

Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz: *Exquisite Corpse: collaborative drawing with Judith Hopf, Raqs Media Collective, Tobias Rehberger, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Anton Vidokle, and Eyal Weizman, Showroom London, 2008*

INSTITUTION AS MEDIUM – TOWARDS A CRITICAL ARCHITECTURE OF INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Dorothee Richter and Axel John Wieder

Recent years were marked by a growing interest in the forms and formats of presentations and exhibitions. In artistic production as well as in theoretical and historical reflection, the attention increasingly shifted towards how artistic practices are conferred with meaning through their presentation and mediation (from aspects of interior design or labeling, to questions of accessibility), and not only through the works themselves. Especially through examples of exhibitions or displays of museum collections, historical research analyzed the interplay of artistic works and their presentation, which ultimately aimed to connect art and its contextualization within a political sphere. Seminal contributions in this field included the studies of Tony Bennett, Mieke Bal and Mary Anne Stansiszewski.¹ For many artists working today, consideration of the presentation form is a fundamental aspect of their work, which is often based on and reflected through references to historical examples of exhibition design.

Most frequently, the investigation of presentation strategies in art has centered around the medium of the exhibition. Alternatively, artistic practices often make use of interdisciplinary techniques and diversified presentation forms such as lectures, film presentations, and interventions. These practices are no longer contained within the medium of the exhibition itself, rather they place new demands on the profile of art institutions. The expansion of presentation formats can perhaps be best explained through the growing interest in forms of artistic mediation described above. The analytical criteria for a discussion of production and presentation conditions of artistic practice, which were established through 'institutional critique' since the 1970s, have brought the fields of administration, mediation, and interpretation within the perimeter of artistic practice. In a transpositional sense, critical analysis has consequently led to an expansion of the competences of artists themselves. The extension of formats of presentation might also be a result of an increasing evaluatory pressure on public

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cultural institutions, which are expected to have the greatest possible effect through their cultural measures. This includes sociopolitical goals, like the implementation of educational programs in museums and other art institutions, as well as aspects of advertising and city marketing. In many cases, individual exhibitions are no longer the primary focus of a cultural institution, rather the development of a clear and identifiable institutional profile that is made visible through graphic design, a specific use of language, and innovative presentation forms.

In relation to these current developments, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart organized in collaboration with the Postgraduate Program in Curating, Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), a conference responding to the question, to what extent an inquiry into forms of art presentation must include a discussion about the design of the exhibition's institutional framework and its recent transformation. In light of the ambivalent character of this transformation, its basis in institutional critique as well as various marketing contexts, it is clear that neither a repudiation nor an unconditional embrace would be an appropriate reaction. An important recent effort to examine various institutional frameworks was made for example by the reader *Mögliche Museen/Possible Museums* edited by Charles Esche and Barbara Steiner. With a tendency towards historical and more established examples, the book examines museums in relation to their mediation formats as well as their material implementation in architecture and institutional structures.² Though the program at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart also included the word 'architecture' in its title – *towards a critical architecture of institutions* –, the meaning suggests not so much a built structure, as the complex material as well as immaterial structural framework that defines the fields of work of an institution. The goal of the discussion was to imagine different realizations of such architectures and to discuss both their critical relation to artistic interests as well as to the changing social infrastructures.

An essential problem discussed by the lecturers and audience at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart was the question of how to define an art institution, and to locate the border to its being a 'non-institution'. To what extent does the discussion about institutionalized forms of art presentation shield alternative models which simultaneously exist, and possibly produce more interesting results? The concept of an institution can be understood in the sense of a museum, a Kunsthalle, or art organization, which is subsidized by the state or a state-supported private organization. By closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that so-called 'Off-Spaces', which are also often supported with public funds, are most times closer to official institutions than one might first suspect. If one uses the term 'institution', as Peter Bürger introduced it, as a space of social groups, defined by a relative autonomy as well as certain practices and conventions, then it becomes obvious that the anti-institutional organization and the traditional institution have much in common.³ The conference in Stuttgart discussed the movement of certain practices from the margin of art institution to its center. This movement was also reflected in the biographies of participants, who maintain alternative methods in museum contexts, like Jacob Fabricius in the Malmö Konsthall and Joanna Mytkowska in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw.

In the nineties, many institutions began to push the borders of the institution and its rules. Maria Lind, for example, installed a group of curators at the Kunstverein München as so-called *Sputniks* and thus expanded the curatorial authorship. Curators like Charles Esche achieved a wide discursive audience through extremely provocative exhibition titles at the Rooseum in Malmö. At Künstlerhaus in Stuttgart

and Künstlerhaus Bremen, or the Shedhalle in Zurich, projects were combined with lectures and film programs, theater productions and art exhibitions were presented parallel as complementary practices, related to socially relevant themes, which attracted a young, politically motivated audience. In Vienna, Stella Rollig, in her position as the state curator, founded The Depot in 1994 as an open archive and a space for discussion.

The new forms of transgressional curatorial practice that were discussed in Stuttgart showed that the breaking of museum walls was not only a symbolic rupture, rather also a direct action: art sought alternative spaces and new audiences. Jacob Fabricius' project presented exhibits that the curator made as a sandwich-man on the front and back side of his body at a busy traffic intersection in Los Angeles. As museum director, he started this experiment in the institution, where museum employees carried works of art and traveled through the city as hitchhikers or rode public transportation. Joanna Mytkowska also discussed ideas about possible procedures of contemporary museums with a presentation on the project space in the former studio of artist Edward Krasinski. The studio is located in a somewhat run-down apartment building, high above the city of Warsaw. Also Kino Apparatom introduced the relevance of art films with the possibility of non-museal locations of presentation: in a garage, desolate buildings, in storage units. These are highly interesting, personally invested infractions. In very specific ways, these practices oppose an all-encompassing decontextualization and a tendency to glorify the museum. Nicolaus Hirsch discussed how broadly 'exhibition design' can be conceived in the service of another perception of art, as 'exhibition design' it dissolves and becomes a vessel for activities, for the access to new media and for the manufacture of other spaces. Entangled with the institution, art remains selective, for example at the Manifesta, part of the intention becomes to make this visible and therefore anchored in a cultural memory. The medium of the museum as instrument for political efficacy? Despite all skepticism towards an incommensurate romanticism of the potentials of art, Oliver Marchart argues: "What Adorno says about philosophy – it is the most serious, but also not so serious –, can also be said about biennials and other sectors of the field of art, just the other way around: they are the most unserious, but also not so unserious. Because together with the politics of other art institutions, like the exhibition and collection politics of museums and foundations, the politics of 'biennialization' play directly to the politics of politics."⁴ The growth of nations, colonial pillage, technological advance, racism: are all entwined in exhibitions, as Marchart argues. With allusion to Gramsci and Althusser, Marchart points out that all forms of governance as well as its dismantlement are accompanied by cultural struggles for visibility and the social imprint of images. Perhaps this is how critique with the medium of the art institution (as concrete place and organization) began. Thus if we see exhibitions and art projects as an institutional device that makes the approach of certain notions of a wider public sphere possible, then it depends on which way the public will be addressed, how knowledge circulates, and which social spaces – as well as institutions – will be created.

1. Tony Bennett: *The Birth of the Museum. History, Theory, Politics*, London/New York 1995; Mieke Bal: *Kulturanalyse* (especially the chapter *Sagen, Zeigen, Prahlen*), Frankfurt a. M. 2002; Mary Anne Staniszewski: *The Power of Display. A History of Exhibition-Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, London/Cambridge 1998.
2. Barbara Steiner, Charles Esche (Ed.): *Mögliche Museen* (Jahresring 54. Jahrbuch für moderne Kunst), Cologne 2007.
3. Peter Bürger: *Die Theorie der Avantgarde*, Frankfurt a. M. 1974.
4. Oliver Marchart: *Hegemonie im Kunstfeld, Die documenta Ausstellungen dX, d11, d12 und die Politik der Biennialisierung*, Cologne 2008.

INSTITUTION BUILDING AS CURATORIAL PRACTICE

Nikolaus Hirsch

What defines the contemporary art institution? Who are the authors in the construction of institutional space? Is it possible to built an institution while producing art? In times in which artists create buildings, architects contribute to art exhibitions, and curators act like artists, it seems to be possible to rethink the classical role models, and thus to renegotiate the relation between art production, the exhibition and its spatial envelope.

In the following I present four projects that I have been working on in the past years: firstly European Kunsthalle, secondly *Exquisite Corpse* which is a contribution to the 'Curating Architecture' program at Goldsmiths College in London, thirdly *unitednationsplaza* in Berlin, and lastly *Cybermohalla Hub* in Delhi. All these works can be understood as attempts that not only concentrate on the spatial presentation of art but that understand the institution as a medium in its own right.

European Kunsthalle

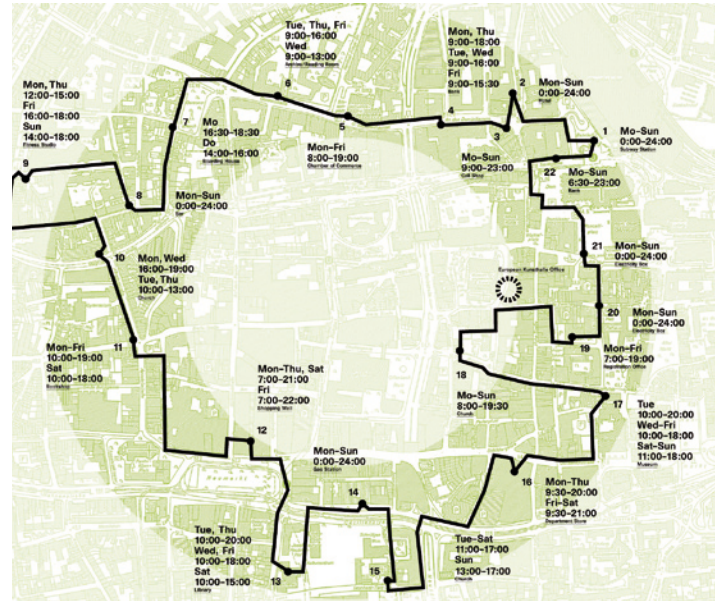


Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz, Markus Miessen, Matthias Görlich:
European Kunsthalle

Spaces of Production is a study that conceptualizes and practically applies spatial scenarios for the European Kunsthalle. Commissioned by Nicolaus Schafhausen, the developed models and strategies were tested in the European Kunsthalle's founding phase between 2005 and 2007. That is to say that this investigation was not the result of purely theoretical or conceptual considerations, but rather an integral part of the preliminary practice of the European Kunsthalle's first two years. In this respect, the result is an applied research – an iterative study informed by the resonance between theory and practice. *Spaces of Production* began as a survey of contemporary institutions in Europe. In addition to the more traditional typologies of galleries, museums, and kunsthallen, the investigation also included institutions that have consciously avoided conventional institutional models, in order to promote them with caution, undermine them, give them new meaning or combine them in different ways. At this juncture it became clear that art institutions have increasingly become spaces of production.

The core of the research appeared to be the increasingly contradictory relation between the institution's physical-spatial configuration and its programmatic approach.

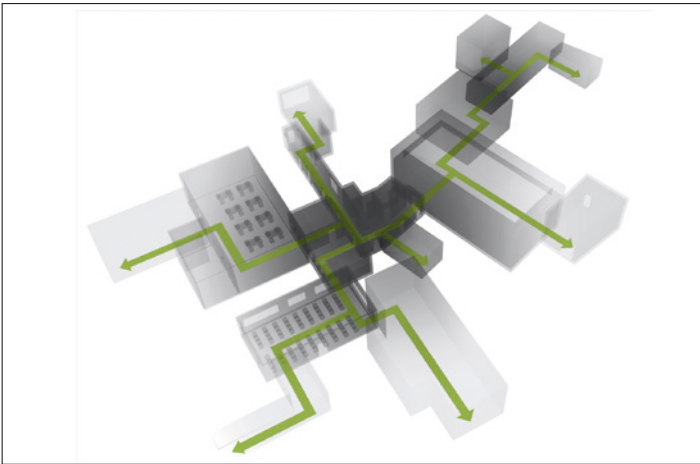
A comparison of analyzed institutions opened up a new field of consideration informed by the contradictory concepts of 'stability' and 'instability.' Institutions identified with the traditional kunsthalle model define a highly controlled environment: a hermetically closed and neutral interior in a stable architectural framework. Variants of use stand in direct relation to the intrinsic possibilities of architectural elements such as wall, ceiling, and floor. Spatially unstable institutions, on the other hand, aim for a fusion with their urban everyday surroundings. They are defined by flexible, dynamic borders and temporarily adopt existing territories and spatial vacancies in the city, at the risk, however, of turning into event-based activities under the premises of neo-liberal deregulation.



Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz, Markus Miessen, Matthias Görlich:
Models for Tomorrow: Cologne, 2007

The approach developed by *Spaces of Production* attempts to constructively rethink and recombine the concepts of 'stability' and 'instability' by gradually implementing a model for action that inextricably merges architecture with curatorial agency. The point of departure in terms of developing a specific and distinctive concept was finding an architectural strategy that guarantees both physical presence on a specific site and temporal changeability. Stable and unstable factors thus become the parameters for a permanent yet growing and accumulative institution.

Analyses conducted for this study showed that a kunsthalle is a structure in constant flux. An investigation of hundred-, ten-, and one-year cycles illustrates that even those art institutions that were planned as stable buildings are subject to constant structural transformation processes, not taken into consideration in most of the current operational models for kunsthallen. For the future European Kunsthalle framework, such realities could imply that permanent negotiation between stability and instability is not understood as a problem or deviation from an ideal condition, but instead as a chance to develop a new typology: a growing kunsthalle that takes the changed artistic, social, and economic conditions at face value, using them as a point of departure for its spatial-architectural strategy.



Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz, Markus Miessen, Matthias Görlich:
Development scenario for a growing art institution

The time-based, growing art institution emerges from the sequential putting-together of individual segments. This approach breaks with the assumption that an art institution's plan – with its exhibition spaces, offices, storage facilities, restrooms, auditorium, café, etc. – forms a coherent entity that is designed by a single author. Instead it divides the space into autonomous yet related components. The result is a network of possible paths starting from a beginning and branching out in a number of different directions. The role models are opened up – and who knows: eventually the artist might act as architect, the curator as artist, and the architect as curator.

Exquisite Corpse – A Contribution to "Curating Architecture"

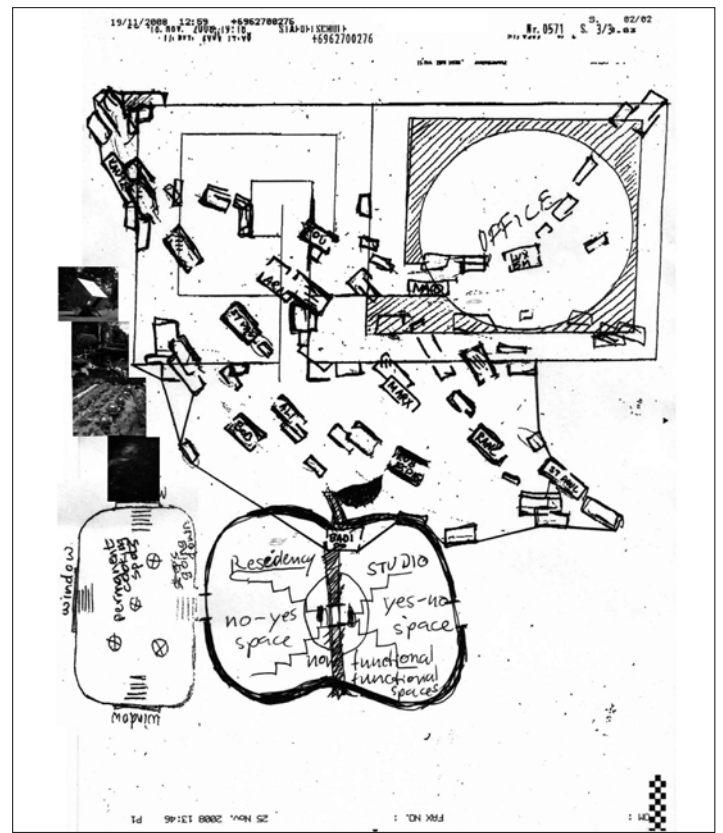


Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz: *Exquisite Corpse* (with Judith Hopf, Rags Media Collective, Tobias Rehberger, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Anton Vidokle, and Eyal Weizman), Showroom London, 2008

The renegotiation of authorship and its traditional role models refers to the tendency of more and more artists working on infrastructural architectures: Liam Gillick's *Conference Room* for the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Monica Bonvicini's *Toilet*, Dragset & Elmgreen's *galleries* (better known as *Powerless Structures*), or Anton Vidokle's and Julieta Aranda's *Martha Rosler Library*. Yet paradoxically it is still broadly assumed that the spatial-physical entity of the institution must be coherent physical structures conceived by single authors, namely architects.

Commissioned by Goldsmiths College London and its Curating Architecture program we investigated new models of institution building, which use the reality of multiple authorship as a

trigger, expose it and seek to find appropriate architectonic, programmatic and organizational languages. Based on an understanding of 'institution building' as an accumulative and open-ended process, the project was developed as a sequence of autonomous yet related programmatic components.

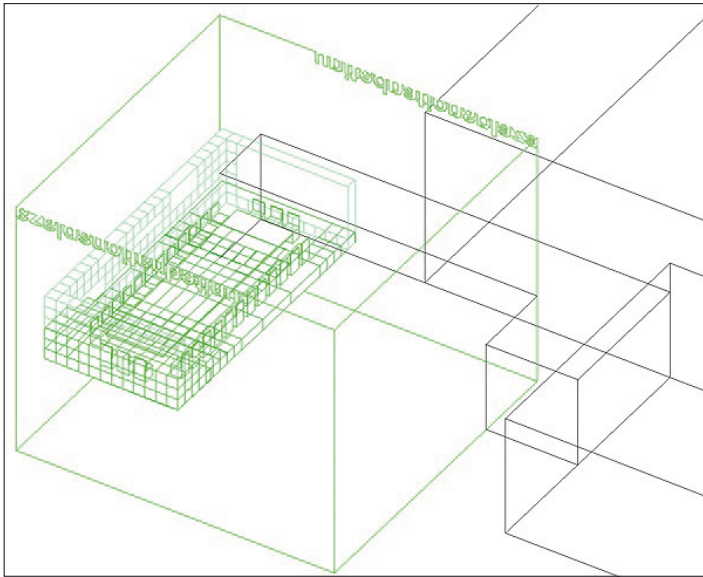


Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz: *Exquisite Corpse* (with Judith Hopf, Rags Media Collective, Tobias Rehberger, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Anton Vidokle, and Eyal Weizman), Showroom London, 2008

We invited Judith Hopf, Rags Media Collective, Tobias Rehberger, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Anton Vidokle, and Eyal Weizman to participate in producing a collaborative drawing, which evolved in a series of fax exchanges. In each step of the accumulative process, one spatial element of an imaginary art institution was added: gallery, office, auditorium, café, cinema/lecture theatre, radio station/sound space, artist residency, library/archive. Each participant was asked to comply with a set of five simple instructions:

1. Please draw – in plan – one of the six components of an imaginary institution cited above.
2. Each drawing should demarcate clearly the perimeter 'walls' of the space and may include details such as furniture and/ or written instructions on the materiality of the walls, the positioning of windows etc.
3. Please specify the position of a 'door' or 'transitional element' which will connect the space to the next; this will determine in which direction the drawing will grow on the paper; again please place all instructions inside the 'walls' of your drawing.
4. You are free to determine size and shape of your space, but please bear in mind that all seven components will need to fit on one standard sized fax paper.
5. Please complete your drawing as soon as possible and then fax the result to us as well as to the next participant.

Curating Architecture is an initiative from the Department of Art, Goldsmiths, University of London, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, The Henry Moore Foundation and The Japan Foundation. *Curating Architecture* at the Showroom included works by Rem Koolhaas, Angela Feireira, Walid Raad, Nikolaus Hirsch, and Philipp Misselwitz, and was curated by Andrea Phillips and Edgar Schmitz.

Exhibition as School: *unitednationsplaza*

Nikolaus Hirsch, Michel Müller: *Conference Room for unitednationsplaza*, 2007

unitednationsplaza was an exhibition as school. Structured as a program in Berlin, it involved collaboration with approximately 60 artists, writers, theorists and a wide range of audiences for a period of one year. It was organized by Anton Vidokle in collaboration with Liam Gillick, Boris Groys, Martha Rosler, Walid Raad, Jalal Toufic, Nikolaus Hirsch, Natascha Sadr Haghigian and Tirdad Zolghadr.



Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller: *Conference Room for unitednationsplaza*, 2007

The spatial concept of *unitednationsplaza* addresses the ambivalent character of the contemporary art institution. Is it a gallery, a theatre, a cinema or an auditorium? Being interested in this hybrid condition, we developed a lightweight modular system – the material is a compressed white and yellowish foam – that can be reconfigured into different formats: from an exhibition into a seminar, from a video-screening into a performance, from a lecture into hybrid and unpredictable arrangements. Thus, *unitednationsplaza* is a space in which institutional models themselves are displayed. A model always works as a kind of display of itself. In this sense, display is unavoidable. In a certain way this reflects an approach that understands a work of architecture as both a theoretical model and a physical space. *unitednationsplaza* both a model and a real building in Berlin.

Institution Building as Knowledge Production: *The Cybermohalla Hub* in Delhi

Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller, *Cybermohalla network* in Delhi

Initiated by the research institute Sarai/CSDS and Ankur – Society for Alternatives in Education, the project involves approximately 70 young practitioners, who are engaged with their urban contexts through various media such as broadsheet, radio, installation, wall writing, books and blogs. Mohalla in Hindi and Urdu translates as neighborhood. The *Cybermohalla project* deploys the meaning of the word mohalla in its sense of alleys and corners, of relatedness and concreteness, and as a means for talking one's 'place' in the city as well as in cyberspace.

A Hybrid Typology

The institution becomes the medium of the work. As a hybrid of school, archive, community centre and gallery the *Cybermohalla Hub* is both a load-bearing structure and a display for the cultural production of the Cybermohalla Ensemble in Ghevra, including the archive of the destroyed lab in Nangla. The hybrid condition of the project can be seen in the wider context of our institutional work such as the *Bockenheimer Depot Theater* (in collaboration with William Forsythe), the European Kunsthalle in Cologne, *unitednationsplaza* (with Anton Vidokle), and currently the studio and workshop structure for Rirkrit Tiravanija's and Kamin Lertchaiprasert's *The Land*. Renegotiating and recombining diverse typologies, those projects explore the role of cultural institutions as political and social agencies in the contemporary city.



Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller, *Cybermohalla Hub*, Manifesta 7, 2008

As an expansion of this previous work, we are developing the *Cybermohalla Hub* as a material process that refers to extremely diverse past, present and future conditions of culture: from the destruction of the previous lab in the

squatter settlement of Nangla Manchi, which was demolished as a result of Delhi's urban cleansing plan, to a workshop in Delhi, to a collaborative construction process within an academic school model in Stuttgart, to a temporary life span in an exhibition in Bolzano and Vienna to an accumulative construction process in Delhi.



Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller, *Cybermohalla Hub*, TB A-21, Vienna, 2008

The physical structure is many things in one: a hybrid of school, community centre, archive, and gallery. An evolving institution, both programmatically and physically from one to two to three and four storeys, it is never finished. On a parcel of three to six meters, space is so limited that usually separated elements are now blended into one: furniture elements like cupboards, shelves, display boards, and work desks are not additional elements but the load-bearing structure themselves. The wall becomes the in-between-zone that negotiates the activities. It is the zone whose width expands and shrinks according to the different functions. Hence the institution grows with its production of texts, documents, videos, and objects. Shelf after shelf, the structure (made of leftover wooden material) can grow and at the same time outsource its components – as if the situation in Delhi is already in a mode that oscillates between production and display.



Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller, *Cybermohalla Hub*, Delhi, 2009

Cybermohalla Hub

Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller in collaboration with the Cybermohalla Ensemble, Sarai/CSDS (Delhi), Ankur – Society for Alternatives in Education, Kunstakademie Stuttgart, Engelsmann Peters engineers, Daniel Dolder, Steffen Sendelbach and Snehal Gada.

The *Cybermohalla Hub* was made possible by the generous support of Manifesta 7 and by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary.

THE POLITICS OF BIENNIALIZATION

Oliver Marchart

Why waste another breath discussing the biennialization of the art world, which hardly a city seems able to resist? Why analyze a mega-exhibition like the documenta, that – similar to a dwarf planet in its orbit – enters the field of art every five years and then disappears back into the dark depths of the universe? Or the Venice Biennial which, with its stultifying routine, defends its position as art-olympia and probably has as little to do with the 21st century as the rest of Venice? Are such Potemkinesque art villages, that are built and unbuilt every two, three, or five years, really so meaningful, so as to deserve an in-depth analysis?

What Adorno said about philosophy – that it is the most serious, but also not so serious – can also be said about biennials and other sectors of the art world, but in reverse: they are the most unserious, but also not so unserious. Because together with the politics of other art institutions, for example the collection and exhibition politics of museums and foundations, the politics of biennialization play a direct role in the politics of politics. For one, there is of course the local politics, since the biennials and similar large-scale events – for example the European cultural capitals – contribute to an efficient city and regional marketing.¹ Beyond the economic value added locally, there are also the state politics. Thus, last but not least, the politics of biennialization contribute to the construction of local, national, and continental identities. Therein the format is connected to the format of any World's Fair, which supported the inner 'nation building' of colonial and industrial nations of the 19th century. This was accomplished by World's Fairs in that they served two sides of national pride: they showcased the newest achievements in technology and progress, as well as the exotic achievements of colonialist raids. Progress and racism were integral components of World's Fairs. At the Parisian World's Fair of 1889, the construction of the Eiffel Tower testified to the accomplishment of French engineering, while at the same time, African villages including original inhabitants were put on display for the European audience.²

By no means have all the Western biennials, museums and institutions departed from the heritage of exoticism and nationalism. Continuities are, with all their nuances, impossible to overlook – even if today, it is not the ideology of the individual nation but rather of the 'European Identity' that is constructed, with the help of a European biennial like the Manifesta. But couldn't institutions like biennials, beyond their ideological function, have in a narrower sense a political function? Is it conceivable that there be a politics of biennialization that could be used to benefit the world – and not just the art world, which might [mis-]understand itself to be 'the' world? More precisely: is there a chance that thematically focused large-scale exhibitions can radiate outwards towards society, so that political themes which might otherwise have little attention are sneaked into public debate? Such a political function of art publicity would shake up the existing forms of ideological 'nation building' of museums and biennials, as well as the economic function of the art world as market place, where products and services are traded.

In fact, these possibilities are in no way implausible. One must consider that precisely the so-called peripheral biennials are creating their own networks, as well as opening channels of communication and translation, which

could prove to be very valuable in their context. Biennials offer an “exemplary location for cultural translation and trans-national encounters.”³ One could argue that this is true only for the elite of art world functionaries and a few biennial-hoppers, however biennials and similar large-scale exhibitions likewise have provided points of attraction for political movements, organized under the cover of the spectacle, making use of its shadows and surfaces of representation. Walter Benjamin pointed out that the World’s Fairs were “pilgrimage sites of fetishistic commodities where the exchange rate of the merchandise was romanticized and people were offered as phantasmagoria of diaspora,⁴ which was to a certain extent politicized or at least politically useful:

“At the Parisian World’s Fair, Victor Hugo issued a manifesto ‘On the People of Europe’. Earlier and more definitely, their interests were represented by French Workers’ Delegations, the first of which was delegated to the first World’s Fair in London 1851, a second with 750 representatives to the World’s Fair of 1862. This was indirectly significant for the foundation of the International Workers Association by Marx.”⁵

Willed or not, mega-exhibitions – from the sudden agglomeration of infrastructure and the accessibility of medial representation alone – can become facilitators of political articulations, with implications beyond the art world. To this day, the *documenta* in Kassel attracts political groups – solely for the media attention that the exhibition generates – whether they’ve been invited or not. Thus, like a distant echo of the meeting of the Workers Delegations in the 19th century, an active network opposing deportation called *Kein Mensch ist Illegal* (*No person is illegal*) was founded in the ‘hybrid workspace’ of the *documenta X* in 1997, and still exists today. So, the term ‘biennial’ has in itself already become a sort of trademark, that can be appropriated for political purposes, even when the results have hardly to do with biennials. Originating from the Moskau Biennial of 2005, the so-called ‘Emergency Biennial in Chechnya’ was founded, which in the meantime – literally out of a suitcase – has taken its work to Paris, Brussels, Riga, Vancouver, Milan and Istanbul, spreading information about the situation in Chechnya.⁶

The Irony of the Political

Thus the politics of biennialization incorporates a certain irony. Not irony in the humorous sense, rather in the material – an objective irony:

Since on one hand, Western mega-exhibitions throw an enormous amount of symbolic, representational and structural resources into ‘nation building’ (and the inferred ‘subject building’). This transforms them effectively into a gigantic ideological machinery, or better: hegemonic machinery of the dominant culture, be it middle-class, national, occidental, European or other. Their political meaning is therefore significant, although in a time when mass spectacle is mostly experienced through media, it is hard to comprehend that the World’s Fair once functioned like the television of the 19th century. Alone the number of visitors – which *documenta* could only dream of – provides a glimpse of the multiplication factor of such events: the ‘mother’ of all World’s Fairs, the Expo of 1851 in London, counted six million visitors. This number increased towards the end of the century to 30 million at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1889 and in Chicago in 1893, up to 50 million at the Parisian World’s Fair of 1900.⁷

But on the other hand, and here lies the irony, a mega-exhibition will never be able to totally control the effects that it produces. Wherever resources are available, they will also be tapped into by the unauthorized. The dominant

discourse, which is reproduced and kept in circulation by such hegemonic machineries, can always be read differently than intended. And it can get worse; the apparatus itself can fall into the enemy’s hands. Incoming factions can make demands and call for changes (like the 68ers) or even alter the apparatus and use it for other purposes. Through the hijacking of institutions – as in the case of the ‘New Institutionalism’, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs – the cultural reproduction apparatus of the dominant culture allows itself to be at least partially abstracted, then de- and reconstructed in a new way. Furthermore, the apparatus can be utilized for a progressive shifting of the canon. Some things are rendered visible and describable, which formerly were not, other things seem as a result no longer able to be said or must be reformulated. This doesn’t have to happen suddenly – the loss of authority of the dominant culture can be furtive. Then it takes the form of a successive shift in the canon, as could be observed in the *documenta X* and the *Documenta 11*.

An analytical approach is especially appropriate to describe such circuitous processes: the theory of hegemony originally developed by Antonio Gramsci and expanded upon in discourse analysis by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. One could say that the marxist Gramsci further developed historic materialism into an ‘ironic materialism’. The structure of hegemony is always objectively ironic. Hegemony describes an instable balance between social powers struggling for dominance. This instable power balance – in which there are always dominant and subordinate powers – is established through the network of civil-social institutions in the sense of opposing sides. ‘Hegemony’ does not so much describe the prize that was just won by the dominant side in a shooting contest, rather the power relationship between two rivaling powers. One doesn’t ‘own’ hegemony, rather one constantly wrestles for mastery. Actually, hegemony can never be completely achieved, since there will always be other powers who want a part of it. For this constitutive stand-off, Gramsci suggests a metaphor of trench warfare, as it was conducted in World War I. Trench warfare – one thinks of Verdun – is based on a winding system of ditches, where it is often unclear where the frontline actually lies. The objective irony of hegemony is that its own fortifications, as soon as the frontline – or the balance of power – shifts, can fall into the hands of the opponent and be used to fortify their own opposing hegemony. In other words, institutions as apparatus are not ‘neutral’ and have in a sense a life of their own, though nothing in the form of mega-exhibitions impels that they – like earlier World’s Fairs – will forever propagate nationalistic and racist ideologies.

Tectonic Shifts in the Art World

To the contrary, we now can witness an anti-hegemonic shift that institutions and dominant middle-class culture – at least part of it – has itself initiated. With examples of *documenta X* and *Documenta 11*, it can be further examined how pilfered means of the apparatus itself can be used to advance contra-canonization and hegemonial shifts. With the *documenta X* and *Documenta 11*, a latently present canonical shift intensified to a symbolic break in the art world, and had progressive effects. One can describe these shifts in terms of axes of politics, the post-colonial constellation,⁸ theory and education. Above all, with the *Documenta 11* came about such a multifaceted radicalization of strategies of exhibition-making in forms of a heightened politicization, a decentralization of the West, an uncompromising theoretization, as well as an aimed consideration of public mediation.

With ‘politicization’, it is not only meant that the *Documenta 11* understood itself to be a political intervention

on the level of cultural symbolic production, moreover it is meant that political-analytical art practices became the focus and the exhibition thus became a political instrument for analysis that simultaneously jolted and sustained certain canonical shifts in the art world. 'Decentralization of the West' does not only mean that the complicity of European art with colonial history was exposed, rather also that the West itself was displaced (through a series of platforms as part of *Documenta 11*, which took place in locations like New Delhi, St. Lucia, and Lagos) and the 'non-Western' could move to the center.⁹ The same goes for 'theoretization', where it is not only meant that the actual history and function of exhibiting would be further reconsidered, rather above all that the interface between art and theory would be pushed beyond what had been previously seen in the art world. And finally, the meaning of 'public mediation' would be reassessed, because the pedagogical function of nationalized 'education' and 'conditioning' of subjects within the dominant culture is amongst the primary functions of museum and large-scale exhibitions. A shift also occurred along this axis. To illustrate this, I could refer to the mediation concept of the *Documenta 11* and show how it took account for three other axial shifts in the art world, likewise brought about by the *Documenta 11*. It could be also discussed how these differed from the education offensives of *documenta 12*. The canonical shift initiated by *documenta X* and radicalized by *Documenta 11* took place along the four axes and intensified to a rupture that later biennials and exhibitions would have to measure themselves against. For the Venice Biennial, which from a certain perspective can be seen as 'communicating vessels' with *documenta*,¹⁰ one can compare the Biennial of 2001, curated by Harald Szeeman and that of 2003 by Francesco Bonami, which clearly demonstrates the influence of *Documenta 11*. Above all, this becomes evident in how all three exhibitions, in very different ways, addressed the 'Global'. Bonami could no longer proceed in the same way that Szeeman had two years prior, but instead had to comply with the shift in handling of the notion of the 'Global', but also in the handling of the 'Political', that the *Documenta 11* had highlighted in the art world.

The *documenta 12* faced a much bigger problem in relation to its two predecessors. With its depoliticizing aestheticism, it demonstrated that no politicization remains unchallenged. One could formulate polemically, that the *documenta 12* wanted to restore the right for enjoyment of art to the cultured middle class, which could be accounted for along the lines of the aforementioned axes. With *documenta 12*, the breaks and shifts assumed by *documenta X* and *Documenta 11* were retracted back into the dominant middle-class culture, and therefore neutralized – and namely through strategies like formalization, ornamentalization, decontextualization, de-theoreticization, and occidentalization of the presented works. In relation to *documenta X* and *Documenta 11*, the *documenta 12* summed up these strategies to an overall strategy, which Gramsci had called 'Transformism'. Here, the irony of the political is again evident: the institutional means, which were previously siphoned into a canonical shift, are exerted in a dominant-cultural way, in order to disarm everything that may be unruly or unpopular. Anti-hegemonial ruptures are smoothed out and hegemonial formations reinstated.

By no means does this occur as a frontal attack; everything is not revoked and countermanded at once, since hegemonial shifts require compromises and tactical retreats. Therefore in the field of hegemony, every term for 'rollback' or 'backlash' is delusive. Even for such a regressive exhibition, there is in the strictest sense 'no going back', since what has happened, has happened. Every 'reverse' is therefore ultimately a 'forward', even if a progression into the reactionary: a backwards forward! Hence a hegemonial power responds to anti-hegemonial attacks, where these have enjoyed

a temporary partial success, not simply by returning to a status quo ante. Rather, it continues on developing, in that it attempts to influence critique productively for itself, indeed to make an argument for its own position. This can be discourse-analytically perceived in the example of *documenta 12*. In short: if the field has been displaced, it can't be made 'undisplaced', rather it can only be intercepted through a further displacement, become trivialized or obscured. This is exactly how the project of *documenta 12* related to *documenta X* and *Documenta 11*. As it is everywhere in politics, no small or temporary contra-hegemonial territorial gain is in vain. It causes the dominant discourse to work on its own hegemony, demands redefinition, in order to maintain the hegemony and to reinforce it against further attacks. All this makes politics into an objectively ironic enterprise with an open end. One sees how dramatically this approach of ironic materialism differs from that of tragic materialism, as in the *culture industry* thesis of Horkheimer and Adorno or the *society of the spectacle* thesis of Debord, for whom the ending is always clear, and the enemy has always already won. With the hegemony-theoretical analysis of the art world, however, as it is attempted here with the example of the biennials and especially the *documenta*, it should become evident, how a progressive canonical shift within the 'center' of the art world is totally possible, but also how the dominant middle-class culture immediately attempts to neutralize it. The theory of hegemony should work on a more thorough analysis of this aspect – to balance out competing approaches, like the field theory of Bourdieu and the disciplinary model of Foucault. Following the motto, the art world is the most unserious, but also not so unserious, we can contemplate an important terrain, on which ideological alliances are constructed and constantly remodeled, on which powerful social discursive formations compete against each other and try to dupe the other one, figuratively speaking. On this terrain, *mental maps* are elaborated and experimentally displaced, which present new models for world interpretation or rearticulate existing ones. The institutions of the art world are not the only ones, but they are important hegemony machines, that indeed reproduce middle-class dominant culture, but also make it vulnerable. If there is any reason to occupy oneself with the present biennialization from a political perspective, then it is to be found exactly there.

1. Because the Biennial-boom can be described in part as resulting from the collapse of globality and locality, from a globalized art world with the local city and regional marketing.
2. Sandy Nairne, *Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*, in: Emma Barker (Ed.), *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, London: Open University Press, 1999, pg 106.
3. Okwui Enwezor, *Mega Exhibitions: Antinomies of a Transnational Global Form*, Munich: Finke, 2002, pg 20. "[...], that the emergence of the global periphery cannot simply be accused of being the standard signal for a biennial-syndrome. Instead, the possibility of change of paradigm would be conceivable within the phenomenon of the biennials, through which we as viewers would be put in the position to encounter a variety of experimental cultures, without possessing them." *ibid*, pg 30.
4. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, V/1, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1991, pg 50.
5. *Ibid.*, pg 51.
6. Which doesn't mean that it's impossible to observe an opposing effect through the appropriation of biennial labels, namely, its privatization, as in Tirana.
7. Maurica Roche, *Culture and Modernity: Expos and the Origins of public culture*, in: *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 1(5), 1999, p 1-31.
8. The term 'postcolonial constellation' is outlined by Okwui Enwezor in the following: "It is a name, which reverberates in a series of structural, political, and cultural entanglements, from the decolonialization movements of the post-war era to civil rights movements and feminist, queer, anti-racist, anti-essentialist, contra-hegemonial politics of a new global community." Okwui Enwezor, *The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a State of Permanent Transition*, in: Gilane Tawadros and Sarah Campbell (Ed.), *Fault Lines. Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes*, London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 2003, p 77 (translation of the author).
9. In the following, I use the term 'non-Western' in the sense of a non-North-Atlantic art, if under this we understand such art practices

that position themselves in an imaginary space and will be positioned there, as David Morley and Kevin Robins once called *EurAm*. The term 'non-Western' in reference to the art system remains however problematic, especially because the art system itself is too Western, and halfway successful 'non-Western' artists often live and work in 'the West'.

10. One could argue against these approaches, that they – with their concentration on documenta and the Venice Biennial – only support the Eurocentrism that they deem to oppose. A reply is, that Eurocentrism must be fought against in the margins as well as in the 'imaginary center'. Precisely a hegemony-theoretical approach would show itself to be especially interested in who attempts to fill in the center, especially when the power of this center remains completely imaginary. Because the fiction of the pre-eminent meaning of the Venice Biennial and the documenta only remain consequential, if it indeed is a fiction, they remain consequential when nobody believes in this fiction, but nonetheless act as if the Venice Biennial and documenta were so meaningful.

This article is taken from Oliver Marchart: *Hegemonie im Kunstfeld. Die documenta-Ausstellungen dX, D11, d12 und die Politik der Biennialisierung*. n.b.k. Diskurs, Band 2 (Hg. Marius Babias), Köln 2008, p. 7–13.

INTERVIEW WITH 'WHAT, HOW & FOR WHOM' (WHW - IVET CURLIN, ANA DEVIC, NATASA ILIC AND SABINA SABOLOVIC)

Ana Janevski

AJ: "The three basic questions of every economic organization, What, how and for whom – are operative in almost in all segments in life... these are the questions that also concern the planning, conception and realization of exhibitions, as well as the production and distribution of artworks, or artists' position in labour market."

This is the introduction to your first project dedicated to the 152nd anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, in 2000 in Zagreb. The three questions were the title of the project and since then they are implicit in the name of your curatorial collective. How did you come to the idea for this exhibition and how did your collaboration start?

WHW: The impetus for the project came from the fact that the publishing house Arkzin (which during the 1990s published a magazine under the same name and was one of the rare left-wing critical voices during those times) republished Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* with an introduction by Slavoj Žižek. The book was published on its 150th anniversary, and as it went by completely unnoticed we were curious to see if we could trigger a discussion through an exhibition.

From the curatorial point of view one of our main concerns was how to deal with the anniversary of a book with such powerful ideological and political connotations, and we decide, to problematize it in the existing local context. Thus, the Manifesto functioned as a strong trigger to initiate a public debate on the issues of recent history and the exhibition in the end questioned a wide range of social issues, focusing on complex relations between art and economy.

The need to question our 'communist' past has been the result of dominant cultural politics in Croatia in the 1990s, where an insufficient intellectual contextualization disabled any serious reflection of both the immediate communist past and of the present 'transitional' moment.

At the time we started to work on the exhibition, we were still mostly in our twenties. Working together was a great and formative experience. From the beginning we were aware that collaboration enables us to do things that none of us individually would be able to do: create and influence new

spaces and modalities of art production, thus challenging the environment of ossified and closed art institutions in Croatia.

That exhibition established most of the aspects of our future curatorial approach: collective way of working, close partnership of different organizations, establishing links between different generations of artists as well as building the exhibition around social and political issues which we feel are being swept under the carpet... We did a modified version, on the occasion of the 153rd anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*, in Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna in 2001. We are still looking forward to the possible opportunity to do another *Communist Manifesto* exhibition on another anniversary.

AJ: Rethinking and coming to terms with the communist past was an excellent example of how art projects can be used to introduce discussions on relevant social issues into broader public discourse. Your further projects *Broadcasting Project: Dedicated to Nikola Tesla*, *Normalization: Dedicated to Nikola Tesla* and others, dealt with local daily politics, pointing out the cultural policy dominant in Croatia during the 1990s. Can you tell us something more about those projects? What is, in your opinion, the specific role of curatorial practice in relation to the production of meaning and knowledge at work in these exhibitions and projects?

WHW: We understand exhibitions as forms of a unique emotional and physical experience, the main task of a curator in that sense would be to create the context, the discursive and physical space for reflection, a temporary point in which all these parallel processes are collected, contested, intensified and enhanced. For our curatorial work of key importance is the articulation of sensitive social issues, especially in relation to the local context.

The exhibition *Normalization: Dedicated to Nikola Tesla*, presented in Gallery Nova in 2006, in a certain non-committal way served as a closure and a case study of our longterm investigation of different aspects of normalization processes we have been facing recently. Tesla's case is particularly interesting because it interlocks with the existing tensions between national identity and nationalism and pro-EU orientation.

Nikola Tesla (1856 – 1943) was a controversial genius scientist; he was a Serb from Croatia who died as an American citizen. In the past decades he has been claimed and disowned by Croats, Serbs, Yugoslavs and Americans. Both of our projects dedicated to Nikola Tesla were also a reaction to the fact that during the 1990s in Croatia his Serb origins seriously damaged his cult status as a scientist. After being a 'public hero' in Yugoslavia, during the 1990s, for a whole decade Tesla was absent from public discourse. However, in just a few years he became a model of reconciliation and the 'building of bridges' between nations and neighbouring states, and his famous saying "I am proud of my Serbian origin and Croatian motherland", overused in the socialist decades of brotherhood and unity, has been resurrected as a useful daily-politics slogan in politically opportunistic eagerness to express ethnic tolerance.

In 2006 the 150th anniversary of Nikola Tesla's birth was celebrated in grand style. Because of the *Broadcasting Project* we did in 2001, we were invited by the Serbian Cultural Center in Zagreb to organize a further exhibition on Tesla, and we decided to organize an archive exhibition on Tesla's presence in the public discourse since the 1950s, and an open call for an anti-monument to Nikola Tesla. We received about fifty proposals from artists, journalists, architects, scientists, designers, students, philosophers, writers etc. and we included them all in the exhibition. As an integral part of the exhibition we also displayed archive material that made visible the dramatic ruptures in the public reception of Nikola Tesla and its broader social and political background throughout the last fifty years.

AJ: Since 2003 you have been running the non-profit gallery Gallery Nova in Zagreb. The gallery has an important Avant-garde tradition from the 1960s and 1970s and under your direction it has become a platform for supporting critical local and international artistic production. The projects with some artists from the 1970s such as Sanja Ivekovic, Mladen Stilinovic, Goran Trbuljak seem to reveal the lack of institutional engagement. What are in your experience the differences and gaps between institutional and independent curatorial activities and positions?

WHW: We would not associate some intrinsic differences between the two positions, partly due to the fact that we are all 'in the system' and 'on the market.' We see ourselves as an independent and self-organized team but also as a micro-institution that tries to create institutional space that is more sensitive to the actual needs of the local scene. When we started the Gallery Nova program, apart from working with both the youngest generation of the local artists and the most prominent artists who started in the 1970s, international profiling and initiating discursive programs, the idea was also to make the space available for collaborative activities of the so called 'independent' local scene that has been very active since 2000. Just as with every exhibition project, when thinking about the Gallery Nova program we try asking the 'what, how and for whom' questions again. Being open and aware of the way possible answers change over time and with changing circumstances is - we think - part of our responsibility. We can still see many institutions in Croatia not being aware of that, so there is not enough recognition of the experiences of the previous generation or of the current attempts of independent initiatives.

AJ: Last year you gave a very interesting lecture at the Berlin Biennial night programme entitled *Modernism and its Discontent. The Croatian Avant-garde of the 1950s* related also to the exhibition about the Croatian sculptor Vojin Bakić organized last year in the Gallery Nova. Beside the legacy of socialism and its consequences you are focusing on the unsolved questions of Croatian modernism. How have you started to search for new terms of discourse, for new readings of modernism in Croatia in the post-war period?

WHW: Complex relations between 'marginal' modernisms with a socialist background and the supposedly ideologically free and neutral modernism of the West, have recently become the subject of more extensive research. The case of Yugoslavia is especially interesting, not only as the only socialist country that cut off relations to the Eastern Block, as well as relaxing ideological barriers and opening up to the West culturally, but also as a cultural space in which parts of the communist political and cultural elite recognized correspondences between the universalism of modernist art and the universalism of socialist emancipation.

Our research has mainly been focused on sculptor Vojin Bakić (1915-1992), an artist who on the one hand was perceived as an 'authentic' modernist sculptor, the main figure of the break-up with social realism who forged the paths for abstraction and freedom of artistic expression in the 1950s and, on the other hand, as a 'state artist' in service to socialist ideology who did a number of large state commissions for anti-fascist monuments. The problematic relations of the legacy of the socialist decades is unavoidable also for understanding the context of the reception of Vojin Bakić's work. He is highly acclaimed in official art histories, yet his monuments to anti-fascist struggle have been devastated and destroyed in the heat of nationalism and anti-communism of the 1990s.

The current revisionist view inscribes into post-war Yugoslavian abstraction a tendency towards the 'restoration of belonging to a Western European cultural circle' and understands modernism as sharing a certain continuity with

'bourgeois' culture. In doing so it fails to comprehend that exactly this bourgeois, traditionalist culture prone to academicism, strongly resisted modernistic tendencies, and that modernism is built on a position of social change; that ideologically it is closer to the socialist project than to bourgeois culture. That does not mean that modernist artists were necessarily party men. It is not about mere manipulation and instrumentalisation of modernist tendencies for political needs, related to Yugoslavia's separation from the Soviet block. In modernist abstraction, an enlightened communist consciousness saw closeness to the universalism of modern emancipatory politics. Those artists were not modernist because they were communists following the Party line, but as modernists they were necessarily leftist, anti-fascist, socialists, and communists.

The fact that Vojin Bakić used the same formal repertoire to simultaneously create a global cosmopolitan cultural identity and collective memory of socialist Yugoslavia is thus not a paradox but the true face of modernism. The point is not to neutralize or reconcile contrasting views on modernism, but to understand them within dynamics of their relations, to see contradictions as inherent to modernism itself, and to explore their specifics in any given cultural space. The ideological battle over modernism in socialist Yugoslavia and its legacy and importance today is exactly that which can not be left to institutions, that needs to be taken over and invested with new meanings.

AJ: Two years ago you have curated the exhibition *Collective Creativity at the Fridericianum in Kassel*. The exhibition was focused on artist's groups and collective artistic creativity. You are working as a collective for nine years. What about collective curating? Is it also a way of productive and performative criticism of social institutions and politics?

WHW: The idea of a long-term collaboration came as an afterthought resulting from the enthusiasm that developed around our first exhibition and the recognition of the ideas and political stands that we shared. What we call 'collective curating' in our case is actually connected with the motivation to continue to develop what was spontaneously achieved throughout the experience of the first project.

As Djuro Seder, member of the Croatian group Gorgona said in 1963: "The Collective Work cannot be foreseen as a form, only as an effort. The final appearance of the collective work is of no consequence at all." In other words, collective creativity is not a value per se, it exists only as a never finalized process in which creativity functions as a side-effect of the emancipatory powers of a collective.

AJ: The 9th Istanbul Biennial curated by Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun was proof that biennials can be self-reflexive and constructive gestures rather than merely tools of the tourism industry, urban regeneration and cultural globalization. Titled simply *Istanbul*, it was modest in its ambition – no grand narratives or portentous themes. The attempt to critically rethink the format of biennials is an inevitable challenge for every curator. Your previous curatorial experiences and approaches will certainly guide you in the conception of the 11th Istanbul Biennial. Can you already tell something about some core projections which you regard as most important in the process of the exhibition taking its form? What about the relationship to the city of Istanbul, to its local historical and political content?

WHW: The problem we are facing is how to critically examine social, temporal and spatial limitations of representative 'event' culture, in the field of contemporary art paradigmatically exemplified by the phenomenon of biennale exhibitions. How to rethink the questions of production, definition, and presentation of the work and of artists'

identity in the globalized (art)world? At this stage the 11th Istanbul Biennial is an open research focused on the examination of the status of the Istanbul Biennial in both local and international contexts, connected to a set of political and social issues associated with the wider region, considering the fact that Istanbul plays a major role in the political and social landscape of the region in the widest sense of the word. This research tends to become public in the attempt to also activate the two-year periods between biennial exhibitions in the process of creating a possibility for sustained collaborations with existent independent cultural initiatives and programs.

The format of the exhibition itself is understood as a possibility for transient and temporary, yet ambitious planes for long-term communication and establishing new international platforms for artist and cultural workers from supposedly shrinking but still corporeally very real geographical margins. Even if today one feels that there is no region excluded from the international art circuit, there still remains the issue of control, the unresolved and continuing play of inclusion and exclusion. In that respect, the role of Biennial-as-process is understood as a counter-position to the general weakening of any institutional safeguards that determine (cultural) standards outside the marketplace.

The process of the Biennial is the active site for exploring the rules of conduct established in the Western art system, how is the circulation and reception of information regulated and how can we (and can we really) challenge it? Focusing primarily on regions of the Balkans and former Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa, in which the relationship with Western 'mentors' and the dependence of Avant-garde art practices on validation from the Western art systems still largely define the context of contemporary art. It develops across two interconnecting trajectories, one responding to hegemonic Western model of the role and position of contemporary art and its history, as perpetuated by a globalized system of art institutions and network of markets that regulate them, and the other to artistic and cultural practices that are critically assessing commercialization that tends to dominate life under conditions of neo-liberal capitalism.

AVANT-GARDE INSTITUTE"

Joanna Mytkowska

I would like to discuss in the following pages a project we started in 2003 within the framework of the Foksal Gallery Foundation, which might be of interest for certain models of how institutions can function. But before I talk about the *Avant-garde Institute* – whose name is a bit ironic – I'd like to discuss the history of the place which was the starting point for this institution.

Its location is in an apartment block built in 1962 in the center of Warsaw. There are five similar blocks of apartments, built by the state, and they include studios for artists on the top floors. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were certain facilities for. This was a part of the communist regime, which was soft but still a regime. One of the studios was given to Henryk Stazewski. As you may know, he was a pioneer of the Polish Avant-garde and the founder of the important Avant-garde magazine *Blok*. He was an incredibly prolific person and lived to the age of 96. He was the one who invited Kasimir Malewicz to have his first exhibition outside of Russia in 1927. He founded the museum in Lodz in 1931. His friendships with Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Katarzyna Kobro, and Russian Avant-gardes had an enormous influence on what happened before

the war. Also the international ideas he spread through meetings and social interactions were very important. In 1966, he was one of the founders of the Foksal Gallery. His artistic activities, mostly paintings or projects for architecture and design, make visible contributions, but his activities in the field of cultural initiative were absolutely vital within the course of Polish art history.

In 1962, Stazewski received a studio from the government. He was painting there, but he was also running something like a bohemian, Paris-like salon – one of the very few of its kind. People were coming by everyday ceremoniously at five o'clock. In 1970, Edward Krasinski moved in to the apartment. At the time he was a very young artist, already a part of this bohemian community around Stazewski and involved in the discussions taking place within this apartment. They lived together until Stazewski's death in 1988. After that, Krasinski stayed alone in the 120 square meter apartment. He began to turn the space into an installation or a kind of a theater. Krasinski is mostly known for his particular blue line of tape, which he always put on walls, or whatever was in the space, at the height of 1.30 m. Krasinski is more or less from a generation of artists, like the Croatian artist Mangelos, who dealt with a critique of modernism. This is very typical for the European countries, where modernism – abstract art – became the official art of the government. There was a whole movement which can be called *Anti-Art* in the 1960s and early 1970s, when artists were struggling with classical artistic media like painting. So the early sculptures of Krasinski from the mid-1960s are very much connected with escaping the traditional forms of painting and sculpture. They can be compared to parallel movements in Western art at that time. But they have this specific touch of critique of modernism which has very political roots. When he stayed alone in the studio, he started to change it into his own microcosmos, and added some important elements. He began to work with photography. There were several traps for visitors to the studio, which still kept its salon-like status. There were 'fake objects', i.e. shelves with books as a black and white photograph in one room, and in another room, there is a real shelf. You have photographs with friends in other rooms and so on. There was also a lot of installation, like trees coming out of the floor or pieces of the parquet which were uprooted, as if they were rebelling. Hundreds of small tiny objects which were always a kind of a joke, more or less in an atmosphere of pataphysics.

Krasinski often used images and 'fake-objects' from the studio in exhibitions to change the art spaces into his own space. A famous example is *Hommage to Henryk Stazewski* in the Foksal Gallery (1989), one of the first shows Krasinski did after Stazewski died. Here he built labyrinths in the galleries, which used parts of the studio. The best-known piece is a column consisting of photographs of the studio, the view from two sides, cut into strips and attached to the columns. It was like a raster-image of the studio. In the studio itself, there were also works of other artists, for example a work by Daniel Buren of stripes on a window, installed in 1974 during his first visit to Warsaw. The apartment was a kind of half-official meeting point. When an international artist came to Warsaw, he always went to the studio.

Krasinski was one of the most important figures for the Foksal Gallery Foundation. We always went to the studio, it offered some of the most interesting encounters we had with artists. It was a very vital location for contemporary art discourse as well as historical roots. In 2003, when he died, we negotiated with and convinced the family to leave the apartment like it is, to create some kind of institution which is based on the studio. This was the start of *Avant-garde Institute*.

It took us four years to raise enough funds to renovate it and to build a pavilion. We didn't want to make a commemorative or sentimental room out of the apartment, so we connected the top of the terrace to provide additional space. A temporary frame for the studio is this pavilion that looks like a showcase. The architecture of the pavilion is very modest. It was designed by Bar, a Dutch architect studio from Rotterdam. We found them through their project in Utrecht for BAK, an institution for art, in collaboration with the young Polish architect Marcin Kwietowicz. The frame outside can be used for projection; it is rather spectacular because the projection can be seen from quite a long distance and inside is a small space of 62 square meters which can be used for seminars, screenings, meetings and small exhibitions. We even left the facade of the existing building, so that it's like the 'outside of a showcase'; it's very appropriate for the museum.

The initial funding of €50.000 came from the European Community, with the assistance of Maria Hlavajova. A part of the agreement was, that it has to have a Dutch connection, so it was a Dutch architect who made the pavilion. Maurizio Cattelan gave us €10.000 from the Bode Prize. He never accepts prizes, so he gave it to us. The rest was from the Foksal Gallery Foundation and at that time, prices in Poland were quite low.

I'd like to mention the renovation because it was a long process. The renovation consisted of only removing the dust; the apartment looks more or less like in the moment when Krasinski left in 2003. The whole process of arranging this institution was long and we consulted several artists and conservators. We decided to take the most effective method in museology at the moment: don't touch, don't renovate, don't intervene in the substance of the objects. So just the dust was removed.

Another part of this process was that in order to get permission to build this pavilion on the terrace of the apartment, we had to convince all inhabitants, 120 families, to sign an agreement for the investment. That took us two years. We visited each family and after the very prolonged process, we managed to obtain permission. The moment when we convinced them that it was an interesting project, that they would be part of something, was the biggest change. In the end one of the conditions of the agreement, which they wanted, was that we place a sign on the facade of the building, at the door, announcing that Stazewski and Krasinski had lived there. The discussion with the inhabitants was the biggest social project we ever did.

An artist who collaborated with us, especially because it was within this community of apartment blocks, was Pawel Althamer. He had prior experience, since we also did a big project with him at the Foksal Gallery Foundation in an apartment block in the suburbs of Warsaw-Brudnow 2000. Artur Zmijewski was also a big supporter in that process. But there is of course an enormous gap between the practice of artists who don't believe in the autonomy of art and the ones who use art as a tool for certain aims, as in the attitude of Stazewski and Krasinski. The interesting point is the discussion, which is a kind of synthesis of different generations of Polish art spanning almost a century; that's how this name *Avant-garde Institute* appeared.

We opened Krasinski's studio in October 2007 with an international conference about Krasinski. There was a focus on the contradiction between a social practice, which is so important for the current generation of artists, and the historical condition. It was very clear during the discussion that Zmijewski and Althamer don't feel connected with the *Avant-garde* tradition. Their tradition is rather connected to another important figure in Polish modernity: Oskar Hansen,

an architect and visionary theoretician. He was involved in an architectural practice and theory in the 1960s and the 1970s where he treated architecture as a tool to change society.

Despite conflicts, we still think that Krasinski's studio and the pavilion can be a great starting point to maintain this discussion, to keep the emotions and the relations between different traditions.

To summarize, what is interesting about this project is that it is long-term, but also temporary. The works are fragile and sooner or later they will have to go to the museum, since proper conditions cannot be maintained in the apartment. But we have an agreement with the family for thirty years, a rather long time. The idea that we have kept the studio of the artist intact, not artificially reconstructed or Brancusi-like, and the fact that it's a museum within a block of apartments opens a dialogue between different traditions of modernity – these are the interesting aspects and also the starting point for the program of the *Avant-garde Institute*.

The first event, in 2008, was a screening and a talk by Dan Graham, who was a friend of Krasinski. He showed a series of his films from the early 1970s. An important connection was the wife of Krasinski who was also a founder of the Foksal Gallery and who emigrated to Paris in the 1970s and had one of the most radical conceptual art galleries. The gallery didn't have a name, only a number for each show. She was one of the first to show Dan Graham in Europe. The next project which will be a seminar with Douglas Crimp dedicated to spaces in New York which were important for gay culture in the 1970s and have now mostly changed into fitness-clubs. He's going to give a few public lectures and a closed seminar for students. After this project we will have a project curated by Zmijewski dedicated to some aspects of the tradition of performance in Poland. Another important function of the *Avant-garde Institute* is the support of research, and it's in close collaboration with students of the art history department of the Warsaw University.

This institution is still a project. We are not certain whether this name *Avant-garde Institute* should stay. On one hand it is pretty attractive, on the other hand it's simply a provocation for younger artists, and of course it is too bombastic for such a small institution. The structure of financing is still insecure. At the moment it functions only in relation to the Foksal Gallery Foundation, and it should remain independent. My experience tells me that behind an institution you have to have the community who will support it. An advantage of a small, mostly private institution is that you don't have to apply in advance for funds and so can maintain flexible programming. Plus, there's a big interest, especially among younger academics and researchers because it offers a lot of possibilities to research, it's open for many directions.

For the current calendar and more info, see: www.institutawangardy.org/

KINOAPPARATOM PRESENTS: OTHER SPACES OF CINEMA

Simone Schardt and Wolf Schmelter

"Should We Put an End to Projection?"¹ asks the title of an essay in the journal *October*. The question recalls, first of all, the double meaning of the word projection, which stands both for the geometry of the transmission of light rays and for

a mechanism of identification or defence with the framework of structures of desire. The arguments that follow investigate an observation that, in current exhibitions, film equipment itself becomes an exhibit in installation-like arrangements, while painting and sculpture are increasingly arranged in the exhibition space according to the demands of montage and lighting. The equipment used to show films thus refers to a special quality of cinematic material: it is accessible in the here and now and is available to the public only at the moment of its presentation. With this belated realization of the film at the moment it is seen, the mere showing of it already produces a surplus over its source material; the place of seeing is, in that sense, a space that is devoted to the surplus of a "maximizing of the profit of showing."² In the indivisible linking of image and light in the viewing of the image, projected images are, independently of the format of viewing, always inseparably tied to re-presentation and exhibition. Against this backdrop, what can a project devoted to accentuating the surrounding space mean? A project that does not imagine the experiences of the viewer as a tabula rasa but rather sheds light on the projection space and hence on the conditions of and on seeing? In trying to answer these questions, we will distinguish ourselves from established forms for presenting films in the contexts of both cinema and art and turn to describing our Kinoapparatom project, an artistic practice that opens up another space of cinema.

When we speak of the ideological concepts associated with communicating cultural values, the auditorium of the cinema has always to be subject to a general suspicion: its darkness, the bright rectangle of the screen, the single-point perspective resulting from the mode of recording, the fixed body of the viewer – in short, the totalitarian form of address to the viewers – make it seem, from a pessimistic perspective regarding the ability of the subject to judge, particularly well suited to influencing the subject.³ For the optimistic camp, by contrast, the same apparatus promises to be a very effective instrument to speak to its audience, as a counterpart willing to be educated. In that sense, it can be beneficial to the development of a self-empowering awareness in the viewing subject. Both these views of cinema – the criticism of, and hope for, that place – are connected to the traditional space of the cinema. The question is whether it is possible to situate another, alternative position between these two notions: the media critical view of a subject subjugated to language versus an intention to enlighten and educate.

Cinema as Social Space

The Viennese historian Anna Schober contrasts an understanding of cinema as a fixed order composed of the cinematographic apparatus, architecture, and an audience with the view of a social space formed in a specific way. In this view, cinema is "a produced space that accommodates social relationships and is always occupied by feelings, sensory perceptions, desires, and denials—of projects and projections in the technical and the psychological sense."⁴ According to this conception, the social space of the cinema has the same qualities as other socially created spaces and is thus comparable to exhibition spaces as "spaces that produce inclusions and exclusions, in which certain admirations and denials circulate, and in which different logics are juxtaposed and sometimes clash."⁵ However, whereas in exhibition situations the character of the medium that constitutes meaning is often denied, the construction of the constellations of the gaze in the cinema is permanently on view. Seeing is not a question of subjective intentionality but always a collective experience. The role of the architecture of the cinema lies in the production and exhibition of a collective subject.



New cinema, Rudolfplatz, Cologne, 1956

© Fotowerkstätte Hugo Schmölz, Wim Cox Archive, Cologne



Detail of the furnishings of the Invisible Cinema in New York, 1970–74

The situations for presenting films that have since become established, both in the cinema and in the black box often found in exhibitions, allude to the Invisible Cinema that was developed in the context of the experimental film scene around Jonas Mekas, Peter Kubelka, and P. Adam Sitney in the early 1970s. In their films, the experimental filmmaker was primarily concerned about perceiving with the camera, while restricted to parameters defined by the recording, such as the choice of detail or the duration of shots and lighting situations. Mekas's films, for example, follow a documentary, diary-like style, with no script or actors; they were rarely reworked and ideally not even edited. As a reaction to these works, the Invisible Cinema instituted a cinema that was employed by its initiators as a machine for viewing, as an illusion of a homogeneous framework in whose single-point perspective the viewers could experience themselves as being referred to, as being addressed. Nothing should distract from the screen; the audience should see the film just as the filmmakers saw the situation through the camera's viewfinder in the process of filming:

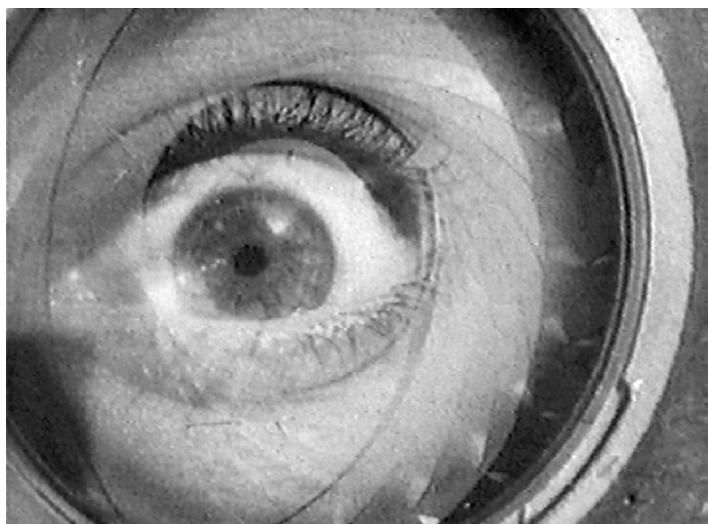
"The viewer should not have any sense of the presence of walls or the size of the auditorium. He should have only the white

screen, isolated in darkness as his guide to scale and distance. [...] All the elements of the Cinema are black: the rugs, the seats, the walls, the ceiling. Seat hoods and the elevation of the rows protect one's view of the screen from interception by the heads of viewers in front. Blinders eliminate the possibility of distractions from the side. We call it Invisible Cinema."⁶

When its ideology is questioned, 'invisible' cinema turns out to be 'totalitarian' cinema. Jean-Louis Baudry's description of the ideological implications of such a staged guiding of the gaze also points in this direction: "No doubt the darkened room and the screen bordered with black like a letter of condolences already present privileged conditions of effectiveness – no exchange, no circulation, no communication with any outside."⁷

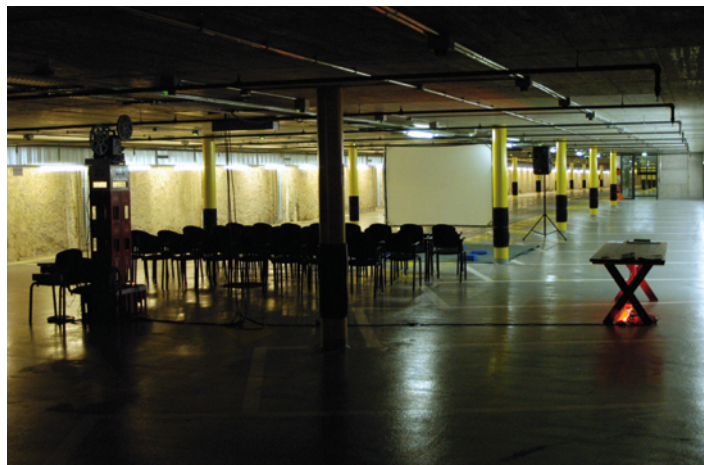
Modulations of the Relationship between On- and Off-Screen

What happens with this form of cinematographic perception when seeing, the imagination, encounters a acoustically and visually modulated surrounding space that no longer follows the principle of optimal absorption of energy from reflected light or effective deadening of sound waves? We have been pursuing this question in a project named Kinoapparatom, which has been showing artist's films, including our own, in specific sites that no longer correspond to the traditional cinema and its architecture. The name Kinoapparatom comes from the Russian and means "with a cinematic apparatus," which can mean either a film camera to record cinematic material or a projector to show it. The name is derived from the title of a film by Dziga Vertov from 1929: *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* (*The Man with a Movie Camera*). The Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov (1896–1954) rigorously employed the camera as an apparatus of perception that supplemented the human eye. The montage of camera lens and human eye was supposed to represent a new potential for visual perception. The camera was understood as an instrument that can record things hidden from the eye and make them visible.⁸ Working from a critical reading of the optimism about technology implied in this assumption – which is palpable in its supposing that fading between the eye and perceptual apparatus is unproblematic – Kinoapparatom developed a form of presentation that leads to an extension of this overlapping to the place of projection and to an altered form for presenting films. What does this positioning mean for the presentation of a film like Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* from 1970, a thirty-five-minute-long film that documents, comments on and contextualizes the building of an earth sculpture of that name?



Still from Dziga Vertov's film *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* (*Man with a Movie Camera*), 1929

Robert Smithson (1938–73) superseded the image of the role model of the hardworking artist-worker that dominated in the 1950s and 1960s and instead introduced the image of the artist as a kind of 'middle-class tourist' (Philip Ursprung). In *Spiral Jetty* he created an icon of Land Art, a bank of black volcanic stone in a salt lake in Utah. Its construction was filmed; the work and the film were supposed to complement each other as equal representatives in a dialectic of site and non-site and create at the same time a 'range of convergence' (Smithson).⁹ The artist, who himself became entangled in an idiosyncratic relationship to film and its apparatus, declared the film to be a sculpture and in various contexts formulated conditions for its presentation. In a text from 1971 entitled *A Cinematic Atopia*, he argued that caves and abandoned mines were appropriate spaces – as topological analogies to the crystalline structure of the human organ of vision, so to speak.¹⁰ He gave form to these reflections that same year, in his *Plan for a Museum Concerning Spiral Jetty*, in which he sketched a cave-like space solely for the presentation of his film. Following these sketches and Smithson's call for a prismatic way of seeing, in the sense of a pure opticality,¹¹ Kinoapparatom projected the film *Spiral Jetty* into the lowest floor of a high-technology underground parking lot in Zurich, whose walls were covered with threads of alum and other crystalline mineral effloresces as a result of a (controlled) seeping of the groundwater. This "cave ambience" represented an appropriate setting to present the film in Smithson's spirit, including the persiflage of a 'true' underground cinema. The installation of the cinematographic apparatus required that the entire parking level be closed to automobile traffic, which enabled the audience to enter at any time through an existing spiral entrance. Distant noises from approaching cars on the floors above mixed with the noise of heavy construction equipment in the film. It raised the question of whether the spectatorial aspect was conditioned by economics. In this context, we did not stage the projection site as a neutral space; rather, the presentation of the film in that specific site marked its social, political, and economic constitution, which also influenced the perception of what was seen. In the site where it was presented, the film found a modulator of perception – an echo, so to speak.



Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970 Presentation as part of Kinoapparatom presents: *The Spiral Jetty*, underground parking garage, Zurich, October 2005

Cinéma Sublime was developed by us in 2006 as an example of a screening practice dedicated to the margins and frame of the cinematographic experience, as a contribution to Liste 06: The Young Art Fair, an offshoot of Art Basel.¹² Conceived as a temporary installation, *Cinéma Sublime* transformed an everyday transit site – the St. Alban ferry on the Rhine – into a machine for viewing, which literally and metaphorically shuttled between alleged opposite poles: between off venue and high art, between art and its public, and finally between

art and its critics. We darkened the windows of the projection room, though the outside as such remained visible. The view out the window was filtered by a gauze that – originally used in film production as ‘day for night’ – suggested falling dusk. By reversing the relationship of the moving image and the stationary viewer, the separation of site and film began to collapse. The architecture of the machine for viewing became the frame of the visual event, while the image itself no longer appeared as a projection but as a drive-in landscape painting whose horizon was accentuated by the tower of the Art Basel trade fair and the Warteckgebäude, where Liste 06 was held. The stressed public from the fair encountered a place with a lavish time frame – the ferry fulfilled the promise of travelling as the crow flies, yet saving time demanded the use of other means of transportation. For a brief moment, a reversal of relationships of economic power became visible: the ferry was originally initiated to provide the financial basis for founding one of the local art institutions, the Kunsthalle Basel, while these days the art institutions on opposite banks are among those who help keep ferry operations going.



Kinoapparatom presents: *Cinéma Sublime*, on the occasion of Liste 06: The Young Art Fair, Rheinfähre St. Alban, Basel, June 2006

The Dark Room of the Viewers

The assumption of an interaction between the film and the place it is perceived is based on a specific ability of the cinematic space to describe a relationship between the picture screen and that beyond it, which cannot be seen. In this sense, the film image always structures an imaginary space – the off-screen – which cannot be seen but nonetheless interferes with the surrounding space as a spatialized imagination. The viewers’ space is the only place where the various perceptual impressions open up and combine into a spatial unit, a visual space. It demands of the viewers a double perceptual movement: the recognition of a spatial representation and the perception of a tension between the visible picture screen and what is imagined outside it.¹³ The darkness that surrounds the glowing screen distracts from the boundary of the screen and is at the same time a challenge to play with that boundary. The shifting of the imaginary outside of the picture into view and its real ‘correspondence’ in Kinoapparatom’s presentation practice results in an apparatus in which inside and outside, seeing and being seen, become interchangeable.¹⁴ This shifting of the focus of attention corresponds to the transition from the cinema to an installation-like arrangement that in turn changes the relationship between the body and the optical instrument.¹⁵ It offers the possibility of becoming aware of the extended body of cinematographic perception – of the body that results from the dovetailing of the viewers’ symbolic and imaginary interpretations with the traces of optical and acoustic perception. In this process,

Kinoapparatom operates in the spirit of making emancipation possible, in that the audience is not simply asked to project its subjectivity into the works and make conclusions about meaning but also to produce meaning by relating to one another as well as within the temporal limitation of the event, in the moment in which one’s own body is experienced as something that can “be exhibited publicly and with which one can stand and sit next to others or where fears and desires can be faced both alone and collectively.”¹⁶

The “Incursion of the Performative”

This extension of the productive zone in the context of exhibition corresponds to a shift in the classic dichotomy of work and viewer to the performative functions of observation and participation, as mediated by the connection of artistic conception and the mode of perceiving it. By making an “incursion of the performative”¹⁷ possible in this way, the site of the presentation becomes a space of action that eliminates the separation between the observer and the object. Kinoapparatom’s space of perception is connected to other places in that respect: the cinema, the exhibition space, the seminar room of a university, the meeting place, the underground parking garage, the conference room. The specific qualities of this space of perception are determined by the effort to mirror in itself the connections to such spaces and making them accessible for reflection.¹⁸ One prerequisite for this is – apart from the choice of the film and the thematization of its interaction with the place, whereby it is sometimes impossible to decide which was there first, the film or the site of its presentation – situation for perception in which the screen is placed in a room as dark as possible – that is, precisely not in the swansdown-lined black boxes we encounter in countless exhibitions. That name not only describes a phenomenal manifestation but also points to a place about whose inner workings we know nothing, but of which we can assume in any case – from either perspective critical of the subject or one intended to enlighten – that the images affect the viewers in some way. Rather than this neutral construction, we favour a view of the projection space as a social and aesthetic “space of production that explicitly articulates its relationship to the moving image.”¹⁹

Does situating the presentation of films and their watching make it possible to release an experience that defines the viewers neither as a passive crowd nor as potential converts, which does not promise sublation into a state of unalloyed aesthetic experience but rather can be a place of social and aesthetic production without reverting to the nostalgia of submerged and rediscovered communities? We know that writing about an artistic practice implies other questions: What concepts can we find to describe an aesthetic experience that can only be had in the place of perception? What images ‘demonstrate’ the successful realization of such a project? Perhaps we will find neither these concepts nor the associated images, but it seems that much more important for us to emphasize that as a mode of artistic production Kinoapparatom does not stand for a specific, single practice but rather for the possibility of changing any practice by means of framing.

In that spirit, the present text does not merely describe a type of event; rather, it also stands for the relationship of various modes of production to one another. This is equally true of Kinoapparatom, a kind of instant cinema on the move, and of *Surprise*Surprise*, a series of interventions that we developed in 2007 in cooperation with the Zurich art space Les Complices* as a changing commentary on institutional practices of exhibition.²⁰ These interventions called into question the construction of a neutral and transparent exhibition space whose rhetoric remains effective. Both projects – regardless of whether they demonstratively abandon institutional space, as in the case of Kinoapparatom’s

presentations, or dedicate themselves to its study, as in the case of *Surprise*Surprise* – seek to thwart the orderings of time and space traditionally found in exhibition by creating a space that is at once event and rupture.

1. Païni, *Should We Put an End to Projection?* October, no. 110 (Fall 2004): 23.
2. Ludger Schwarte, *Das Licht als öffentlicher Raum: Die Laterna magica und die Kino-Architektur*, in Gertrud Koch, ed., *Umwidmungen: Architektonische und kinematographische Räume* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2005), 214.
3. The projection of cinematic images initiates a tendency to make the viewer's body more immobile, a complementary, balancing movement to all the freedom available to the camera during the shooting. This immobility is reflected in the architectural paradigm of the cinema: close-set rows of seats facing the screen – it is not the intention that viewers should be allowed to come and go constantly. Viewers are placed in a constellation of the gaze in which "the screen to which I am glued is in front, while the projector I ignore is behind me"; see Anna Schober, *Kino Passion: Soziale Räume und politische Bewegungen in Wien seit 1945*, *Urban Cultures*, no. 1 (2001): 87. With the tension between the mobility of the moving image and the immobility of the viewers and with the linking of the materiality of the cinema space and the "immateriality" of the cinematic image, the perception of film is based on a double, spatial and temporal paradox of watching; on this, see Anne Friedberg, *Die Architektur des Zuschauens*, in Koch, *Umwidmungen* (note 2), 101. One of Kinoapparat's concerns is problematizing this tension between materiality and "immateriality" by focusing greater attention on the materiality of the projection space and that of the cinematic image in the physical presence of the roll of film. With this shift of emphasis, the use of the screen as a threshold between the materiality of the projection space and the "immateriality" of the projected image is limited.
4. Schober, *Kino Passion* (note 3), 71.
5. Regina Wonisch, *Museum und Blick*, in *Museum und Blick*, www.iff.ac.at/museologie/service/lesezone/imblick.pdf (accessed April 2008). On this, see also Roswitha Muttenthaler and Regina Wonisch, *Gesten des Zeigens: Zur Repräsentation von Gender und Race in Ausstellungen* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2006), 13; see also Mieke Bal, *Telling, Showing, Showing Off*, in *A Mieke Bal Reader* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 169–208.
6. Introduction in P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Essential Cinema: Essays on Films in the Collection of Anthology Film Archives*, vol. 1 (NY: AFA and NYU Press, 1975), vii.
7. Jean-Louis Baudry, *Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus*, trans. Alan Williams, in Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods: An Anthology* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 538; originally published as *Effets idéologiques: Produits par l'appareil de base*, *Cinéthique*, nos. 7–8 (1970).
8. In order to bring the visual material thus discovered in the recording to even the most remote audience, Vertov developed a network of so-called agit trains (Russian: agit-poezda) with transportable projectors (Russian: peredvichki); see Oksana Sarkisova, *Vertov the Traveller: A Modern Nomad*, in Thomas Tode and Barbara Wurm, eds., *Dziga Vertov: Die Vertov-Sammlung im Österreichischen Filmmuseum/The Vertov Collection at the Austrian Film Museum* (Vienna: SYNEMA, 2006), 18.
9. Robert Smithson, *The Spiral Jetty, The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 143–53, esp. 152–153.
10. Robert Smithson, *A Cinematic Atopia*, in idem, *The Collected Writings* (see note 9), 138–42, esp. 142.
11. Robert Smithson, *Pointless Vanishing Points*, in idem, *The Collected Writings* (see note 9), 358–59.
12. In cooperation with Alice Cantaluppi, Isabel Reiss, Andrea Thal, and the Kaskadenkondensator Basel.
13. See Hermann Kappelhoff, *Der Bildraum des Kinos: Modulationen einer ästhetischen Erfahrungsform*, in Koch, *Umwidmungen* (note 2), 141.
14. Transgressing the boundary of inside and outside describes a phenomenon that has until now been associated with digital media; see Christa Blümlinger, *Virtualisierung des filmischen Raums*, in Koch, *Umwidmungen* (note 2), 66.
15. The concept of installation requires yet another amendment in the case of Kinoapparat's arrangement: although not much was changed from the classic apparatus of the cinema with its darkened room, (usually) frontal placement of the audience and vertical screen, in the manner emphasized here it is still open what belongs to the aesthetic object and what no longer does. In any case, the viewers will always experience the presentation as their own specific situation. At the same time, however, all of Kinoapparat's presentations are embedded in a temporal structure of the sort familiar from all film programs: the beginning of the film, its end, and the projection time are fixed. On this, see Juliane Rebentisch, *Ästhetik der Installation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 179–207.
16. Schober, *Kino Passion* (note 3), 86.
17. Silvia Eiblmayr, *The Site of Sculpture: The Transformation of the Notion of Sculpture in Terms of the Performative*, trans. Camilla R. Nielsen, in Sabine Breitwieser, ed., *White Cube/Black Box* (Vienna: EA-Generali Foundation, 1996), 89.
18. In these attributions, the space of perception corresponds to Michel Foucault's idea of "heterotopias"; see Michel Foucault, *Of Other*

Spaces, trans. Jay Miskowicz, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22–27, esp. 24; originally published as *Des espaces autres*, in *Architecture, mouvement, continuité*, no. 5 (October 1984): 46–49.

19. Ralph Ubl, *Das wiedergefundene Kino*, unpublished text on the occasion of Kinoapparat presents: *Wavelength* (2004).
20. On this, see *les complices**, www.lescomplices.ch (accessed September 2008).

AUTO-STOP

Jacob Fabricius

Malmö Konsthall, June 2008

The artists: Slater Bradley, Nina Canell, Leif Holmstrand, Sture Johannesson, John Körner, Runo Lagomarsino, Ariane Müller, Stina Östberg, Ahmet Ögüt, Mia Joo Rosasco, Frida Yngström and Franz West



Auto-Stop, Malmö Konsthall, Jun2 2008: Ahmet Ögüt

Auto-Stop is a project that attempted to examine and test the institution, the institutional role and exhibition making. The project investigates how curators and institutions present artists' works and ideas, and how exhibitions are prepared, created and presented. How can institutions meet and approach the audience today, or even meet and create a new audience? Can institutions act as social soft structures to present artists' thoughts and works?

In the first paragraph of Umberto Eco's book *The Open Work* (1989) he analyses music in the following way:

"A number of recent pieces of instrumental music are linked by a common feature: the considerable autonomy left to the individual performer in the way he chooses to play the work. Thus, he is not merely free to interpret the composer's instructions following his own discretion (which in fact happens in the traditional music), but he must impose his judgement on the form of the piece, as when he decides how long to hold a note or in what order to group the sounds: all this amounts to an act of improvised creation".

The idea of considerable autonomy as Eco describes it can be adapted to the visual arts and the way artists use their artistic practice today. Art works are often accompanied by instructions, which describe how and if they can be presented, used, performed, restaged or re-enacted. In *Auto-Stop* the artist appears as the composer, who gives the performer, the staff of the Malmö Konsthall, the instructions for installing, handling and in some cases performing/acting

their work. As a performer the work can be discussed, used and negotiated through considerable autonomy and as a result of this the work will be seen, experienced, followed, discussed and interpreted differently.

The project *Auto-Stop* is about this considerable autonomy: during three weeks of June 2008 the staff of the Malmö Konsthall will present and perform twelve artists' works on the roads of Skåne (Southern Sweden).



Auto-Stop, Malmö Konsthall, Jun2 2008: Arianne Müller



Auto-Stop, Malmö Konsthall, Jun2 2008: Franz West

The word *auto-stop* seems to pull in two different directions. The word *Auto* is mostly connected to *au-toma-tic* (having the capability of starting, operating, moving etc. independently), *au-to-mo-bile* (a passenger vehicle designed for operation on ordinary roads and typically having four wheels) and *au-to-mo-tive* (pertaining to the design, operation, manufacture, or sale of automobiles). Each language has its own association. In Swedish and Danish *auto* means *av sig själv/af sig selv* (by one self)! *Auto* is about movement! On the other hand the word *Stop* is to cease from, leave off, discontinue or interrupt. *Auto* and *Stop* work both with and against each other.

The term *auto-stop* refers to the transportation form that is gained by standing by the roadside and asking people for a ride to travel a short or long distance. Also known as hitchhiking.



Auto-Stop, Malmö Konsthall, Jun2 2008: Sture Johannesson

The project is an attempt to look at how art is made and looked at, and how works, information and stories are distributed. The staff of the Malmö Konsthall will work hands on with each artist's project and mediate the work's meaning and its (possible) travel. The projects have been negotiated with the artists and discussed among the staff themselves. Considerable autonomy has been used by the individual staff member to find a way in which they could take part in the projects.

Each work will be on the road for two days. What route do the works/hitchhikers take? It depends possibly on instructions for destinations suggested by the artists, or simply where the drivers, that pick up the hitchhiking personnel, take them. All parts of the projects, instructions and works are made for *Auto-Stop*. Due to the condition of the project, weather, transportation and hitchhiking in general we cannot say where the works can be seen whilst on the road – or at least only where the starting points are in the outskirts of Malmö. The artists were asked four questions before the staff began hitchhiking around Skåne with their work.



Auto-Stop, Malmö Konsthall, Jun2 2008: John Kørner

Thank you to the artists, priest Ida Wäreborn (St. Johannes Church, Malmö), 3rd grade students at Tångvallaschool (Falsterbo) and the drivers that picked us up or smiled at us, whilst driving by.

The hitchhikers: Angela Cesarec, Anna Dedorson, Per Engström, Jacob Fabricius, Nilas Hultman, Axel Holmbom Larsen, Emil Nilsson, Mårten Nilsson, Olof Olsson, Jonna Söderberg, Stefan Tallberg, Stefan Winroth and priest Ida Wäreborn.

The drivers and helpers: Paria Bototii, Jan Ohlsson, Martin Bergström, Iván Garro, Jenny Eversberg, Gunilla Nordgren, Hussein Ismail, Niyazi Özer, Johnny Christiansen, Linda Markstedt, Gabriel, Maria Anderberg, Christina Löhal, Jon Tillberg, Monika, Eva-Lena Rudbecker, Alex Lojewski,

G Hassan, Petter Modeer, Mahmoud Alahdab, Peter Rosén, Hamzl Ali, Leonel Pizarro, Jenny Leyman, Nils Phillips, Ingemar Olsson, Elvis Ivanov, Ronny Fritsche, Roger Franzen, Johan Karlsson, Jonatan Ronnlycke, Sussi Sundblad, Mikael Florens/Ernhake, Fam. Rönnerberg, Roger Barane, Jonas Rasmusen, Alexander Vilensten, Nedžad Velec, Eva Åkermen, Rosa Olsson, Niklas Hilborg, Pontus Petterson, Agim Berisha, Krenane Shahini, Alexander Johansson, Koador Zein, Mats Ranggren, Frederik Welterberg, Bojan Krstic, Valmir, Daniel Engström, Massom Ashrati, Trine, Håkan Persson and many more.

AUTHORS

Jacob Fabricius lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark. He is the director of Malmö Konsthall and a publisher with Pork Salad Press. He was working as a freelance curator and editor as well as a curator at the Centre d'Arte Santa Monica (Barcelona).

Nikolaus Hirsch is a Frankfurt-based architect and guest professor at Städelschule who has held academic positions at the Architectural Association in London, at the Institute of Applied Theater Studies at Giessen University, and at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Recently he has published "On Boundaries" (Sternberg Press: Berlin/New York, 2008), a collection of texts that focuses on the relationship between architectural, artistic and curatorial models.

Ana Janevski is a curator at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, where she organized the exhibition "As soon as I open my eyes I see a film. Experiments in Yugoslav art in the 60s and 70s." She studied at the EHESS in Paris and worked as a curator and writer in Croatia.

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Joanna Mytkowska is the director of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, which is currently under construction and will open in its new building in 2014. In the interim, the museum runs a temporary space. Mytkowska was a curator at the Centre Pompidou and is one of the founding members of the Foksal Gallery Foundation in Warsaw. She is also a co-founder of the Avantgarde Institute, Warsaw.

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'What, How and for Whom' (WHW) is a curators' collective formed in 1999 and based in Zagreb, Croatia. WHW organizes different exhibitions, production and publishing projects, most recently the 11th Istanbul Biennial. Since 2003 WHW directed the program of Gallery Nova, a public gallery in Zagreb. WHW members are curators Iveta Curlin, Ana Devic, Natasa Ilic and Sabina Sabolovic.

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