J: I guess, the material aspects make it difficult as well to replace the object with a sound...

R: I mean in reference to what you mentioned about your project earlier, the distinction between vision and sound doesn't really apply here. The object I use here is strongly material, it has a weight, it is made of metal, you put

your hands on it, while you cannot touch the sound, it's much more purely sensorial and immaterial. I almost never use the logo or that specific shape as an image only, it is always embedded in the context of an installation or situation. It doesn't make much sense for me to play around with the image itself. Anyway, sound is so much something that you don't touch, unless you are really sensitive and the frequencies are so low that they resonate in your body.

J: I would say it's actually the other way round, sound touches you and you are not touching it. Let me give you an example that explains how I imagine the similarity between logo and sound. In one of your installations you placed the visual image of the NBP shape on a wall in the middle of a gallery space. The space itself is divided by many little obstacles on the floor. When people navigate through that space they have to look down on the floor to not step on one of the objects. In between they always look up to oversee the rest of the space while their eyes always go back to the image of the shape first. That way, the logo becomes imprinted in their minds, it remains as an idea in their head and will further on shape their thinking, maybe even long after they left the gallery. Isn't that similar to what you said about popular music?

R: There is more to it. The image is some sort of virus that circulates in our body. You're infected but you won't find it in your blood. It is there in the symbolic layers, in the image faction of your brain. The plot of the work would be that there is no place in your body where this image will stop, no space where this particle fits perfectly, and in a way it is a lack of space that you open in your body and which then forces you to think differently. It is some sort of suggestion or involvement, and I cannot do anything else than just that. The other half of the work, let's say, you have to complete yourself. I want to produce some sort of transformation, but what kind of transformation exactly I cannot say, I cannot write the program. I mean, this is up to you. Of course, I believe that I can trigger that process more or less, but I can't tell you where it's going to lead

exactly. But I also believe that it will lead you into a transformation that means an enhancement of your thought or a provocation in your thinking process, making you feel much more aware of where you are, more alive let's say. But actually I leave a gap, some kind of open space. I keep it open because I believe that other aspects of the work are unknown to me, the openness is part of the poetic of the work. It plays together with other references, other artists, other topics, and so on.

J: For the „After All...“ show the sound activist collaborative Ultra-red did an installation, in which two microphones transfer the sound from the outside to the exhibition space. In fact, the sound comes from a part of the building which is used for military intelligence and medical training. All windows in the exhibition space are covered by walls, only a glowing stream of light crowns the walls. Centered between the two speakers that fill the space with sound, there is a text tells you how to interact with the listening situation in three steps, basically to listen in front, behind and beyond the wall. It's not even necessary to follow the steps, just reading the instructions and thinking about the situation already has the effect that you carry the idea with you, and you will remember it and rethink it in other listening situations later on, at home, in public spaces, and so on. I find it fascinating that a pedagogical gesture, or proposal, can have such an effect on your thinking and maybe even your perception. I think the effect you are talking about is closely related to that, it also works on a pedagogical level to some extent.

R: I agree, both projects are about making you aware of where you are, about taking you directly to the present time, to the here and now, which are the conditions of perception. Somewhere on your website you mention Rudolf Arnheim, who was completely into Gestalt-theory, or even phenomenology, and very aware of the senses. And of course, this is a very important topic, I agree with you, because when you are confronted with these instructions in your example or the obstacles in my installation, when you are taken to the here and now, to the specific site, it means that you

are getting aware of sensorial layers. Because all sensorial experience is based on a radical presence. You have sensorial experience only in the very present moment, everything that comes later is only representation, and it is a very unique moment. I see this as a connection between the two examples. What also plays an important role in my work is that this aspect of sensorial relation to art works is a very strong issue for Brazilian contemporary art. It started in the late fifties with the first steps of Lygia Clark and others, and from that moment the idea of phenomenology to relate sensorially to a work of art became very strong. So, I was confronted with that heritage somehow. If you worked here you were confronted with that. But I was also trying to update that for myself through reading the work of Foucault and Deleuze. They somehow related to phenomenology since they believed in the sensorial and gave a lot of significance to affect and direct contact. But they were also critical of phenomenology because they thought it based on a kind of fiction of purity that doesn't exist anymore in terms of having direct contact with the work only through the senses. So, Foucault introduced discourse at the same moment as we still talked about sensorial contact, because he believed that there is nothing before knowledge, no moment before words as phenomenologists liked to believe. This was an anti-foundational concept. According to Foucault, there is no space before the sensorial and discourse begin, and that was very important for me and my NBP project, because I was kind of free to organize both layers at the same time; all the discourse around the work and all the material or sensorial aspects, hitting two birds with one stone, so to say.

J: Did other Brazilian artists do that at the same time? Was there some kind of movement or were you the only one?

R: There were a few people working on similar ideas or in resonance with that, people with whom I am in dialog, some art historians or even art critics, but it's not so transparent, let's say those topics as such, but in terms of because the discourse here between people in the art world can be sometimes kind of too

much based on more daily direct issues and not so much in terms of theory etc. Sometimes we feel kind of lacking more dialog in such terms. But yes, I would say there are people here who work on and share the same register if you want. Deleuze is very influential here somehow, there are groups working with his concepts, studying his writings and doing related film and video works. I published a text in a reader on the reception of Conceptual Art, it was published in 2006 by the MIT and the Generali Foundation, perhaps you are aware of that book, it's called *Art After Conceptual Art* and was edited by Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann. My essay in it is based on those assumptions more or less, to try not to separate the sensorial and the conceptual, what usually the common sense or even some readings of art history try to put apart, what is conceptual art and what is more directed and linked to the experience with the body. I think it's important to break this. Now it's more the common sense to put together all those conceptual aspects that are organized through discourse but also through the sensorial aspects that make any art work so provocative.

J: Well, I think sound would be a very interesting medium to explore that, taken as a methodology to go more into that direction. Last but not least because sound triggers completely different behaviour among audiences, mainly due to its immediate, immaterial and ephemeral appearance.

R: Yes, I think you're right, especially in the way you and your peers play with that. Sound is very challenging and for sure it puts together very directly conceptual aspects and a kind of bodily sensorial reception.

J: This conversation will appear in a publication that documents an exhibition series called *Curator Curator*. In *I Love Etc. - Artists*, your entry in Jens Hoffmann's book, you suggest a semantic differentiation between the various forms of professional engagement in art, for which you use the expression „curator-curator“. I think, it wouldn't make too much sense if I tried to summarize your statement, so I suggest that our readers look it up online*. My question to you

would be: Do you think something has changed since 2003? The last Documenta in 2007, for instance. Did it show for you that Hoffmann's statement is still valid or maybe even more than it was before? What would you like to add if you were asked to comment on it today?

R: I think the statement is still valid, absolutely. However, a lot has happened since then. Shifting between curatorial and artistic positions or thinking of them as going together has become a lot more natural. Also, a lot has changed in terms of how the two roles come together in person. Here I think that artists are now more aware of their curatorial role, while many curators still aren't conscious of all of their artistic qualities when creating some kind of big installation work with a show, for instance. In general they don't assume that artistic interference as much as they should, I think. Some curators can be very manipulative and they sometimes really manipulate the artists' work. A certain negotiation should always take place between the two, but sometimes it simply doesn't. Either way, with regard to these roles it's interesting to see that both artist and curator share, or can share, similar concerns. Very often we see these roles taken apart institutionally, that is, by the institutions or the institutional networks that create them as separate positions. This separation is not based on any given nature of both roles. If they want they can share many issues. So, I think my response to Jens Hoffmann's statement still makes sense and I wouldn't change today what I said six years ago.

J: Do you think that this blurring of lines between curator and artist has made questions of authorship and representation more complicated and problematic in the past years?

R: Authorship should always be shared somehow. But if you are aware of what is attributed to each of the positions it should be clear as well what each one has contributed to the collaborative situation. I made many exhibition experiences with different curators who take on this role of a dominant organizer and manipulate some of the art works. But if the artist and the curator then sit together and

talk, they have a chance to find a common agreement for that. When there is room for conversation this negotiation can really happen. Too often the institutional profile does not provide this kind of conversation, as I've seen in Documenta for instance, mainly due to the scale of the shows and the time constraints during the realization process. In the case of Documenta 12 the curator really did some very strong interventions in the spaces, like painting the walls and other things. My experience has shown though that when both artist and curator have the possibility to sit down and discuss their collaboration they mostly find a point and the artists often accept this intervention of the curator, because then it makes sense to them. But when this conversation does not take place the artists feel like the curator invaded the space and awkward situations are the result. However, even if they have a conversation they sometimes don't find an agreement, and maybe then the artist should just leave. So, I think if you are in a show with a curator then there should be a conversation between you and that person, otherwise it doesn't make sense. If there is no dialogue, no common ground, I mean, what are you doing in that exhibition as an artist anyway? Unless it's completely formal or conventional and market oriented.

J: Some Documenta 12 artists like James Coleman even rejected the color schemes and insisted on having their own space. But I think the last Documenta also took this problematic kind of curatorial intervention onto the next level, that of modes of display. The audience wasn't properly informed about the formal decisions made by the curators, which made it extremely difficult for the average visitor to distinguish what came from the artists and what from the curators. Perhaps this was even intended and formed part of the show concept and its modes of display. I would say, there are at least three levels on which this problem can occur in an exhibition project. One level is the collaboration between the two roles while the exhibition is produced; how that collaboration is then represented in the exhibition is another level; the third one is the way in which the documentation of the project represents that collaboration. And I think on the third level

the question of authorship cannot but create a conflict. I see that as a big issue in my work, for example. Not only because people always want to see images even if I am talking about art works which in fact mainly or exclusively operate in sound. It's more the fact that I always take on some kind of authorship when documenting an exhibition afterwards that I find worrying, an authorship that is not given to me as a curator. In the least problematic case what I show is the result of a balanced exchange between me and others, but very often I merely represent other people's work. I try to deal with these questions when I document my exhibition projects on my website.

R: The lines are completely blurring, that's right. I think the curatorial lines should be definitely made more transparent for the audience because, as you said, in my case the green carpet in the installation was not my decision, I wanted another material. Actually, I wanted to play with some artificial grass, but the curator convinced me after several meetings that I should use this carpet. He was very convincing in his arguments and I accepted, but the audience doesn't see that later on. These examples reveal that those curatorial gestures were made somehow invisible. I think, curators should make these gestures clear for the audience and find ways to train people to see these things. Why not do this in the same way as catalog texts or labels inform you about the concept and materials of an art work? I also like to use words like curatorial installation or curatorial sculpture because as a curator you organize the works of other artists in a certain way for specific reasons, or you even organize the space itself in some way, you may decide to paint the walls. But whatever you do those gestures should be made transparent for the audience, they should be labeled or attributed, and not just become invisible. This is something that could be really thought about. For instance, in the 7th Mercosul Biennale (2009) the two main curators, one curator and one artist, nominated only artists as curators for all sections of the show. There was a sound project, a public interventions project and so on, and they were all organized and created by artists, even the information system. There were four or five big

warehouses, each one for a different project by one of the curators, and one of them was really radical in terms of curatorial intervention: Laura Lima, the curator, covered the space with sand, several tons of sand, and all the artists had to work with that intervention; video artists, painters, performance artists, all of them agreed to display their works in that space. But it was completely transparent who did what and in a way you could read these warehouses as big curatorial installations. Of course, some art works were more and others less embedded in the curatorial context. With some of the pieces you even had difficulties to identify them as art works in the environment. However, the big difference to Documenta 12 is that here they created a system of information which made it very clear who did what, and you could actually enjoy it more because of that.

J: I think the idea you just mentioned is actually very interesting, to create a detailed register that traces the decision making process of an exhibition. That could be a project in itself. A documentation of how artists and curators collaborated, a list of all the steps taken by the different people involved. In that context, and along with the example you just gave, I'm also wondering what it actually means to engage the term 'curator' or 'artist' to define someone's role in the whole process. Wouldn't it be better to just name the people and literally say what they did, instead of attributing a title that adheres to certain conventions within the division of labour? I know this is a provoking idea since it somehow questions the profession of the artist, but that's not my point...

R: I think it's important to keep attributing some specific work to the artist, to somehow reserve some space of mobility. But we can also enact the roles in a way that they blend into each other. If we are speaking institutionally, it's interesting to differentiate the roles or rather the responsibilities with respect to the specific kind of collaborative work. As an artist the convention of calling something an art work already has a function and you have to take the responsibility for this act, in terms of what its meaning is or can be in the future, how it relates to the audience, what conceptual

layers you provide in a particular piece etc. This responsibility should be taken by someone and in the same way the curator has to take responsibilities when organizing an exhibition with different people. As an artist at Documenta 12 I could only think about my work, I had no idea how the exhibition was planned as a whole. The only ones who could think about it as one giant piece were the curators. I could only see my work, I didn't have access to all the information. There were clearly different responsibilities and we could see the different roles. I think this is interesting for certain contexts, but at some point it's also important to consciously enact the roles in a way that they blend, when in a certain moment and for one particular gesture it would be more interesting to mix the roles. It can be productive to see how we can take the one for the other in a certain situation. So, I think sometimes it's necessary to assume certain responsibilities with regard to the art work and its conventions and sometimes the roles need to be exchanged or mixed.

J: I was thinking more about the terms themselves and how we use them. For me these words, and that includes other terms like the critic to some extent as well, only serve as placeholders in most discussions. The terms themselves don't mean anything but the discourse around them is what's interesting. I'm particularly curious about their overlaps and grey zones because they can stimulate new debates, as you just said, about how artistic practices and their modes of display shift, have shifted or will change in the future. The curator Raimundas Malasauskas made a great remark during a symposium in Rotterdam earlier this year. He said that curatorial discipline is probably the one that is mostly affected by the concept of always changing the model without actually trying it. I think he really brought it to the point. The label curator can mean a lot of things, what you do in practice and how you position yourself in relation to that term is what makes the difference; what is behind your use of the term and how that relates to the art world and other social contexts. Speaking of overlaps, your NBP project, for example, is a large participatory project and obviously has a

curatorial component as well, no?

R: I agree that these labels are empty words unless you really practice them. This project you just mentioned, „Would you like to participate in an artistic experience?“, indeed involves many people and I feel I'm some sort of administrator of the process. I have to contact different people, I organize gestures, I make it all happen and somehow I create this structure to present everything publicly, which is the website. So, I guess you could almost call that a curatorial project, yes.

J: In your text *I Love Etc.-Artists*, you write: „When artists curate, they cannot avoid mixing their artistic investigations with the proposed curatorial project: for me, this is the strength and singularity they bring to curating.“ Is this something you also try to do as an artist?

R: Yes, in some way. As artist I have been working as a critic as well, writing reviews, introduction texts for catalogs, and I also did curatorial projects. Having the chance to work with these different roles at certain given moments, it was clear to me that I didn't want to be just a critic or a curator. I knew that if I would do those things, writing or organizing exhibitions, I should do them in a different way. A way that brings those activities closer to my preoccupations as an artist. I can only write about artists who I feel have some connection to the kind of work I do myself, for instance. It became clear for me that there should be a difference between an artist who writes, an artist who curates and a curator-curator. Whichever role they take on artists should mix their poetic preoccupations and the issues of their work with the preoccupations of the critical or curatorial gesture. I would not like to do a curatorial project that brings me far away from what I do as an artist. It would not be so interesting, I would not have much to say. But of course, in the same way curators can also mix their own investigation as researchers, as anthropologists, as philosophers and so on with the curatorial statement.

J: As I mentioned at the beginning, curatorial and artistic research are quite similar practices

for me, if not identical in some cases. I see artistic research as essential for my curatorial work while exhibition making can both serve as a research tool and result in collaborative art works, too. Thank you very much for this conversation, Ricardo.

R: Thank you, too.

New York, Rio de Janeiro, 6 Nov 2009

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