ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES

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* unable to attend at last minute

This book juxtaposes three distinct agents in the art world – the critics, curators and artists of its title – adopting the conversational form of three large-scale symposia that took place at Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, in the Fall of 2008 and the Spring of 2009.

In addition to transcripts from selected dialogues and the outcomes of three guest-led workshops, it also contains spirited contributions that arrived from many of the participants in the months that followed the *Rotterdam Dialogues*, opening another dimension of the discussions held in front of a large audience. At stake here are questions of cultural agency, audience and production, ranging from the concrete to the speculative.

Bringing together the cross-generational experience of the 140 guests of the three symposia, this compendium offers insights from some of the most renowned and the most promising figures in their fields.

Witte de With Publishers

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES
THE CRITICS
THE CURATORS
THE ARTISTS

Witte de With Publishers
post editions

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES

THE CRITICS THE CURATORS THE ARTISTS

EDITORS: ZOË GRAY, MIRIAM KATHREIN, NICOLAUS SCHAFHAUSEN, MONIKA SZEWCZYK & ARIADNE URLUS

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EDITORS: ZOË GRAY, MIRIAM KATHREIN, NICOLAUS SCHAFHAUSEN, MONIKA SZEWCZYK & ARIADNE URLUS

THE CRITICS
THE CURATORS
THE ARTISTS

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES

THE ARTISTS

INTRODUCTION

This book is based on a unique public program: On three occasions, between the fall of 2008 and the spring of 2009, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art organized three symposia under the title *Rotterdam Dialogues,* subtitled *The Critics, The Curators* and *The Artists* in turn. Each three-day event focused on one agent in the art world, looking at their expectations, positions and the contexts in which they operate. For all the talk of the proliferation of discursive events in the art world, a conference focused solely on artists has never been organized and they are rare in the case of critics. As for the curators – as several of our guests mentioned – a gathering on this scale had not happened for fifteen years.

The triptych of events exhibited a clear founding structure, centered around a series of broad questions. And it was the openness of the framework and the diversity of guests and topics, rather than its foolproof discipline, which gave the *Rotterdam Dialogues* their driving force. A variety of formats – keynote lectures, panel discussions, interviews, seminars and master-classes – admitted a wide range of voices and opinions. The invited speakers included the most sought-after names in their field, emerging or lesser-known talents, as well as representatives of alternative, localized production from around the world. The audiences were equally diverse, from young students to established professionals, from across the Netherlands, Europe and the Middle East.

The sense of critical mass was palpable throughout and mounted with each symposium, yet each gathering had its own tone and its own set of concerns. These were partly established or framed by the keynote lectures, to which several subsequent speakers referred, but there were also less tangible distinctions, reflecting how we tend to relate to our professional peers based on different terms of engagement. What could be felt across the board, however, were the heightened stakes of claims made and questions posed in the name of each speaker's life-long creative commitments – examining not specific projects but their very *modus operandi* in the art world and the world at large.

The mood was dissonant, constructive and, it must be said, entertaining. Our curatorial decisions were willful and we expected strong engagement in return. Although the overwhelming feedback was positive, as organizers we faced some criticism, as we anticipated. The categorical divisions (between critics, curators and artists) met with strong objections: some people asked how such agencies could be isolated from one another; others asked why we had not invited other protagonists within the cultural field (politicians, gallerists, auctioneers). Whilst recognizing the necessary and often fruitful overlapping of such roles, we decided to focus on these three distinct agencies in order to examine in depth the spectrum of each practice.

A number of guests reacted against the (at times admittedly provocative) questions that they felt pigeonholed their practice, and in several instances, decided to talk about something off the program entirely, provoking in turn the ire of the audience! Certain artists protested at not being allowed to show their works while speaking, as is customary with artists' talks. More generally, concern was raised about the way in which discursive events such as these symposia are increasingly occupying space and programming usually dedicated to exhibitions, a phenomenon of growing debate and interest at present in the art world, not least to us at Witte de With.

Many of these criticisms may be traced in the polyphonous pages of this book. Our main focus, however, is on what we, as organizers and editors, feel were the most telling exchanges, those that enunciated some of the burning issues of contemporary artistic, curatorial and critical practice. Notions of power and failure, individual and communal agency, financial determinations (or hints thereof) and relationships with institutions may be seen to permeate all discussions, mutating in meaning throughout.

If a book cannot capture the atmosphere of lively excitement – of 35 international critics, 48 curators and 57 artists, not to mention the 500+ visitors who attended each symposium – it *can* highlight the individual tone and spirit of many discussions that remain, by necessity, unfinished. What is more, this book is the only site where a juxtaposition of the three distinct cultural agents, hosted on three separate occasions at Witte de With, can take place.

We have followed a chronological structure, beginning with the transcription of three discussions from The Critics symposium, followed by the outcome of the associated workshop. The format continues with transcripts and workshop outcomes from The Curators symposium and subsequently The Artists symposium. After this comes a free-wheeling section titled "What are you talking about now?" This was a question we sent to all the invited guests in the months that followed the symposia, as a means of continuing the dialogues established in Rotterdam. Their diverse reactions give a sense of the great range of characters, ideas and practices that the *Rotterdam Dialogues* brought together. Finally, the book concludes with the programs from each symposium and with all the participants' biographies. Here you will also find the image key to the small photographs that run through the pages like a flicker-book, almost creating a stop-motion animation of these highly animated events.

At Witte de With, we learned a great deal from *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics, The Curators, The Artists,* knowledge that we have already started to apply in the development of subsequent projects, exhibitions, publications and discursive events. This was a celebratory moment, an inspiring occasion, where we could frankly talk shop with colleagues across the field of contemporary art. What strikes us is the lasting influence of these gatherings, as the dialogues in Rotterdam continue to resonate in projects at home and abroad. Thus, we tend to think of this book not in retrospective terms but as an after-life. We are very grateful to the people who supported the project and to those who participated in person. We hope that with this publication, the *Rotterdam Dialogues* will travel and continue to incite further conversation.

Zoë Gray, Miriam Kathrein,
Nicolaus Schafhausen,
Monika Szewczyk, Ariadne Urlus

THE CRITICS

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES

TIM GRIFFIN & EDGAR SCHMITZ

IS THERE STILL SUCH A THING AS EDITORIAL AUTHORITY?

Edgar Schmitz— Whilst *Artforum*'s commitment to critical theory, critical thinking, or thinking about art practice as a critical contribution to society at large is normally recognized in discussion, this is always immediately countered by the somewhat obvious observation that *Artforum* is also a heavily commercialized, glossy, ad-heavy magazine. And, depending on where you are coming from, one view seems to automatically obliterate the other. Do you think this is something that is indicative of the art world? Is there a similar tension at play in the art world at large?

Tim Griffin— It's funny, the first thing that comes to mind is a recent issue dealing with an exhibition of Sots Art and the way in which its practitioners in the former Soviet Union were taken to task by the government and dissident *samizdat* artists alike, since Sots Art was critical and yet employed the predominant images of culture.[1] The Sots artists were hated both on the left and on the right. But the question for the dissidents was whether criticism, in order to have any effect, needs to engage mainstream culture in its own language. In my editor's letter for that issue, I asked that the magazine be considered a kind of object, displaying a schizophrenic capitalism where both sides of a story are there to be read in counterpoint, full of antagonisms but also of tactical maneuvers among different demographics. Over the course of many issues of *Artforum*, one sees that engagement unfold through time, with the different parties not always consciously responding to one another, but nevertheless together creating a kind of composition.

I am very aware of how conventions can play out within criticism, so that people, instead of creating a generative situation of difference, merely do what is expected of a critic. Criticism becomes a kind of advert for itself, or a representation of itself, not actually forcing any unpacking of culture, but rather adhering to its own conventions and orthodoxies. It becomes, in all senses of the word, academic. One of an editor's basic obligations, I suppose, is to try to dislodge those conventions, insofar as it is possible.

E. S.— And you would do that through choreographing different voices coming together? Is that one way of describing it?

T. G.— Ideally, yes. You want to have different texts, and different methodologies of writing, addressing varying aspects of any given subject. It's actually like curating, with each piece inflecting the others, generating different meanings, or revealing new blind spots. Or put another way, I am, as an editor with a background in poetry, interested in creating correspondences among the different pages: Even if it one thing isn't overtly articulated as having a relationship to something else in the issue, that relationship *is* there. And as you read through the publication, you end up having an experience similar to that of going through a curated show or reading through a poem. The meaning is not stable.

1.— *Samizdat* is the name given to a clandestine publishing system within the Soviet Union, by which forbidden literature was reproduced and circulated privately.

E. S.— So in a way, the ads that everyone is so ready to jump at feature as a form of commercial wallpaper. If you say the various component parts (which are the ones you commission) have some inter-textual relevance and create associations, and all that is surrounded or "cradled" – to coin a phrase you used in one of your recent editorials – by the advertising, which cradles your editorial statements as much as it surrounds the more content-heavy contributions, if one assumes that all of that is part of the texture of *Artforum*, then one could compare it to an exhibition in a shopping mall, where part of the "spot the art" game consists in working out what to look at and how. The implicit, optimistic challenge to the reader is to know where to look first.

T. G.— Well, the magazine constitutes a kind of site and, like anywhere you're working, requires an awareness of context. Actually, I remember that when I first became editor, I felt that my first obligation was to make sure that *Artforum* was understood not merely as a vehicle of commerce, but rather as an attempt both to address the context of the art world by itself – of which the gallery system and its economy is a part – and, more broadly speaking, to look at art in counterpoint with mass culture. I wanted to investigate the ways in which the art world *per se* has come to mirror mass culture, in terms of customization and the creative industries. How do you deal with that? This was, I thought, a really daunting task – to say that a publication today *can* still do something of social relevance, engaging people's minds and perhaps offering a public sphere where individuals interact and inform each other. And yet this possibility was all the more intriguing for me to think through, since I wondered whether the art world as such – or, more accurately, the idea of art existing within an isolated cultural context – was an antiquated idea.

E. S.— You describe the magazine as holding a position in relation to the public sphere. Do you believe that there is still at least scope in the idea of a public sphere? As it is effectively reduced to post-public space, there is a whole tendency within art institutions of another kind, not the magazines but the museum infrastructure, to reclaim the museum space in a very particular manner, to import the formerly public sphere into the domain of art and its attendant discussions and discursive formations, as a substitute that can nevertheless feed back out into the milieus. Maybe it is interesting to think about the magazine as a similar formation.

T. G.— One of the first thematic issues we did after I started was specifically about art and politics, published on the occasion of the 2004 American presidential election. And, in fact, we had a certain mindfulness then of Bush's America that resonates with the "importing" you describe – since the kind of public debates you'd have expected around the war or civil rights, for example, were generally not taking place in the mainstream press. Given our commitment to the meaningful analysis of

culture, it almost seemed the publication's *duty* to take up the slack – though I admit it felt somewhat absurd to me that certain political conversations were falling to an art magazine. In any case, I don't mean to suggest that we directly impacted public opinion in any major way – our audience is so specific – but we did seek to define the terms of contemporary social engagement in a way that other public forums weren't.

E. S.— Going back to Matthew [Collings]'s comments about left-wing/right-wing fragmentations and the flippant rhetorics of dismissing political positions – which I think is to some extent probably a European phenomenon – what strikes me about your take on the public sphere (which I can only imagine is a response to a fundamentally American situation), is how a commitment to something one would define as left-wing politics in the broadest sense, appears as a default position within the art world: the way in which you claim the public sphere as something desirable and something to be activated. What struck me when reading your editorials again in sequence was a beautifully unchallenged commitment to something that you call "the political," in a really straightforward sense.

T. G.— One thing I am definitely mindful of, especially when definitions of left- and right-wing are evoked, is Stanislavsky's notion of the rubber-stamp actor – an individual who doesn't actually bring life to the part, but rather inhabits the conventions of the role. It is totally possible to occupy a position that is ostensibly progressive, yet is conservative and ineffectual, because it is known or understood as such in advance. What seems a "critical" position might actually be, in other words, a way of re-inscribing the status quo. Underlying that statement is a recognition that everything we do has a political aspect to it. Sometimes, the most political gestures are ones that don't mention politics at all. And there can be a provocative beauty to silence as well. In any case, a driving question for me is: How does one create that situation where a kind of unresolved tension exists, such that we have a chance to rethink art and society more generally?

E. S.— You acknowledge very clearly that *Artforum* may well be schizophrenic in being made up of all kinds of contradictory component parts. At some point, you talked about this in terms of the demographic that reads *Artforum*, which stretches from the art student, through the dealer to the collector. The magazine is used as everything from a shopping catalogue through to sub-syllabus reading material, a whole range of reading attitudes to which this heavy package of glossy pages lends itself. Do you hope that you can actually cut across these different readerships? Or does everybody pick up the magazine to see what they want to see, so that it ends up preaching to the converted in these different fragments of a readership that doesn't actually cohere? This may be similar to the art world, which is one of the most misleading terms anyway when trying to think about the various discursive fields around art.

T. G.— It's a good point. But one really unique thing about *Artforum* is that, within the sphere of art, an incredibly wide range of individuals reads the publication. People who wouldn't normally be sharing a conversation look into the magazine, obviously coming to it for different yet interconnected things. I immediately want to add, though, that this publication, like any number of others, is somewhat tautological: It has a certain platform and power only because people are drawn to it, and yet people are drawn to it because it has a certain kind of platform and power. How does one maintain that tautology and yet make the publication dynamic and self-reflexive in some way?

E. S.— In terms of a partisan political commitment or involvement in current affairs, you bring up two anecdotes that I find quite interesting in order to understand this need to position oneself. One was around Paul Chan, who is an American artist and activist who talks about some of the ways these two things might intersect. He had produced a detailed map or information pack that detailed specific information around the Republican Party Convention in New York City, which was meant to be a manual for disrupting the convention – which hotels would the Republicans stay in, where would they meet, how would they get from here to there – not inciting anything in particular, but lending itself to all kinds of usage. And you declared in one of your editorials that one of the ideas was to just publicize this map and to place it as an insert into *Artforum*, and thus mass disseminate to a supposedly benign or sympathetic audience this manual for disruption. From a European perspective, this seems incredibly optimistic about your readership and the possibility of a consensus about that kind of politics. But it then turned out that to publish this manual would have had legal implications which made that impossible. This was a similar situation to the one created by the double-page spread that Richard Serra designed for *Artforum* saying "Stop Bush," which couldn't be printed in full so had to appear as an abbreviation. That seemed to be an attempt to have an impact across readerships, because people would have come across the double-page spread just by flicking through the magazine, without even having to *read* it – it was like a billboard that comes at you! Was that successful? What kind of responses did that generate?

T. G.— The Chan project actually goes back to the question of representations of the social in artistic institutions. Specifically, if the map was considered information – something we were reproducing as its first instantiation – then we wouldn't be allowed to disseminate it. If, on the other hand, the map was considered a project we were discussing and presenting in a second-hand capacity, then it was absolutely fine to distribute. I suppose this example underscores that one of the core questions for any kind of criticism in any kind of publication is: where are the borders between information and representation? When

is something dynamic and volatile, and otherwise presented at a remove, as if seen only through a lens? Maybe that's a false dichotomy, but it's one way to look at what appears in publications such as *Artforum*. And as far as the real effect of that Serra issue is concerned, or the response we expected from readers, I remember Richard Serra saying on the phone when he gave us the work: "You know, you're preaching to the choir, but if you really want to do it, be my guest!" He was very skeptical, and perhaps rightfully so, but my hope was that we might better grasp the terms even for skepticism, or for optimism, and interrogate them to create the possibility for alterity. Even the skepticism a reader has towards that issue about art and politics might be somehow productive.

E. S.— Another dichotomy that plays into a similar problematic is the one between the political as décor, the stylistic appeal of the political as an ingredient in the recognizable cocktail of contemporary art and contemporary discourse about art, and a more complicated notion of the political as something that has structural relevance and opens up a new perspective. So far we haven't talked about the thing that we were invited to talk about, which is a question of authority, filtering, authorizing judgment. You are the one who decides who's in and who's out and that obviously has repercussions across the board commercially and intellectually.

T. G.— And to ignore that would be wrong. Obviously, on a monthly basis, I have to make decisions. Additionally, we should consider the role of desire in what an editor does. I love Stockhausen, so I commission something on Stockhausen; or I think Mary Heilmann is great, so I interview her. But when it comes to that matter of authority, I should say that I don't know that I identify myself *as* an editor. I am a writer who is occupying this role for a time. I'm not always going to be this. I wasn't always this. And so I've always felt that I should act, as an editor, in a way that makes it clear that I am part of a community; I am in a position of privilege, but also of responsibility. To that end, I've made sure that I am writing in the publication a fair amount, enmeshed in the dialogue; and one of the first things I did was make sure that many artists were writing for the publication, so that certain hierarchies weren't being replicated and so that critical discourse stayed close to the art.

E. S.— Going back to the premise of today in relation to these future conferences with the curators and then the artists – what struck me is that there seems to be an underlying assumption that there is art on one hand, and criticism on the other. A different understanding that I find at least equally plausible could be described in terms of an aesthetic discourse premised on overlapping forms of knowledge production in which art and discourse may contribute to a shared field of confusion. How do you see that relationship? You have an investment in artists' writing, you obviously have an investment in artists' work. Do you see a split along

which the critic and the artist contribute very differently to the present, or are they part of a shared milieu? Is the artist always in the background only to be mediated by the critic, or do they surface in similar ways in shared milieus where that hierarchy might be more complicated?

T. G.— When you frame it like that, I guess, I would say they just have to be part of the same conversation. I mean, the idea of *mediating* art and articulating its meaning through writing is highly problematic, if it means fixing or assigning specific and final significance. But maybe something of the converse is true as well. The question brings to mind essays by Craig Owens and Hal Foster I recently came across while researching [John] Baldessari's *Blasted Allegories* (1978). Looking at that artwork, they were both saying, "Now wait a minute, he's sending up the critic's role here, and if he is trying to offer this as a criticism in itself, then great – but if, on the other hand, he's saying that the critic can't introduce meaning at all, then that's a terrible thing." This debate was taking place at a highly anxious moment for criticism, since criticality was supposedly, in the wake of conceptual art, being taken up by artists and, according to some, rendering the critic obsolete. I actually think it would be interesting to consider how that relationship has changed over the past three or four decades.

E. S.— As Jan [Verwoert] said, all sorts of people work as critics, but don't identify themselves with the idea of being a critic. Another way of diverting that away from a condition of crisis is to shift it towards a condition of multiplicity in which one does all kinds of stuff having to do with art. What seems very suggestive is how you described *Artforum*, as an acknowledgement of these different contributions coming together, albeit not necessarily non-hierarchically – it is not a Utopia, by any means, it is far too heavily compromised for that. This may indicate a move away from the somewhat lamenting account of the critic as a position nobody wants to inhabit, towards a position that sets up problems that can be taken up as an opening onto something.

T. G.— That is the ideal; that is the hope for a publication. Although I think a larger question is: what is the role of an art magazine, period – I mean, question mark [laughter]. You see, *that's* my authority: changing punctuation! [audience laughter]. Every publication comes with its possibilities and limitations, and the editor ideally performs a kind of jujitsu within those specific conditions, I would say.

Jan Verwoert [from audience]— What seems interesting is that you have been discussing the legitimization or the justification of a magazine in terms of its relationship to the public, or how it represents the interests or the nature of the public, and you proposed that it could be a choreography of polyphony, that if there are more voices in the magazine, it would make it

more likely that it would talk to the constituency of the readers. And that it would be *your* task as the editor to moderate the various voices, and to make sure that there *are* many voices, so that the constituency is represented. Then the problem that came up was: What about politics, then? Or the notion of the radical? If a magazine is about moderating many voices, and many interests (the market, the critic and the artist, the attraction of power and the diffusion of power), if it is all about moderating, then where does the radical come in? Is there any possibility left for the radical? Or are we just being too moderate? That's how I understood it and that is the question that I would throw back at you. Is inhabiting, as you said, a kind of default left-wing position today about moderating a multiplicity of voices to do justice to the constituency? Does the critical public then become too moderate, or too moderated? And where are the possibilities for radicality? Is there still some kind of avant-garde agenda of radicalism, or is it a better position to speak from that of moderating multiplicity?

T. G.— The first thing to say is that it is a magazine! [laughter]. The second thing is a matter of vocabulary. Hopefully, the notion of moderating is *not* to make more moderate. Rather, as one constructs a context and creates constellations of work, there should be a kind of mutual inflection, or even problematization, among them that would upset any kind of adherence to orthodoxy. In other words, rather than saying that this is a definitive word on such and such a subject, the editorial operation would ask for a more generative viewpoint, promoting difference. I guess that in terms of linguistics and, more specifically, of how a poem behaves, you have the words and you have the meaning of the words – but then when they come together, it offers the possibility for interpretation and reinterpretation. Is that radical? Perhaps it's idealistic. But when it comes to editorial authority, I suppose what comes to my mind is the value of analytical thinking in our contemporary context. How many opportunities are there for it, and what might it in turn generate? It is in spirit of *potential* that one attempts to put things forward. I should probably come full circle and say, "It's a magazine." And yet it is hopefully also something more than that.

E. S.— In terms of criticism, it might be interesting to flag that there are two fundamentally different ways of looking at this. One is the representational model by which criticism represents something that already exists, moderates it, mediates it, translates it. Or you think about criticism more assertively as an assemblage or construction by which you put certain things together so that they produce an effect. If there is an ethics to being involved with art discursively, it is about generating not newness but such effects.

Matthew Collings [from audience]— Tim, one is constantly reading good articles in *Artforum*, but one is also constantly seeing those ads, which are stimulating...

T. G.— Some people prefer them!

M. C.— Really? Well one way to consume the magazine is to look through the ads first, and then read some of the articles. But my point is that, having edited the magazine for four or five years now, have you come to any big conclusions involving the role of the market *in* that process that you were eloquently describing earlier involving what material to include each month? Is it that you have to come to different conclusions each month? Or is it that you think the market is so arbitrary that you can never think about it? The ads are there to make the magazine work, presumably, but how do you as the editor know to what extent your thinking of what to put in the magazine flows according to a sort of "*Wizard of Oz*-market" that is telling you what to think, and how much are you independent of that?

T. G.— I've been hyper-aware of the way in which art can be totally shaped by its distribution systems, so that it becomes a kind of representation of itself and I suspect that the same risks might attend criticism and the publications that house it. But to speak more concretely, when I first arrived at the magazine I tried to present a kind of criticality that clearly stood slightly apart from the market and its mechanisms. Obviously, we are always enmeshed in the market, I thought, but there wouldn't be a 1:1 correspondence and, in fact, at times one would operate in stark contradiction to it, even when discussing the most commercially successful artists of the day. All this was to convey the fact that criticality could be sustained meaningfully and have some impact within a mainstream, commercialized setting. An irony, for me, was that I felt that the more I was doing that, the more advertisements came. It was actually by being that critical needle in the haystack, or being that element of the contrarian, that had commercial appeal. The irony is doubled, I think, since I have probably been at great leisure to pursue those things of my own interest because there have been so many advertisements. When I don't have to be so concerned about the market at all, I can devote an issue to, say, May '68.

M. C.— How do you know, though, that the market doesn't lap up May '68 like cream? It is part of consumerism – isn't it? – to be delighted by a little radicalism here and there.

T. G.— That is precisely what I've been saying. Further, any time you articulate a critical position, you also create a niche market, and that sort of cycling happens so quickly at this point. My first impression of the magazine, my *young* impression of the magazine had been

the old cliché: It is a vehicle of the market. You have ads and then you have articles in the magazine about what's in the ads. But it is more complicated than that, although I would imagine that a pressure for that correspondence might arise at some point. I haven't had to deal with that pressure, but now that there's been an economic meltdown, I do wonder what will happen when the magazine becomes smaller.[2]

> **M. C.—** *Artforum* is a zeitgeist magazine that reflects the zeitgeist very well. And you are putting the case for choosing a recipe of articles and material in the magazine that somehow expresses the complexity and richness of the zeitgeist. Which *Wizard of Oz* is saying what the zeitgeist is?

T. G.— I guess the short answer is that the move from the period to the question mark has to happen on a monthly basis, where you might think that you are operating in a way that is both different and creates difference, when you might already be replicating the system you are describing. So that always interrogating – sometimes successfully, sometimes not – is the only thing that one can do.

> **Judy Freya Sibayan [from audience]—** Hal Foster once commented that it was fashionably political to refuse the role of being a value-endower, as someone who endows value, especially now that the market has taken over or circumvented the work of the critic. He quotes Adorno saying that the commodity is now its own critique. He talks about an out-of-place-ness. Can you talk about that, because you are so fixed in that world of power? Does anybody feel what Hal Foster feels when he talks about being out-of-place in this world of power?

T. G.— There was a moment in our conversation earlier when this was very relevant, when we discussed the changing of the critic over the past three to four decades. What criticality *was* and what Hal Foster could imagine it to be in the early eighties, is very different to what that can be now. With different circumstances one has to behave in different ways, and be mindful of the fact that what *once* qualified as a critical point of view might be a one-dimensional reaction to what has become a multi-dimensional situation. And, yeah, that would make one feel out-of-place, but maybe there is some use value to that out-of-place-ness.

E. S.— There is an Oedipal dimension to somebody like Hal Foster complaining about a lack of power because somebody else has the power now…

T. G.— …which gives him power…

2.— Editor's note: In an article in *The New York Times* in September 2009 almost one year after this discussion took place, Roberta Smith reported that "Ad pages in *Artforum*'s September issue are down to 206 from 363 a year ago, a decline of more than 40 percent." ["The Mood of the Market, As Measured in the Galleries," *New York Times,* 3 September 2009]

E. S.— …which gives him power and something to write about. There is also laziness in insisting on what the role of the critic might once have been without the desire to reinvent the scope of criticism. The focus on the critic as one who is entitled to a position of power from which he/she mediates between the unknown rawness of art and the unsuspecting willingness of an audience to be enlightened through its translation: I don't recognize that as a contemporary notion of criticism, and I don't think it offers a template within which a lot of people work today. I think that the Hal Foster template is one among many and hopefully not a dominant one in the contemporary context.

T. G.— Well, to advocate for Hal, one must identify the problems if one is to work through them. But, as a quick thought – and this is completely speculation and perhaps even utterly fictional – if you have the rise of the artist as a manager or producer since the sixties (and obviously that's only one kind of work), then what's to say that a critic's position hasn't changed as well? Perhaps that amplifies the importance of any kind of publication, perhaps it is a contextual question as far as what shape criticism should take.

E. S.— I think there are all kinds of changes to the role of the critic. Whilst in one model (that I would agree is outdated) the critic forms an opinion that then informs the purchase decisions of collectors, in another the critic is the one who retrospectively validates the choice of artists for big blockbuster exhibitions. And if both of those functions are defunct, or made redundant by marketing/publicity overdrive, then I think it becomes stimulating to *observe* what happens to criticism, and to rethink what one might want to do with it. What do you do with an emptied-out, semi-professional status that people inhabit more or less in amateur fashion?

> **J. V.—** It seems that on one hand, Edgar, what you propose is an interesting metaphor; if we are thinking about market forces and critical forces, we should just see them as different forces in a complex field that produce different effects. But on the other hand, it seems that we are always falling back on certain moral dialectics, where the forces of the market are associated with the forces of corruption, and where criticism is associated with an idea of independence and integrity. I'm not saying you have been doing that, but it is something that creeps into the discourse and that's why I tried to offer these different metaphors – of the bartender, the cab driver, the sex worker and the hairdresser – as another way in which the market might relate to the public; that it is not a contradiction but it is a strange parallelism that you serve the client and while you do so, you talk about whatever. I would propose that as a model to look at how – as you said – criticism is enmeshed in the market. And then the question is just: On which street corner do you want to hustle? In *Artforum*, the street names are all over

the magazine, and there are other academic publications where it takes a bit longer to find out on which street these people were hustling. But it still says nothing about the conversations that can be had while these customers are served.

E. S.— That is exactly the kind of point I am trying to emphasize. Contamination is a condition to work with. There is no purity in criticism or in any involvement in the art world.

J. V.— But there's freedom, right? At the hairdresser, you can talk about whatever.

E. S.— Absolutely, and that's what I wanted to highlight, that this space is an unscripted space, an unscripted conversation at best, and that one needs to make use of it, for whatever use one may think is relevant.

T. G.— When you're taking on a job like editing *Artforum*, why take it if you don't think you're going to interact with that, or if you don't think you are going to try to make some impact? When the position was offered to me, I thought that, if I didn't take it, I would have no right to complain about the art world ever more. I had to go in there! And to take a cue from something else Jan said earlier, in the upcoming issue there's a piece by Fritz Haeg, with this great quote that feels very pertinent to me. It's from Jane Fonda, related to her role in *Tout va bien*, I think: "The best place to be radical is in the mainstream."

CAN CRITICISM BE A PRODUCTIVE FORCE FOR SPECULATIVE THINKING?

Sina Najafi— I thought I would put forward some words and phrases that might provide a vocabulary for discussing what speculative thinking could be or needs to be.

The first phrase is "poetic research" and this one requires a bit of background. There is a quote I want to read from a letter that Roger Caillos wrote to André Breton on the 27 December 1934. Two days earlier, Breton and Caillos had been at a friend's house for a Christmas party along with Jacques Lacan and some other people. At that time, Caillos was a 21-year old superstar of the Surrealist movement, with the possibility of being anointed its new leader. What happened at this party was that someone had brought some Mexican jumping beans, which were a total novelty in Paris at that time. Everyone at the party was astonished at the beans, and everyone agreed that this was a marvel. Then Caillois suggested that they cut one up to see if there was an insect inside. Breton got very upset at this suggestion, and said: "What kind of Surrealist are you if you want to destroy the many poetic possibilities suggested by this particular phenomenon by finding the one mundane truth?!" Basically the poetic possibilities are endless, Breton argued, as long as we don't know what's going on. Under the shelter of willed ignorance is where we find poetry. Breton's stance won and the jumping bean was left unopened. Two days later, though, Caillois wrote Breton to announce he was leaving the movement:
Modern atomic theory is at present an adventure into the dark. […] *This does not involve the distress or* jouissance *brought about by a beautiful picture, but instead involves a sense of utter confusion; utter confusion in the face of what I choose to call the debacle of the evident. For there is nothing left of the old intuitions, and any philosophy that cannot fit together with this new science of the why not is absurd. Of course, the results themselves are less in question than what they brought about: namely, their carnage of allegedly unsophisticated concepts. Here we have a form of the Marvellous that does not fear knowledge but, on the contrary, thrives on it. When I compare this great game with Gérard de Nerval's attitude, who refuses to enter Palmyra so as not to spoil his preconceptions, or with your own, refusing to slice open a jumping bean that sometimes jolts about because you did not want to find an insect or a worm inside (that would have destroyed the mystery inside, you said), my mind is made up. Actually, it always was. As a child, I could never really have fun with toys; I was constantly ripping them open or dismantling them to find out what they were like inside, how they worked.*[1]
So a first question for speculative thinking would be: Can we cut the bean open and still have speculative thinking?

The second word I would like to introduce is "the meander," and I'd like to approach it through a quote from the eighteenth-century novel *Tristram Shandy*, where Laurence Sterne offers the reader a little squiggle that he claims resembles the arc of the narrative he is about to tell:

1.— Roger Caillois, "Letter to André Breton" in *The Edge of Surrealism: The Roger Caillois Reader*, ED. Claudine Frank. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003): 85.

Could a historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule – straight forward – for instance, from Rome all the way to Loretto, without ever once turning his head aside either to the right hand or to the left – he might venture to foretell you to an hour when he should get to his journey's end – but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible: For, if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually soliciting his eye, which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly…[2]
So here's this idea that the true narrative – the moral narrative, in some sense the ethical narrative – would have all these squiggles that would in fact prevent any story progressing from A to B as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The third word, "adventure," has already come up in the Caillois letter, but it's Georg Simmel's essay "The Adventurer" that we'll turn to in order to understand what's at stake in this notion:
In the adventure, on the one hand, we forcibly pull the world into ourselves. This becomes clear when we compare the adventure with the manner in which we wrest the gifts of the world through work. Work, so to speak, has an organic relation to the world. In a conscious fashion, it develops the world's forces and materials toward their culmination in the human purpose, whereas in adventure we have a non-organic relation to the world. Adventure has the gesture of the conqueror, the quick seizure of opportunity, regardless of whether the portion we carve out is harmonious or disharmonious with us, with the world, or with the relation between us and the world. On the other hand, however, in the adventure we abandon ourselves to the world with fewer defenses and reserves than in any other relation, for other relations are connected with the general run of our worldly life by more bridges, and thus defend us better against shocks and dangers through previously prepared avoidances and adjustments.[3]
So that's adventure.

The fourth word is "curiosity," and my quote is from Michel Foucault's "The Masked Philosopher," an interview he gave in the early 1970s:
Curiosity is a new vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. Curiosity, futility. The word, however, pleases me. To me it suggests something altogether different: it evokes "concern"; it evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist; a readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to break up our familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervor to grasp what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential.[4]

2.— Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman.* (Cirencester: The Echo Library, 2006 [1759]): 19.
3.— Georg Simmel, "Das Abenteuer," *Phiosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essays* 2nd Ed. (Leipzig: Alfred Kroner, 1919 [1911])
4.— "The Masked Philosopher," Michel Foucault interviewed by Christian Delacampagne in *Le Monde Diplomatique,* April 1980. Republished in Michel Foucault, *Politics Philosophy Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984.* Ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, Trans. Alan Sheridan (London/New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall Inc.,1988): 323-330.

And my last word is "drunkenness," which comes from Baudelaire's "The Painter of Modern Life," where he is talking about Constantine Guys:
Imagine an artist who was always, spiritually, in the condition of that convalescent, and you will have the key to the nature of Monsieur G. Now convalescence is like a return towards childhood. The convalescent, like the child, is possessed in the highest degree of the faculty of keenly interesting himself in things, be they apparently of the most trivial. Let us go back, if we can, by a retrospective effort of the imagination, towards our most youthful, our earliest, impressions, and we will recognize that they had a strange kinship with those brightly coloured impressions which we were later to receive in the aftermath of a physical illness, always provided that that Illness had left our spiritual capacities pure and unharmed. The child sees everything in a state of newness; he is always drunk. […] The man of genius has sound nerves, while those of the child are weak. With the one, Reason has taken up a considerable position; with the other, Sensibility is almost the whole being. But genius is nothing more nor less than childhood recovered at will – a childhood now equipped for self-expression with manhood's capacities and a power of analysis which enables it to order the mass of raw material which it has involuntarily accumulated.[5]
So I'll stop here; these are the five words: "poetic research," "meander," "adventure," "curiosity" and "drunkenness."

Dieter Roelstraete— Thanks Sina – I will come back to those remarks in due time. I have a quote to start off with as well, but unlike you I wrote it myself: it's from the editorial of the first issue of *F.R. David*, a journal I co-edit with Will Holder and Ann Demeester.[6] The core business of *F.R. David* is to focus on writing and other uses of language as a performative tool or material that is integral to art practice rather than merely reflective. The first issue, published in 2006, was loosely themed around the concept of "speculation" – and that's probably one of the reasons why I am sitting here. I wrote this more than two years ago and I already feel mildly estranged from what I wrote back then, but perhaps that comes with the nature of speculative writing. As a speculator, one is free to contradict oneself constantly, very much unlike the critic, I would say. Anyway this is how the editorial starts:
For some time, "research" has been the buzzword of critical art practice. Artists, critics and curators alike fancy themselves the spiritual brethren of scientists, and rename their respective areas of interest ("investigation") "laboratories" – granted, this is perhaps the one metaphor that, due to its rampant curatorial abuse, has most emphatically fallen out of favour of late – or, worse still, "Research & Development" departments or institutions.

5.— Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" [first published 1863] in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (New York: Phaidon, 2001 [1964]): 7-8.
6.— Ann Demeester, Will Holder, Dieter Roelstraete, "Editorial," *F.R.David, The "As Yet…" Issue (On Speculation)*, Will Holder, Falke Pisano, eds., (Amsterdam: de Appel arts centre, 2007): 3-4.

I should probably add here that I work at a museum that, for some time, also had a "research and development department." We have luckily ditched that nomenclature since. Now to continue:
In terms of art exhibitions and related projects, 2006 will surely be remembered as the Year of the Art School: a deluge of publications, exhibitions, and biennials (some of which did not make it beyond the point of a declaration of principles) has firmly lodged "education" at the top of the art world's list of political priorities, and the Academy as such of course only figures – in many, if not all of these initiatives – as a variation on the cultic theme of "research." The latest, and perhaps most ambitious incarnation of this obsessive quest for the legitimacy of science has come to us in the guise of art's equation with a type and practice of knowledge production.

And this is something that I still sympathize with, but have in the meantime also grown critical of:
That is to say: art, much like science, gossip, reportage or social life, "produces" knowledge – it discloses communicable truths about itself, about the artist and/or, most dramatically, about the world. To be sure, there is much to be said in favour of this development, which many of us (including the undersigned) have long been applauding and continue to applaud as science itself is clearly becoming more and more instrumentalized by either big political or big business interests, and is likewise moving further and further away from anything resembling trustworthy "knowledge." Also, there obviously exists an age-old intuitive apprehension of art as such a system of knowledge, a procedure of knowing, an "epistemics," a "field of truth": the history of art's desire to either resemble or model itself after the triumph that is scientific knowledge is perhaps as old as the idea of art itself – as is convincingly attested to by the likes of Pythagoras, Leonardo da Vinci or Athanasius Kircher. However, trends warrant their measure of caveats in return as what long seemed a simple development is underway to acquire truly cultic proportions – and thus defeat its own hallowed purpose of critical scrutiny. When "research" and "knowledge" become quasi-religious injunctions or trend-driven vogues to be subject to, rather than mandates to enact, the possibility of truth is the first thing to be hurled out of the window. What, in the end, does the ubiquitous sabre-rattling with such notions as "knowledge production" do but force both art and thinking (or writing) about art into another productivist straitjacket?

So what I object to here is not, in fact, so much the concept of knowledge as the concept of knowledge production.
What is art really left with here but the compulsion to be a means to an end – to produce? There is much writing about art these days, and perhaps we are right to believe that there has never been more writing done by artists specifically – but one thing that seems tantalizingly absent from much of this tremendous outpouring of scripture is speculation – an imaginative writing based on the capricious art of conjecture. Most "art" writing is either descriptive (the preferred mode of the journalistic trade plied by most established art magazines) or apologetic (the method of

choice of most artists, anxious or keen to anchor their practice in the broader stream of art history); some of it is neurotically "critical," some of it bad; much is laudatory, more still the type of speech that the art market wants us to hear (very often the case in author-driven work in the monographic mould). Very little, it seems, is philosophical in the way only fantasy can be – i.e. speculative. It is this type of writing that the present publication, F.R. David*, seeks to explore and promote: tentative, at times outrageously so – writing for writing's sake, and thus wholly disregarding the currently fashionable injunction to be either "true" or useful with regards to certain productivist mandates.*
But that was 2006, and I'm inclined to think that a certain naïve romance with knowledge production – the fantasy of the laboratory – has had its day. 2007 for instance – if we think of it as the year of *documenta 12* – was radically anti-epistemological. So if I now end up disagreeing with what I wrote back then, I think this is entirely connected with the very idea of speculation; I doubt whether more established traditions of critical writing and thinking enjoy this same freedom. I just googled the word "speculation" to find out what it means, and the first thing that Wikipedia lists is the *financial* meaning of the term. And it is of course quite ironic that we should be talking about speculation as a fruitful intellectual endeavour precisely *now*, when it appears that financial speculation has brought the world economy to the brink of absolute collapse.

Sven Lütticken— I want to continue with something that you emphasized – the freedom to contradict oneself. This is a crucial element of one of the two historically dominant types of art criticism: the writing that follows what I call the Romantic model of criticism. Albeit, this should not be confused with a Picabian celebration of contradiction for the sake of contradiction – perhaps what matters most is that one works with and through the contradictions that emerge in one's analysis. Then, I would argue that there is also the Enlightenment model of art criticism, which is all about the public and judgment. To put it in schematic terms, the critic judges art in the name of, and for, this abstract entity – the public. By contrast, the Romantic model is not so much about judgment as it is about reflection. The critic is not primarily concerned with judging a work of art in the name of allegedly universal standards and in the name of the public, but he or she is interested in continuing the work of reflection, which is seen as an integral part of the work of art itself. The work of art is not some kind of finished, closed, organic, mysterious entity, which we can only contemplate. This would be the banal notion of the work of art found in later Romanticism, and which differs from that developed by early German Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel or Novalis around 1800; in their critical and theoretical fragments, the work of art is seen as enacting – starting – a process of reflection. Mixing one's optical metaphors, one might also say that the work of art becomes speculative. As something that is principally open-ended, it becomes an essay or a *Versuch* –

and an unfinished one at that. It is the critic's task to try to continue the artwork's own tacit, mute work of reflection.

According to Walter Benjamin, in his famous thesis on the Romantic notion of art criticism, this work of reflection is never finished.[7] There is never this kind of Hegelian moment, where the spirit has come to complete self-awareness. Hence also, in Romantic art criticism, theory, literature and art in general, the notion of Romantic irony, of contradiction, is crucial. If the Enlightenment model has been dominant in the mass media, the Romantic model has lived a shadowy existence for quite a long time. It doesn't necessarily have a natural habitat or a certain medium, a certain genre where it has a continuous existence. So it exits in in-between spaces, in cracks as it were; and it always has to struggle to find outlets. The existing genre of the review is not necessarily ideally suited to it. Answering the question: Can art criticism be a productive force for speculative thinking? I would say: Yes, *but* – and in this "but" there are loads of problems, also loads of possibilities – only if you make the question more specific and ask, "Under which conditions could art criticism be this force?"

Ok, how do we proceed? [Laughs]

D. R.— To continue with the Romantics and German idealist philosophy – the founding father of speculative reasoning is of course none other than G.W.F. Hegel. His *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* is known for its apocalyptic tone and its declaration of "the end of art." This is based on the assumption that philosophy would take over when and where art had come to an end.[8] Of course Hegel doesn't mean art history has come to an end: Historically, art will definitely go on, but after "the end of art," all that we are really left with is the freedom to *comment upon* art. Now this commenting-upon-art is something that, in the meantime, has migrated into art practice proper. I would say that the dominant tone of contemporary art practice is retrospective, nostalgic and melancholy. None of it is very futuristically-minded; none of it has the speculative force of dreaming about the future, of "futurity." In this sense, I am not so sure why there should be a critics' conference separate from an artists' conference at Witte de With. Very often, as a writer, I feel like I am really in the same room as the artist. I think speculation is what ties art making and art writing together as "practice."

S. L.— Yes, but one has to distinguish between the Hegelian aesthetics and the early Romantic model, as reconstructed by Walter Benjamin. What Hegel posited is the end of art inaugurating an era in which art completely dissolves into thinking and philosophy. That is not the point of the Romantic model, according to which art can never be completely

7.— See Walter Benjamin: *Selected Writings*, Volume I: 1913-1926. Eds. Marcus Paul Bullock, Michael William Jennings, Howard Eiland. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996): 116 - 201.
8.— See Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*. Ed. Michael Inwood, Trans. Bernard Bosanquet. (London: Penguin Books, 1993). The lectures were first delivered at Humbolt University, Berlin in the 1820s.

subsumed by concepts. The Romantic approach refuses to say: "Okay, here we have the complete realisation of Spirit." That moment never arrives. It is postponed *ad infinitum*. But perhaps we could talk a bit about a practical down-to-earth question: "Under which conditions can art criticism be that force for speculative thinking?" If we all tend to say, "Yes, probably," then what does that mean?

S. N.— In relation to your previous mention of the *Versuch*, I was wondering if you could talk a bit about the history of the essay. Of course, people are always creating new genres exactly to find a home for this kind of thinking, but when you think about a genre that speculative thinking could partner with, the essay is the oldest one that we have.

S. L.— Yes, I think the essay is indeed the most natural habitat for speculative or reflexive thinking.

S. N.— So what *is* an essay?

S. L.— This may be a misperception, but my impression is that the term is used a little bit more loosely or perhaps a little bit more modestly in the Anglo-Saxon world, in particular in the US. In Holland, but also in Belgium and certainly in Germany, we tend to think that an essay has to be highly ambitious, and this brings with it a certain size. It has to be *ein grosser Wurf*, to use a German expression. In the Anglo-Saxon world, people sometimes call texts of two or three pages "essays," and I feel there would be extreme reluctance to do that here. But actually, that loose, modest use of the term "essay" is quite attractive because sometimes that can be exactly the right form.

D. R.— The founding father of the essay as a form of art in its own right is Michel de Montaigne, and I don't think any of his essays were ever longer than five pages. This modesty, this economy of means and the centrality of the notion of an "attempt," of trial-and-error and conjecture, defined his essays. You talked about *adventure*, Sina, as well as about the exploratory drive, and one word that came up in the Foucault quote you read to us is *desire*. For sure that's what drives my personal engagement with art: *the will to art* – as a way of disseminating certain ideas in the world. Sven mentioned the fact that speculation is an optical metaphor – it belongs to the same family as the speculum, a medical tool for the examination of bodily cavities that, as most medical tools do, can also function as a *toy*. Similarly, speculation literally *gropes in the dark*. And this diagnostic function is where the essay seems more valid than related writing forms such as reviews, interviews, or monographs – the essay as a diagnosis of contemporary cultural conditions. And this is why I enjoy writing about art: I look at art as a prism through which the contours of certain contemporary cultural conditions can be discerned. And here any discussion of "speculation" has to face the fact that we are living through the greatest monetary catastrophe of the last forty years...

S. N. [to Diedrich Diederichsen in the audience]— You have just written this essay *On (Surplus) Value in Art*.[9] Can you talk a little bit about what an essay meant?

> **Diedrich Diederichsen [from the audience]—** The use of the term essay differs in different language cultures; something qualified as an essay in certain traditions probably wouldn't be so in others**.** I do not have such an investment in that form, but I am also not trying to escape it. Here, it gives me the opportunity to say something about your discussion – the function – of the essay and what you call speculative thinking and its productivity and its possible success.
>
> You have been talking in binary propositions like Romantic criticism versus Enlightenment criticism, Hegelian aesthetics versus Romantic aesthetics, art versus science and so on. I'm not sure if you are talking about humanities or actual science, *Naturwissenschaften* or *Geisteswissenschaften*. In some languages, they are not the same, and in other languages, like German, they are two versions of the same thing, *Wissenschaft*. You can relate this to *Forschung*, which would be related to the laboratory and also to the French *recherche*, which is something journalists would do in order to get the facts. These days they are using Google! All these distinctions I am raising are trying to bring order into your very interesting discussion about being speculative. But in a time when being speculative, being associative, being fantastic, being romantic, being melancholic, being inventive and so on, is the major paradigm, we see the disappearance of the distinctions between critics and artists and curators and all their functions. This has positive sides, of course, but it also means there is thinking without any resistance. It is not breaking itself against something and that can be a problem because this is a world where everybody congratulates everyone on his or her creativity.

D. R.— I absolutely agree with you that the inter- or trans-disciplinary model and the subsequent questioning of everything (even the process of questioning) have given way to sloppy, nonchalant thinking. Hegel's notion of speculative thought, on the other hand, insisted on absolute lucidity. Perhaps lucidity is another useful word, bringing us back to the language of light – another optical metaphor. Speculative thinking is a phase that we should be allowed to reach only *after* having subjected ourselves to the most rigorous thinking.

S. L.— Building on what you said and responding to Diedrich,

9.— Diedrich Diederichsen, *On (Surplus) Value in Art*. Reflections 01. Eds. Nicolaus Schafhausen, Caroline Snyder and Monika Szewczyk. (Rotterdam/Berlin: Witte de With Publishers and Sternberg Press, 2008).

these binaries are not about a stable dichotomy: it is not about putting this into that box and that into this box; it is about a dialectic relationship, if you will, between the two. I write essays with footnotes; I operate in the academic system. There are certain criteria. So there is no complete freedom and it would be naïve to believe in such a thing. It is indeed important to deal with external and internal resistances – to make them productive. Of course, someone operating outside academia may seemingly have a greater freedom, a greater freedom to "be wild," not to follow the rules, but at the same time such a practice may in fact be subject to even greater economic and ideological constraints.

S. N.— Can I bring up one thing about the story of the jumping bean? For Breton, the idea is that the poetic resides in the *subject* and you need ignorance, not research or systematic investigation of the world, in order for speculative thinking to occur. You have to *not* cut the bean, whereas for Caillois, cutting the bean does not dispel the marvellous and the speculative. For him, the poetic is to be found in the *world*. And I think that is an important distinction. In fact, Caillois says that it is possible to strike an equal balance between the satisfaction offered by research (i.e., cutting the bean), and the *jouissance* offered by poetry.

> **D. D. [from the audience]—** But the interesting question would be: "Do we mean research in the sense of *recherche* or research in the sense of *Forsuch*?"

S. N.— What would the act of cutting the bean open, of trying to find out what makes a bean jump, be in German?

> **D. D.—** I think that can be still both, but it would be interesting to inscribe it into *Forschung*. Then you would have a kind of poetic research, artistic research. If you would inscribe it into *recherche* then it would just be another curious fact and not a poetic of the world. The world is full of things to know. And if you cut up the bean, there is another kind of mysterious little thing in there. Just continue to experience them and have an interesting life and make a journey on the trans-Siberian Railway next time. [Laughter] But instead of doing that, entering the logic of *Forschung* means you are here, it can be falsified, it can run into some kind of resistance. And that would be more interesting.

S. L.— I think resistance is very important when it comes to writing. And art, the *work* of art, is a major resistance that one encounters.

D. R.— Writing can also be the source of such resistance, of course. Writing can even resist the art it speaks about.

> **Ariadne Urlus [from the audience]—** Maybe we can open it up for the audience?

> **Simon Sheikh [from the audience]—** Actually I want to follow up on the last part… There is something known as the death of the author, but with the death of the artist, we have this new author god re-emerging – this free-thinking critic, the speculative critic. I would see that as a danger because it leaves the object behind. On the one hand, the object becomes the excuse for speculation; on the other hand, you cut it open like the bean. Or, can you speculate *through* the object?

D. R.— Are you assuming that the death of the artist is a wholly accepted fact? And the rebirth of the critic – is that where you are heading for?

> **S. S.—** I think we also see it in curating a lot actually. There is no resistance, there is no critique of this figure that emerges. What is allowed very often recalls masculine trades of self-expression, at a time when that kind of author position has been heavily criticised within art practice.

S. L.— I'm sure that a lot of curating and writing tacitly rests on old notions of self-expression, but is that what we should be talking about? This is not a term which I would associate with speculative writing, which is about an encounter, a tricky encounter or series of encounters, and indeed also about coming to terms with the resistance inherent in the work of art—in its mute logic. If speculative writing is not to become some kind of masturbatory exercise à la Marcel Duchamp's mock-expressionist *Paysage fautif* (1946), this is of crucial importance. It seems that this really needs to be emphasized.

D. R.— I also believe there hasn't been any critique of the institution of criticism because it is probably too futile or weak to warrant such criticising. Criticism hasn't gone through the same phase of "deconstruction" as other parts of the art world, but that's probably because it is so incredibly marginal.

S. L.— Maybe what Simon is getting at is a basic characteristic of writing. The process of reflection can continue *ad infinitum*, but at some point you have to finish a text provisionally and then there is a point where you claim something, you argue something, at that point you are an author who says: "It is like this." You cannot completely escape that.

D. R.— I would like to turn that around and find out whether anyone else here constantly deploys the pronoun "I" in his or her writing. *I* do because I sort of identify with the subject.

Can there be such a thing as an Olympic viewpoint from which art writing proceeds, or are we always tied up in the particulars of *our* appreciation, *our* aesthetic delectation of art? I find it quite important to be straightforward and open about the fact that I am just speaking in my own feeble voice. Perhaps this can mark the beginning of a truly critical process: one of exposure rather than expression.

A. U.— Thank you.

ARE THERE NEW AUDIENCES FOR ART CRITICISM?

Koen Kleijn— Our topic today is about finding new audiences for art criticism through new media, and the influence of new media on art criticism. I am brilliantly the wrong choice because I work for the oldest magazine in The Netherlands: *De Groene Amsterdammer*. It's solid paper, 132 years old. We also have the oldest website of any magazine in Holland, since we were online in 1995. What have we done with our website since? Very little, hardly anything you might say. I was very pleased to hear that *Bomb* magazine from New York also just puts the magazine on their website and waits for fish to swim into the net, rather than actively looking for them. The objective of what most art critics do – I have to quote Mark from his own magazine – is to "make people rush out and go see that show for yourself." How are we going to do this, other than printing a lot of stories? Fortunately, the rest of my panel is *not* brilliantly unfit, indeed several of us here have experimented with other kinds of criticism, in the theater and online for instance. Judy, your approach: It is curating really rather than criticism, isn't it?

Judy Freya Sibayan— No, it's really publishing. It's a kind of publishing that is DIY. It has no funding whatsoever. *Ctrl+P* started because of the desire to have something going on in my country. It is one of the two magazines that are published in Manila. The other one comes out once every two years, whilst *Ctrl+P* comes out six times a year. We are two and half years old and we are now publishing our thirteenth issue. We work in what I call a "gift economy," where everybody is willing to give their work to us for free. I just got two writers to write for me here today. So that's pretty much how it works. Everywhere I go, I find people who are willing to work with us for free.

K. K.— This is the way you find people, but how do people find you?

J. F. S.— Who are our readers? We are in *ListServe* and we are in thirty e-groups. I asked Nicolaus "Did you find us in *documenta* magazines?" and he said: "No, we do our own research, we are a smart institution and we go for those who we really like."

K. K. [to Ho Tzu Nyen]— So how do people find *you*?

Ho Tzu Nyen— I have no idea actually!

Zoë Gray [from audience]— You found *us* two years ago when Het Domein voor Kunstkritiek brought you here. We got talking about your *4x4* project, which stuck in my mind as an interesting example of an alternative way of trying to be critical.

H. T. N.— That particular project is called *4x4 Episodes of Singapore Art* (2006). It was actually an art project that I was

commissioned to do for a show in Singapore by the National Arts Council. I convinced them to give me money to buy airtime from one of the broadcasting stations in Singapore and to find a production company that primarily does advertising on TV to produce a program with me. The program is made up of four episodes, each half-an-hour long and each dealing with existing Singaporean works of art from four different historical moments. Each episode has two presenters, always a man and a woman, and they are quarrelling about the work of art in question. It's a way to do criticism as a television program, in a dramatic way.

K. K.— Did you write the text for it?

H. T. N.— Yes, I wrote the script and directed all four episodes. I guess the reason for doing it is that nobody reads art criticism in Singapore. The locality of the practice is something I would really like to foreground. I thought that the only way to engage the audience was to use television, television, to shift a format, to see if we could come up with a new kind of criticism that involves the moving image as well as dramaturgy.

K. K.— Can you say something about how you developed that? As a dramaturg, as a writer, as a critic, or as an artist?

H. T. N.— Well for me, it's very clear that it is an art project, because it involves different layers of engagement. First and foremost, there's the actual writing of the script, which is similar to writing a play but also involves thinking art historically and art critically. The second part of the process is dealing with bureaucracy, because the national television channels in Singapore are owned by the State, as is the money for the project. So it's about engaging with the State and trying to convince them that commissioning a program is a valid form of art. The third part is to engage with people who work in the moving image industry, people who make TV advertising. This engagement, this explaining oneself, is part of the process. The last part is to work with the actors, broadcast it, publicize the project and get people to watch it.

K. K.— Do you have any idea of the viewing audience?

H. T. N.— I think the thing about TV is that you don't know who is watching. You don't meet them physically, but of course once in a while you have some kind of feedback in unexpected moments. You meet people who say they've seen the show. Or better yet, you meet people who say they have recorded the show, hence pirated the program (and the work of art) and distributed it themselves.

K. K.— And you, Mark, do you have any idea what your readership is, where they are and how they react to you?

Mark Rappolt— I've been working in magazines for about ten years and I don't think I've ever known who the audience is that buys this stuff, besides the people that pretend they read it when it comes to events like this! It's slightly absurd that I'm on this panel, because *ArtReview* has been going since 1949. When I came in as editor about two and a half years ago, it was a totally shit magazine. We had the opportunity – thanks to a very benevolent owner who gave me a large budget to spend – to restart from scratch. One of the things we did was to launch the digital edition of the magazine, which is the entire magazine available via our website and you can flip through the pages (which we did for fun, because we liked the technology). We give it out free, whereas you still have to pay for the printed magazine. Online I can get information on how long everyone spends on an article, how old they are and so on.

K. K.— And on the advertising pages?

M. R.— Unfortunately they spend more time on the advertising pages than on the other ones! The online version has developed a life of its own. I think that in about three months it will probably have the same circulation as the print magazine, but with completely different readers.

K. K.— Does it change the way you write? Does it change the way you seek to interact?

M. R.— I think it changes the way you threaten your writers, because you can say "Matt Collings, you are getting thirteen less minutes than someone else!" The writers always want to know – they think I've got a secret chart under my desk that I can whip out and say: "You're really underperforming this month!" I think the only area it does change is when we deal with something like video art. With a digital edition, we can embed an entire video in a page. For a print magazine, it's always problematic to write about either performance or video art because you have just this text and the shittiest of images. And if you stick a video on a page, readers spend a lot more time on it.

J. F. S.— Like you say, if you put something online that's moving, you get more attention. With using hypertext, we were quite happy to lose our grip, to lose our readers who might click away from us because of the links we post. If they leave us, that's fine, because that's also the way that people have found us, on other people's blogs or lists-serves. For us, the text is not a fetish in terms of its centrality in people's research. In writing about hypertext in *Hypertext 2.0*, George Landow said that it "permits the reader to choose his or her own center of investigation and experience," his or her own source and culture of reference. One of the options in doing online publishing is to embrace the nature of the medium entirely. For example, we like the fact that you can actually loosen the text

from its institutional moorings, from the institution of expertise, so that now art writing can come from many places, which is good.

K. K. [to Ho Tzu Nyen]— What would you say to that? Were you bothered that somebody had recorded your show and put it out in the world? Or were you ok with that?

H. T. N.— Yes, actually the very idea of doing something on television, transmitted to everybody's homes free of charge, is that it should proliferate. Also part of the deal of working with the national television channel is that I don't own the rights for the work, because we sold it to the channel in order to get the money to produce the series. So this kind of horizontal distribution is what I am hoping for, actually.

K. K.— Is your sense of authority, as a critic or an artist, taken away from you?

H. T. N.— Authority is something that the program was really trying to work around. In traditional TV programs about art, you have one presenter and he is looking into the camera and hence out of the television, so there is the direct address of the gaze. He tells you information about a particular piece of art; it is authoritarian in nature. Hence we created a structure where the man and the woman are never in the frame together. When the one is looking into the camera, he or she is addressing the other, and the other one replies as a voice from off-screen. So it is a constant dialectical argument and in each of the episodes, the man and the woman have a class difference or power difference between the two of them. These are the ways we tried to use the television, doing the work of art criticism in a way that is different from criticism in printed matter.

M. R.— Having the web version really changes the nature of the feedback we get. For once, everyone in the world can have the magazine at the same time and, for some reason, they feel they're entitled to reply immediately to anything we write with whiney complaints. For instance, I've ended up with a guy who on the day the edition comes out emails me back listing the number of times I've used the word "I" in an article, without fail, every month! But I think the other interesting thing about this new format for a magazine like *ArtReview* is economics. We spend a lot of money shipping the magazine out to Australia or L.A, and it takes a long time to get there. More people in those territories go to the digital edition, which means that I feel less obliged to divert money to shipping the magazine. Also, because the circulation is very high now, it makes the magazine much more attractive to lifestyle advertisers. Part of the strategy has always been to try and make fashion brands pay for the entire magazine. Now, I get more money to pay writers and I can do more crazy things. We do an annual publication, which is like an anti-magazine, done by artists

(with no critics) where they can say what they like, and that is entirely funded by the increase of lifestyle advertisements.

K. K.— But it does seem that with the digital version, the glue of the magazine comes undone.

M. R.— The online version is basically a digital replication of the print version and we haven't really started to explore anything else, partly because we're quite lazy! I think in the future we are going to have to. There are various artists who want to add audio and video to their pieces. At the moment, the advertisers tend to do that much more than we do.

K. K.— When you publish a magazine, even in English, it does have a local context, but if you go online and you spread it as far as the eye can see, what kind of language are you using? In terms of talking about art, what kind of vocabulary is relevant?

M. R.— We made our decisions on the vocabulary that we use in the print magazine and we tend to keep it very personal, sometimes a bit bitchy. I think that if we were to try a different vocabulary for the online version, it would require a separate editor. That has always been a possibility, and at some point this might happen. I think it would be hard to have the same editor doing two things in a completely different style.

K. K.— Do you have the same experience, Judy, when you go out into the world, that you have to adapt the way you express yourself?

J. F. S.— We established the journal thinking that it would just serve the Philippines, because we wanted to be a place to train writers, as there are hardly any art writers in my country, but that never happened. Because of the medium, it was certainly easier to work with people beyond the Philippines who are already writers and who were willing to collaborate with us. I don't know if it's good or bad that we hardly have any writing about things that are happening in my country. We have done probably three reviews of people making art in Manila and every other writer is from outside the Philippines.

K. K.— So who are you serving then? It seems you have this international community, who speaks the same language, loves the same art. Once you're up there in that stratosphere you're fine, but what does this local context mean for you?

J. F. S.— I think the word should be "trans-local." I was in Canada earlier this year, in a city called Edmonton and I asked someone to guest-edit an issue. The contributors to that issue were basically people from Edmonton who know each other and who wanted to write about art and

archiving. That writing was probably just for them.

K. K. [to Ho Tzu Nyen]— Let's maybe bring you in again, because you not only made a television program but you were also writing for theater.

H. T. N.— Earlier this year, I did a project called the *King Lear Project* for which, instead of staging Shakespeare's canonical *King Lear*, we staged three critical essays about it over three days. The first day, we held a live audition. We had actors onstage, they acted out the same parts and they had to explain why they did it in that particular way. On the second day, we held rehearsals of three of the most difficult scenes in *King Lear*. We had the lighting-, sound- and set-designer onstage. We rehearsed the three scenes seven times each, but each time we changed the scenography, and the designers had to explain their decisions. The third day was a discussion of this performance that never took place. It was a discursive way of engaging with art projects, and was a way to open up a dialogue with people who make theater.

K. K.— Are we witnessing the end of the critic in the safe fortress, a distinguished area where he can show himself as a distinguished person?

H. T. N.— I've just reached a point where I don't see any difference between criticism and producing a work of art. The literary critic Harald Bloom says "every poem is an interpretation of a previous poem." For him, criticism is a continuation of a poem. If we look at it in that way, both art practice and criticism are a continuation of something that came before. Each is an act in a field, which is composed of all these relations. Whether you do it as criticism or as a work of art, you are trying to shift this field or expand it. At that level, there is no difference.

K. K.— Mark, is this how you write as well?

M. R.— No. One could easily imagine that a writer who is good at writing blogs is good at writing magazine articles. We have tried asking a few bloggers to write articles and it was always completely disastrous. I think they are completely different formats and different styles of writing. I wouldn't be any good in writing a blog, but I'm brilliant in writing magazine articles! I think you have to take this as a completely different way of doing art criticism and I don't see why they should overlap. The most attractive thing in doing things online as a writer is getting into a dialogue with people. It becomes a much more sociable thing. When I do print magazine stuff, it is all about me. It is an entirely different process that doesn't really overlap in any way.

K. K.— You don't see this overlap between the artist and the critic, this blurring that we talked about earlier?

M. R.— Not so much. But sitting in conferences has got me wondering about how consciously I would think about any of the issues that have been raised. And the truth is, probably, on a day-to-day basis, I don't think about what I'm doing that much. It's really instinctive.

K. K.— Yes, I had exactly the same thing. I heard Sven Lütticken distinguish between Romantic and Enlightenment criticism and I thought: "That is what we are doing and I never thought about it."

M. R.— One of the things about editing a magazine is that, in lots of ways, it is really good fun. There has been a focus at this symposium on crisis and trauma, but day-to-day, I just have loads of fun in doing what I'm doing. That has always been the driving force behind *ArtReview*. When we launched it, we were seriously thinking about putting a quote from Gene Simmons from Kiss on the cover of every issue: "It is not about taste but about what tastes good!"

K. K.— You don't really think about readers, about the audience?

M. R.— It would be impossible to do so, because for us it's such a general audience. You think about yourself when you're writing…

K. K.— Absolutely. Do you think about your audience, Judy?

J. F. S.— We are unabashedly a journal of contemporary art. A lot of our writers are actually artists, I would say about 75%. It is a mishmash of art criticism but a lot are very autobiographical – there's a lot of "I" there! Our readers in the Philippines are basically the art community, about 500 people who I can name.

M. R.— We are always talking about traditions of *writing* about art without really investigating whether there is a tradition of *reading* about art. I work with newspapers and other publications where art is completely a minority sport. The majority of readers want to read about football and they won't spend any time on the art pages. Particularly given the economic climate now, it is becoming much more important to think about whether anyone actually *reads* this stuff.

K. K.— I read the jury report of the Prize for Young Dutch Art Criticism that was awarded here on Thursday. It is kind of self-congratulatory in the sense that it says "not enough has been written about art," or "what has been written is not written well enough," but it is about a certain kind of art. Actually I disagree with the report, because there is a lot of writing about art that is read by the wider public, perhaps in other forms, especially in magazines and even on television. There is an audience that is much larger than suspected by the members of

the jury. I feel there is a much bigger readership than actually is taken into account.

M. R.— I guess, in the first place, the very idea that people want to read about art, rather than to go into a gallery and to look at it, is slightly perverse. And it encourages a certain laziness in some respects, because I experienced a lot of foreign shows by just reading about them. I think that when you are running a magazine, it is always an interesting to question what you are doing in relation to art and its exhibition. Wouldn't your readers be better off if you gave them free tickets to a show?

K. K.— But is it important for you personally to have someone who mails back after having read your article?

M. R.— I think it is important to know that someone reads it. It is easy to lose track of that when you are sitting in an editorial office just thinking about how you are going to crank out next month's issue. It is always a good reminder that there is an end user beyond the writing. They always respond to all the things I hate. Everything I try to get rid of turns out to be the most popular page, like listings pages. Readers spend ages and ages over contributors' photos!

J. F. S.— Can I quote two of our readers? They want other sources of information. One is an assistant professor working (and these are her words) "in a lousy university in a morbid town in the mid-west of the United States," and she says: "For the past five years, I've just been reading *Artforum* and *Third Text*, but I want to find other voices out there." I asked her how she found us and she said: "I found you in a blog from Toronto." The other one is from CUNY (City University of New York), also an assistant professor teaching contemporary art, and he said: "I found you in the *ListServe*. The net is becoming a new frontier for scholarly articles and might help change the current situation. There are not so many places to publish scholarship these days." So I invited him to write for us!

K. K.— Thank you all.

WORKSHOP

In a letter of the year 1914, the poet Ezra Pound tells his correspondent that it took him ten years to learn his art, and another five to unlearn it. […] Since it has been widely asserted that art can be neither taught nor learned, that it is a gift from Jehovah or the Muse, an emanation from the thalamus, or a metabolite of the gonads, we may pause to wonder what Pound, a failed academic and lifelong scholar of diverse literature and arts, meant by the verb to learn… let alone unlearn. […] We need not look very deeply to find, inscribed within the pungent critical enterprise that extends and supports his concern, a single assumption: that one learns to write by reading.

– Hollis Frampton, "Notes on Composing in Film," 1976[1]

In the first of the Witte de With's three symposia on parts of the art world – sequenced into, in perhaps ascending order of importance, critics, curators and artists – the organizers accompanied the talks, panel discussions and presentations on art criticism with an educational element for young people in The Netherlands: a workshop for art writing attended by selected applicants. The four-day workshop raised a number of red flags: first of all, can one teach criticism, or is that something one can only learn oneself? And more importantly, the women – they were all women – who applied to the course came to learn a skill that the "professionals" were in the process of contesting and even denigrating in the panel discussions in the floors above. The relationship of art criticism to boosterism in the market was discussed both upstairs and down, and when the time came to settle on an idea for this section of the publication, which the group were meant to produce as a final project, the possibilities seemed both too open, and too narrow.

It was in this context that we chose the heuristic of "learning and unlearning," which is noted in a text by Irit Rogoff on the role of criticism and criticality (that I assigned). Rogoff's "What is a Theorist?" echoes, albeit in different terms, Frampton's own advice for writers.[2] The two poles worked well: "unlearning" problematized the idea of "learning," though "learning" was kept as a probable first step. The students were encouraged to keep this idea as a vague guideline, and to apply it to a variety of text genres, for example, essayistic, speculative and journalistic.

For me, this word "apply" seems key. With the idea of learning/unlearning in mind, I recently watched a film by Anja Kirschner and David Panos, *The Last Days of Jack Sheppard* (2009), which tells the story of a dissatisfied young carpenter's apprenticeship in London in the 1700s. Ambitious and impatient in equal measure, Jack Sheppard attempts to bypass carpentry's slow course to (middling) financial security, and instead robs his rich clients of their silver and silks. He is arrested time and again, and escapes time and again, so many times that eventually this ability to escape earns him fame. The media enters the mix: he is contacted by the publishing house of *Robinson Crusoe*, and sells his memoirs to make the money he has been after all along. (Though just after making it, he dies on the gallows.) Now we can ask how to apply this scenario to the position of the art critic: is it that of the parasitical publisher, who earns money off the back of the escape artist; is it that of the felon, who attempts to find a different place in the power relations of the world; or is it that of the apprentice, who learns a craft?

When today there are MA programs for everything (including art criticism), there is also a nostalgia for the idea of the writer who learns on the job. Such a path of advancement seems unassailably meretricious, requiring not tuition fees, but sheer luck – like the lost world of journalism, of copy boys shuffling papers and quick-witted dames on the city beat. And this in turn conforms to how the craft of writing, taught in workshop formats, is thought of in general, with the creative moment so strong that it hypostatises, becoming discernible through the sheafs of words:

> Moreover, one learns to write mainly by reading those texts that embody "invention," that is, the vivid primary instantiation of a compositional strategy deriving from a direct insight into the creative process itself.[3]

One learns to write, Frampton tells us, by looking at moments when the apparatus of the text becomes visible – at the isolated moments when the ontogeny of the work determines the form. (Frampton is speaking about Ezra Pound and Modernism.) It is this sudden coming into view that allows the new composer to see the game, as it were, and to amend or alter parts of it. To "unlearn," he continues, is to overcome the historical norms of a medium – which, very broadly speaking, is what Rogoff suggests in different terms – that make themselves available by this precise mode of learning.

For art criticism, of course, this overlooks the problem of the amount of knowledge required to confront the art object – which, notably, was never suggested as something to be "unlearned." Rather, throughout the four days of the workshops, the problem of art-historical content was shelved. Formal questions, diagrammatic ones like the rules of the (writing) game or of composition – ones that summon perhaps more discredited notions of authorship and reception – were at play. As was, importantly, the diagram of economic influence and social positioning; the example of Jack Sheppard, our dissatisfied carpenter, demonstrates that the work of the carpenter, thief or publisher is always done for material gain. The question asked throughout the seminar was: Who profits most from whose labor and are we happy to submit to the positioning of art criticism now, with its uncomfortable relation to the market? Is art criticism, in the end, a craft worth learning?

The texts, produced during the critics' seminar, use the idea of the artwork as a possible (and often treacherous) conduit for communication: the object that promises information (about a work or an exhibition), but often ends up deflecting the critic's straight path of documentation. Marijke Appelman treats this performatively in her story comprised of aphoristic titles from Conceptual art: a literal landscape of ideas and a reflection of the way in which Conceptual art forms the backdrop to artistic practice and discourse today. Marnie Slater looks at the New Zealand artist Michael Stevenson, and in particular his project with the Phillips Machine, a real mechanism devised in 1949 to illustrate the flow of capital. Through Slater's writing about Stevenson's reconstruction of the machine in *c/o the Central Bank of Guatemala* (2006), the idea of the conduit achieves concrete expression, becoming an allegory of our attempt to see and understand systems. A concern with routes also surfaces in Nikkie Herberigs' text, which likens the process of learning and unlearning to the *dérive*, testing how Situationist practice can be understood as a more pointed psychogeography. Finally, Esperanza Rosales looks at Andy Warhol's "love letter" – in the form of an inscribed drawing – to Truman Capote, in an essay that considers the ability of the art object to communicate, as well as the relationship of the bard towards his hero.

A fraught tension between the communicative object and the unresolved subject of this communication, determines much of the writing in the following pages – reflecting the wider crisis experienced by art criticism and debated during the workshop. If the relationship of the critic to the art object is a symbiotic one – wherein art criticism, of a certain (academic) kind, produces the discourse that determines the interpretation of the object – this relationship is increasingly perceived to be unequal. Following on from that insecurity, the art critical text itself largely ceased to be the object of attention during the classes. (Neither vivid nor primary, perhaps.) More interesting than the text was its place in a system, and the merits and demerits of writing were discussed as such. Still, if we find ourselves here at the end of an "unlearning," what we have left in the next few pages are words, words, words – and some very good ones at that.

Melissa Gronlund

1.— Hollis Frampton, "Notes on Composing in Film," *On the Camera Arts and Consecutive Matters: The Writings of Hollis Frampton*. Ed. Bruce Jenkins. (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2009): 149.
2.— Irit Rogoff, "What is a Theorist?" in *The State of Art Criticism*. Eds. James Elkins and Michael Newman. (New York: Routledge, 2008): 97–109.
3.— Frampton, 149.

ONCE UPON A TIME[1] ON THIS HILLSIDE[2] THE MUSEUM OF THE VOID,[3] ON A ROUGH – BEING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF [A] PLACE,[4] STEPS[5] IN THE BUSH.[6] THE CUBE, THE WHITE, THE IDEALISM,[7] INCOMPLETE OPEN CUBES[8] FALL,[9] FALL II[10] REAL ESTATE OPPORTUNITIES.[11]

A HEAP OF LANGUAGE[12] FROM[13] SENTENCES ON CONCEPTUAL ART,[14] NET,[15] ARTISTS & PHOTOGRAPHS[16] MAKE UP DEPT.[17] HAVING FROM TIME TO TIME A RELATION TO: ESCALATION-OVERLOADING-REVOCATION.[18]

SOMETHING NEAR IN PLACE AND TIME, BUT NOT YET KNOWN TO ME.[19] TO BE WITH ART IS ALL WE ASK.[20] IF THREE DIFFERENT PATHS GO FROM X TO Y[21] THE CO-FOUNDER OF THE WORD OK[22] WALKS FROM X TO Y.[23]

ALL THE THINGS I KNOW…[24] (ART NOTES AND THOUGHTS[25]) PERHAPS WHEN REMOVED[26] RECORDS[27] MY NAME AS THOUGH IT WERE WRITTEN ON THE SURFACE OF THE MOON,[28] RIGHT OF CENTRE.[29]

I AM TOO SAD TO TELL YOU…[30] WORDS[31] PURSUIT[32] UNTITLED[33] CODES.[34]

Marijke Appelman, 2009.

1.— 1973, Lawrence Weiner
2.— 1972, Richard Long
3.— 1967, Robert Smithson
4.— 1975, Lawrence Weiner
5.— 1971, Stanley Brouwn
6.— 1972, Gilbert & George
7.— 1976, Daniel Buren
8.— 1974, Sol LeWitt
9.— 1970, Bas Jan Ader
10.— 1970, Bas Jan Ader
11.— 1970, Ed Ruscha
12.— 1966, Robert Smithson
13.— 1976, Daniel Buren
14.— 1968, Sol LeWitt
15.— 1969, Ger van Elk
16.— 1970, Jan Dibbets
17.— 1975, Ed Ruscha
18.— 1973, Lawrence Weiner
19.— 1971, Robert Barry
20.— 1970, Gilbert & George
21.— 1970, Stanley Brouwn
22.— 1971, Ger van Elk
23.— 1970, Stanley Brouwn
24.— 1974, Robert Barry
25.— 1970, Gilbert & George
26.— 1971, Lawrence Weiner
27.— 1971, Ed Ruscha
28.— 1968, Bruce Nauman
29.— 1970, Lawrence Weiner
30.— 1971, Bas Jan Ader
31.— 1958-1972, Carl Andre
32.— 1975, Bruce Nauman
33.— 1971, Hanne Darboven
34.— 1965, On Kawara

THE RUIN, THE ARCHIVE, THE RESEARCHER AND THE GIFT

On the 12th of October 1971 guests arrived for what would come to be regarded as the most lavish and spectacular party of the twentieth century. Spanning three days, the celebration marked the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. The host, supreme Monarch of Iran, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, welcomed his guests to a lavish tented city constructed adjacent to the ruins of Persepolis, which took as its model the Field of the Cloth of Gold meeting between the kings of France and England in Balinghem, France in 1520. Designed and constructed by the Parisian decorators Maison Jansen, the 160-acre Persepolis complex consisted of the Shah's tent of honor, fifty-four air-conditioned guest tents, and one to accommodate a series of extravagant banquets.

In June 2007, Michael Stevenson presented the audiences of Art Unlimited, Art Basel 38 with *Persepolis 2530* – a carefully reconstructed replica of one of the surviving structures from the tent city. Stevenson presented this facsimile not as the Shah intended – with the eyes of the world turned to the grandeur of Persian imperial history (with him and his modern Iran at the center) – but in its forgotten, skeletal, post-revolutionary state, thirty-six years after the fact. *Persepolis 2530* sat, positioned among the best of the new, presented to Europe as an architectural folly.

In the months leading up to the presentation at Art Unlimited, Stevenson came into contact with Rüdiger Ihle, a structural engineer who worked in the same building as the artist. Stevenson and Ihle spoke at length about the planning and construction of *Persepolis 2530*. This series of conversations fulfilled their promise of structural solidity (the complex tent structure, constructed and assembled with modest means, survived the exhibition period); and they also provided a sound architecture with which to think about *Persepolis 2530* and Stevenson's wider artistic practice.

Ihle and Stevenson talked about a proposed structure or, more precisely, a proposed sculptural copy of a structure that sits in parallel to the ruins of the Persepolis complex. Stevenson needed to know what could make the structure fall, what were the implications of its failure and its success, and what conditions were necessary for its survival. During their conversation Ihle considered the structure in three dimensions; in other words, he spatialized the hypothetical. He explained to Stevenson that they were contemplating a particular class of structure and, in the worst-case scenario, it could totally collapse through a revolutionary force.

Michael— How can this be?

Rüdiger— It is the Turning Moments… they act in union. It is their combined force that buckles the critical joints and turns the structure.

M.— This circular movement, it is not just a few degrees… it sounds very dramatic.

R.— Yes, here it could possibly require a complete revolution to bring the roof trusses from their vertical planes to the point of total collapse.[1]

Although Stevenson's practice has been linked with the recent artistic examination of the archive, as articulated by Hal Foster in "An Archival Impulse,"[2] his connection to the politics of the historical has less to do with the unearthing of a forgotten, minor narrative than with the employment of certain moments as ready-made, intricate frameworks. Utilizing the tools and processes of research, his practice drives towards a speculative account of improbability that operates in the parallel mode of allegory rather than as something specifically tied to an historical *remembering* of the archive.

Stevenson's narratives are sensational and scandalous. They weave a complex web of people, places, and events where the involvement of key players and unlikely figures are exposed. Where others have seen a series of mistakes, Stevenson sees a bizarrely causal series of encounters that uncover the significance of intricate networks of relations. He examines selected moments that articulate the shift or transformation of a complex system from one state to another. It's a messy project, as any genealogy contains not

1.— Michael Stevenson in conversation with Rüdiger Ihle, "Collapse" in *Celebration at Persepolis* (Bristol: Arnolfini, Zurich: JRP/Ringier Kunstverlag, 2008): 14.
2.— Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 2 – 22.

only what is present at any given moment, but all that has come before and will follow.[3] Although we could talk here of a series of parallel but autonomous events, this would be simply a suspended condition; yet Stevenson is not interested in closure, but rather in a time that is forever walking wounded.[4] To say that the past affects the present is too obvious, but to articulate particular moments in history as bordering on the improbable casts our present moment as a palimpsestic web that can reveal itself only through a process of careful reconstruction.

Armed with a "conspiracy theory tactic" of sorts, Stevenson approaches the past in search of an object that will articulate its complexity. The Phillips Machine, or Moniac, invented by New Zealand economist Bill Phillips, is one such object. It was first presented in 1949 at the London School of Economics, where Phillips was studying at the time. Intended predominantly as a teaching aid, the Phillips Machine produced the circulation of colored water, controlled by adjustable valves, that mimicked various economic forces, thereby demonstrating the monetary flows of a national economy. Following the initial presentation, it went into limited production, with approximately fifteen units ordered mainly by institutions with a pedagogical imperative. The machine itself was large – standing at about two meters in height – and was constructed from acrylic, plastic tubing, and metal. It had the awkward form you could expect from a teaching aid – its clunky appearance foregrounding a kind of schematic transparency.

Stevenson first heard about the story of the Phillips Machine as a rumor, and later embarked on "a search for a quest" that led him to the discovery of an account of a Moniac being ordered and delivered to the Central Bank of Guatemala sometime in the early 1950s. For Stevenson this exchange presented an enticing moment in the history of the Phillips Machine, both because this was apparently a unique instance of the machine being used by a non-pedagogical institution, and also because this was an economic trade between the developed world and the Central American developing world in the early days of (social and economic) post-colonialism.

Shrouded in mystery, incomplete records, institutional relocations, political reform, and a sometime hostile landscape, the provenance of the Guatemalan Moniac and the process of Stevenson's research both encountered potholes and dead ends. The resulting myth attended the project's initial exhibition in 2006 at CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco under the title *c/o the Central Bank of Guatemala*, and the following year, at Vilma Gold Gallery in London, when it took on the ambiguous title *Answers to Some Questions About Bananas*. The project consisted of a functioning reconstruction of the Guatemalan Moniac alongside a promotional video for an American corporation, the United Fruit Company. Guatemala in the early 1950s was in the initial stages of liberal land reform, which was later curtailed by a military coup and followed by an extended period of military leadership and civil war. The government-led reform was intended to shift ownership of farmland from large owners to the indigenous population. One such major landlord, potentially set to lose the most in the reform process, was the United Fruit Company, which not only maintained a virtual monopoly over banana production in Guatemala but also owned the major telephone, transport and shipping networks.

During muddy times, the Guatemalan Moniac witnessed it all. As an object intended to clearly demonstrate the flow of capital, the machines journey through Guatemala on the back of the transport networks owned and operated by the United Fruit Company both enacted and implicated the Moniac in the very network it was charged with extrapolating. Ironically, the bankers and economists that greeted the battered structure on its arrival at the doors of the Central Bank expected *more* fiscal clarity. In Stevenson's project, the Moniac appears to mark a convergent point where a speculative web of political and economic structures remain unstable. Did the bankers and economists turn to the Guatemalan Moniac to measure the potentials of this instability (expressed by the varying flows of colored water), to forecast possible "Turning Moments," and to formulate a necessary response? Stevenson's research failed to answer many questions surrounding the life of the Guatemalan Moniac – incomplete records and the sweep of legend clouded anything that might come close to an objective historical portrait.

If, as the second title of Stevenson's project stated, the Guatemalan Moniac could answer some questions about bananas, it does so while remaining elusive. This is no diplomatic archive, nor does it offer a paranoid critique of the possibilities of objective pedagogy. Like *Persepolis 2530*, Stevenson's replica of the Guatemalan Moniac operates as folly, gift and ruin. In both of these cases, his projects emerge from a process of historical research and manifest as sculptural replicas.

They appear in the present as things of the past, placed within the vocabulary of the ruin. Unlike the desires of a monument (with its self-stated significance and its attempt to retain an objective power across, through and for time), a ruin (like a genealogy) manifests through time and wears its scars accordingly. In this sense Stevenson's project could be thought of as the ongoing search for an exemplary marker – a microcosm that can maintain its worn singularity *and* serve the complexity of a Turning Moment.

Marnie Slater

3.— "Let us say, roughly, that as opposed to a genesis oriented towards the unity of some principle cause burdened with multiple descendants, what is proposed instead is a genealogy, that is, something that attempts to restore the conditions for the appearance of a singularity born out of multiple determining elements of which it is not the product, but rather the effect. A process of making it intelligible but with a clear understanding that this does not function according to any principle of closure." Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?" in *The Politics of Truth*. Eds. Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth. (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997): 64.
4.— The state of walking wounded was described to me during a conversation with the artist in Berlin in November 2008. Stevenson was describing the position New Zealand voters encountered on the occasion of the snap general elections called in 1984 – incidentally the first time Stevenson voted – which heralded the beginning of major, sweeping neo-liberal economical and social reform. For a further elaboration on this reform process on a global scale, see Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007).

A TAXI-RIDE THROUGH THE MIND

we lower ourselves into the brain via the
vertical pothole
which takes us to various depths.
at every halt there is a tunnel,
which leads us with some reasoning,
to the quarry of ideas which are dug out
and brought to the surface and....
the richer the brain is in sediments of memory,
the more tunnels there are,
the more halts,
the more active quarries.

– Guiseppe Penone,
Passi Sulle Cime Dei Gelsi (2000)[1]

Dérive

The Situationist International followed an interesting concept, which reminds us strongly of the idea that one must "unlearn" in order to learn something new, namely, the *dérive*. In a 1956 article, Guy Debord, founder of the Situationist International, describes the term as follows: *In a* dérive *one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a* dérive *point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.*[2]
Debord mentions that the first participants in something similar to his concept of a *dérive* were a group of four Surrealists who attempted an "aimless wandering" through the countryside in 1923. But he also notes that the country setting seemed less suitable for a *dérive* than a walk through the city.

The underlying motif for urban *dérives* is the Situationists critique of capitalism. According to Debord, the modern city has been formed into static patterns, the permanent locations of which are based on systems set into place by capitalism.

1.— Penone's *Passi Sulle Cime Dei Gelsi* (Footsteps on Mulberry Tree Tops) (2000) is in the collection of the Museum de Pont, Tilburg. It consists of eleven etchings and a text, where the process of the making is often incorporated into his work. The tree is a returning motif in Penone's practice and growth and development are also central themes. Penone was a member of the Arte Povera movement.
2.— Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive," first published in *Les Lèvres Nues* 9 (November 1956), reprinted in *Internationale Situationniste* 2 (December 1958). (All texts published in *Internationale Situationniste* may be freely reproduced, translated and adapted, even without indication of origin.)

Driven by a lifestyle of earning and spending, people constantly move between set points in the city: from their work to their home to the store. The *dérive* allows the city dweller to let go of these grinding grids, freeing him or her from the suffocating shackles of capitalism. The purpose of a *dérive* is to drift through the city without any purpose, though not without meaning.

Debord used the term "psychogeography" – introduced by the Letterist International, a predecessor of the Situationist International – to investigate the influence of existing geographical structures on the emotional behavior of individuals. This psychogeographical structure, together with the necessary contradiction of letting go of this structure, were the bases of the *dérive*. One has to become aware of the psychogeography of the city before being able to "unlearn" it via *dérive*.

Debord's concept is quite different from another idea of "city-dwelling" and that of the *flâneur,* developed by the nineteenth-century poet, Charles Baudelaire, which posits the stroller as a participant in city life, who ascends in his surroundings. With a *dérive* one tries to escape and keep a distance from the existing structure of the city – reflecting on it without refusing it.

Debord's description of the practical side of the *dérive* maintains that one could *dérive* alone, but also in "small groups of two or three people who have reached the same level of awareness."[3] The average duration of a *dérive* should be one day, which is the period between two sleeps. According to Debord, the night is unsuitable and the weather is of great importance. "Prolonged rains" stand in the way of the *dérive*, though storms are a favorable twist of Mother Nature.

A *dérive* does not necessarily have to take place on foot, although it is the most natural way for the wander to occur. Taxis could also be a good form of transport. "Only taxis allow true freedom of movement. By traveling varying distances in a set time, they contribute to automatic disorientation,"[4] writes Michelle Bernstein, a key member of the Letterist International and also the wife of Guy Debord. She claimed that by traveling in taxicabs, people can break free from the "routes imposed by the Metrobus, and enjoy a hitherto rather expensive means of *dérive*."[5] Taxis can be left anywhere and be taken at random.

Détournement via Dérive

When the concept of "unlearning" for the critics' workshop at Witte de With was introduced, it struck me as a slightly ironic topic for a group of students. I attempted to link the concept to examples from history. In her essay, "What is a Theorist?" Irit Rogoff suggests that one can only learn something new by "unlearning" something old – a formulation that is reminiscent of the unraveling process of postmodern deconstruction. However, I wanted to connect it to a more specific example and to look at the concept of "unlearning" by using the metaphor of a walk or a stroll or a ride. The *dérive* thus becomes a means of "unlearning," allowing the participant to look at the city in an alternative way.

Can we further *détourne* this concept of "unlearning" by describing it as a *dérive*? What would it mean to take a taxi-ride through the mind – a psychogeographical route through what one has learned – to discover patterns and the effect they have, to pass by solid locations of the mind and to view them in a new light? In the same way that the Situationists traveled through the city to free themselves from existing capitalist structures, we can travel through what we have learned and take a different route, a different path, a detour. We do not have to completely "unlearn something old, to learn something new," but we can drift around these knowns. We can unlearn by making different connections in familiar territories.

We do not have to abandon certain neighborhoods of the mind, as Rogoff's concept of "unlearning" might imply. The route of "unlearning" something we have learned might assume the form of a *dérive* that avoids the fixed points of existing knowledge, allowing us to reflect on the known otherwise. Maybe the only way to perceive knowledge is not as something to unlearn, so as to replace it by a new idea, but as a process of losing oneself in the city of the mind, of breaking from existing structures and reflecting on the "learned" differently. A quest through the brain, a taxi-ride even, like Giuseppe Penone's metaphors of tunnels and halts and holes.

Nikkie Herberigs

3.— Ibid.
4.— Michele Bernstein, "Derive by the mile," first published in *Potlach* 9-11 (August 1954), full version available on http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline///presitu/potlatch91011.html#Anchor-58799
5.— Ibid.

TRUMAN'S HAND

Fifteen Drawings Based on the Writings of Truman Capote was Andy Warhol's first solo exhibition in New York. It took place in the summer of 1952 in what was then the Hugo Gallery on East 55thth Street. For the exhibition Warhol showed a series of fifteen line drawings based on the subject of his unrequited love: Truman Capote, the American novelist and playwright with whom he was both fascinated and obsessed.

The first time he read Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, Warhol was a twenty-year-old living in Pittsburgh. The novel tells of a lonely and effeminate thirteen-year-old boy coming to terms with his identity and trying to construct a new family for himself among non-relatives in rural Alabama. It concludes when the main character, Joel, accepts his homosexuality and the liberating aspects of his destiny: to "always hear other voices and live in other rooms."[1] Warhol was touched by the novel, and equally captivated by a back cover photograph of the young author reclining in a nearly erotic pose. The image enthralled him and he talked about it all the time.[2] He moved to New York the following year, and immediately began sending a flurry of *petit trucs* Truman's way: letters, notes, and drawings – none of which were ever responded to.

Warhol continued to send letters to Truman every day for a year, until Truman's mother told him to stop.[3] A year later, he mounted *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Writings of Truman Capote*, dedicating his first show as an artist to Truman.

Little is known about this early exhibition and the work included in it. No checklist or inventory of the works exist, and none of the work in the exhibition was ever sold. The fate of the drawings after July 13th, 1952 is completely unknown.

In a brief review of the exhibition, James Fitzsimmons described the drawings as depictions of butterflies, young boys, and cupids faintly awash in hues of lavender and violet that called to his mind the work of "Beardsley, Lautrec, Demuth, Balthus and Cocteau."[4] Despite this description of lightly colorful work depicting themes from Truman's novels, two uncolored line drawings of Truman Capote that Warhol created in the early 1950s are considered to be works from the exhibition.[5]

One of these drawings, the tender and evocative *Truman's Hand*, is a line drawing rendered in black ink. Bowed, and bending feyly at the wrist – like a hand in the process of casting a spell, or presenting itself to be kissed, it bears the gentle inscription "Truman's Hand."

The first time I saw it, I was transfixed by the image of the hand as a coded cipher – as a visible sign of interest that extended itself like an invitation from its maker to wherever Truman might be across town.

Familiar with Warhol's fanatical interest in Truman, I found it impossible not to think of the exhibition as the staging of an operative gesture that created the possibility for contact between the two men. Warhol had drawn the hand of a man he was deeply affected by, building an exhibition around the idea of using it as a way to get in touch with Capote when all other methods of communication, and attempts to elicit a reply from him, had failed.

But was the drawing really a cipher, or was it shorthand for an absolute transparency of

1.— At the end of the novel, Joel lays beside a hearth, listening to the muffled sound of voices floating in from other rooms. He stares at the fire hoping to see images of figures whose voices he can hear: "He looked into the fire longing to see their faces as well and the flames erupted an embryo; a veiled vacillated shape, its features formed slowly, and even when complete stayed veined in dazzle; his eyes burned tar hot as he brought them nearer: tell me, tell me, who are you? are you someone I know? are you dead? are you my friend? do you love me? But the painted, disembodied head remained unborn beyond its mask, and gave no clue. Are you someone I am looking for? He asked, not knowing whom he meant, but certain that for him, there must be such a person, just as there was for everybody else..." Truman Capote, *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (London: Picador Classics, a division of Pan Books Ltd., 1988): 223-224. First published by William Heinemann, London in 1948.
2.— Though Capote would claim that photographer Harold Halma caught him off-guard, the tightly framed photograph, which pictures the vested young author lounging on a chaise, his right hand positioned suggestively on his belly, and which, along with the content of the book, caused national controversy that would help propel Capote to fame - was hardly unplanned. It was, in fact, carefully staged by Capote in an effort to present a consistent visual identity to the public - one that would forever associate his literary output with his private life.
3.— "I used to write to Truman every day for years until his mother told me to stop it." Andy Warhol, "Sunday with Mister C., An Audio-Documentary by Andy Warhol starring Truman Capote," *Rolling Stone* 132 (12 April 1973): 29.
4.— James Fitzsimmons, "Irving Sherman, Andy Warhol," *Art Digest* 26:17 (1 June 1952): 19.
5.— In a 2007 Warhol retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, two drawings were labeled as works from *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Writings of Truman Capote*. Though no concrete evidence supports it and it would seem to conflict with both the exhibition's title and Fitzsimmons' description of the subject matter, curator Eva Meyer-Hermann believes that both are works from the exhibition.

fascination that hid nothing and said everything there was to say? In assuming the role of a fan, the work in *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Writings of Truman Capote* openly performed the thoughts that Warhol's letters had failed to communicate. *Truman's Hand* carried the signature of desire inscribed in a single, unbroken line – but it was also a letter the length of a Dead Sea scroll, full of intentions and solicitations. It was an invitation to remove the dividing line between himself and his idol.[6]

As a medium the exhibition had the potential to create certain conditions that would allow for a conversation between Warhol and Truman to take place. It had the power to do what writing private letters could not, making Warhol's desire to contact Truman visible by introducing it to a public sphere. But in staging the exhibition, was Warhol performing for a crowd of one (Truman, i.e. one important viewer in particular) or a theater full of unrequited lovers?

The presentation of private fan letters as public drawings suggests a moment of transfiguration in which Warhol decided to convey his interests in Truman through less literal means of communication: the public exhibition as an open letter.

As it was orchestrated, visitors to the exhibition would willingly or unwillingly become accomplices in a highly impaired love affair, sharing the voyeuristic role of empathizers for and witnesses to an uncomfortably incomplete circuit of communication. Visitors to *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Writings of Truman Capote* would thereby be capable of witnessing the absolute trauma of fascination: the inability of works of art, and the makers of works of art, to forget or leave behind the thing that enchants or haunts them.

Truman symbolized many things to a young Warhol. He was a creator of beautiful works, he had bravely and openly come to terms with his homosexuality (in what was generally a hostile time to do so) and, perhaps most importantly to Warhol, he was already quite famous.

Warhol was a young artist seeking recognition from his hero, though Truman's refusal to engage in any kind of communication at all reduced the conversational potential of his letter-writing campaign to a monologue. But for Warhol, this extended monologue of frustrated desires might just have been a necessary and important facet of being a fan.

For all his lettered efforts to engage with Truman, Warhol may not really have expected a reply. Infatuation, like fanaticism, is based on an unrealizable communion. It sustains itself on unfulfilled desires. And so, for a true fan like Warhol, perhaps the only kind of letter that could ever truly arrive at its destination is the unsent letter – a letter that doesn't need, want or expect a reply.

In a somewhat bitter-sounding 1954 article, Barbara Guest writes, "Warhol has developed an original style of line drawing and a willingness to obligate himself to that narrow horizon on which appear attractive and demanding young men involved in the business of being as much like Truman Capote or his heroes as possible."[7] That "narrow horizon" might be misidentified here by Guest as a factor of limitation, because it was precisely this honest and unconcerned focus on his fanatical intentions, on the productive qualities of hero worship, that would lead Warhol as a young artist to tip his hat by means of his artwork to the presence of another (more successful) one. And, in an attempt to identify with and perhaps inherit some of that standing, he invested his drawings – the byproducts of a hopelessly hopeful enthrallment – with *value* for a public that might better appreciate them, thereby turning rejected efforts into virile ones. The unquoted prices that round Guest's article out, speak to the priceless quality of the works in question. Beyond drawings, they were testaments to Truman's works; beyond picturing scenes from his stories, they testified to the love of the artist who made them. In so far as they inspired a younger artist to re-picture them in the absence of words, Warhol's lost drawings – a grass harp perhaps, of characters and voices, of lost boys, and bereft and broken families finding love and liberation, in their alienated situations, and living their lives out from within the safety of a tree – certified that Truman's work was gold.

In traditional mythology, the "hero" never speaks. He or she has experienced the crisis of battle and the fruits of battle that others have

6.— Unlike the trademark, off-register silkscreen prints, based on highly depersonalized subject matter that he would go on to produce later in life, Warhol touched paper to produce these early works, rendering the drawings in an intimate and explicit series of marks that were as linear and uncomplicated as the intentions they were probably meant to relay. An unmediated and therefore more immediate depiction of Truman's hand was a way for Warhol to instantly connect with a man he had no other way of coming into contact with. The resulting drawing is coquettishly coy, mysterious and silent at the same time.
7.— Barbara Guest, "Clarke, Roger, Warhol," *Art News* 53 (Summer 1954): 75.

not, and his or her life outside of heroism is a marvel and a mystery to us. The hero experiences crisis or pain, taking on the fight we lack the courage for, and we, in turn may live out our lives in peace with our only obligation being to direct our joys of gratitude towards him or her. It is therefore the responsibility of the bard, the witness or the historian to provide a testament to the hero's "good deeds" – that is, the heroic actions that makes him or her a hero. This might explain Warhol's willingness to take on the role of a hopeless fanatic, as well as his indifference towards Truman's silence, and his desire to make drawings that both mythologized and espoused the brilliance of his works. Drawings, like heroes, don't give up their secrets. And heroes communicate mostly through action, not verbal reportage. It was precisely for a staging of this heroic action that Warhol hoped to create a venue in his exhibition, demarcating a space for conviviality in the distance between a viewer, a maker and the drawings on the wall, where two hands that otherwise would not meet, might touch.

In trying to convince Truman to visit the exhibition, Warhol hoped to elicit something beyond a verbal exchange: one of action that could be physically attested to. Truman's presence at the opening of the exhibition might be read as a physical sign of acceptance and recognition that would turn a failed attempt at verbal and written communication into an epically incarnate one.[8]

Warhol's hyperbolic interest in celebrity was accompanied by a somewhat passive resistance to all things unspectacular and ordinary, except in conversation where he stuck to the motto *less is more*.[9] In basing his drawings on Truman's writings, Warhol was, in fact, mystifying Truman's work more than could ever be made possible by a direct reading of his novels. And representing that work as heroic – translating the literal in Truman's work (his words and novels) and the literal in Warhol's letters (the honest feelings and intentions he had attempted to communicate to Truman) into the staged and the symbolic – fixed them together in a figurative state for all to see. The drawings communicated elusively, refusing to speak directly or give up their intentions.

Warhol's extraordinary ability to forget and to distance himself from the voices of reason that he heard (from Truman's mother, for example) as well as the ones that he never heard back from (Truman's, for example) enabled him to continue his business of being a fan and to produce some of his most deeply intimate drawings. It was one of the few times that Warhol would exhibit work based on such personal subject matter.[10] He would continue to present "fan letters" as new works for years – just not his own, instead incorporating other people's collective fantasies and fascinations with fame, celebrity, pop imagery and icons into the later work that made him famous.[11]

Though Truman did not attend the opening of *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Writings of Truman Capote*, he did visit the show before it closed with his mother, Nina, who by all accounts according to Hugo gallery manager, David Mann, liked the exhibition very much.[12] At the opening, Warhol would express

8.— From the mid-1950s onward Warhol preferred to be seen with an entourage. In describing the first time he had contact with him after his mother asked him to stop calling the house, Truman Capote recounted, "then I ran into him on the street. When I had known him in this previous incarnation (prior to his fame), he seemed to me the loneliest, most friendless person I'd ever seen in my life. He was surrounded by seven or eight people, a real little entourage around this person I had really thought quite pitiable. Then he started sending me pictures again, including a portrait of me that if you look at you can tell I didn't sit for him..." Jean Stein and George Plimpton, *Edie: American Girl* (New York: Grove Press, 1994): 196–97.
9.—"I learned when I was little that whenever I got aggressive and tried to tell someone what to do, nothing happened – I just couldn't carry it off. I learned that you actually have more power when you shut up, because at least some people will start to maybe doubt themselves." Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *Popism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980): 108.
10.—*Drawings for a Boy-Book*, an exhibition held at the Bodley Gallery, 14 February – 3 March 1956 may be one of the few other times that Warhol worked this way.
11.— The conflict and tension between a twenty-three-year-old Warhol's desire for recognition from a not much older, but significantly more accomplished figure – twenty-seven-year-old Truman had published his first widely successful novel at the same age that Warhol was then – and the artist's insistence on looking past the futility of the gestures that his desire might produce led to a new way of working for him. It marks the point in which he stopped writing letters, and started making drawings.
12.— *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Drawings of Truman Capote* opened on a summer afternoon at the end of the gallery season, and as a result, was not very well attended. Among the invited guests, not only by Truman, but few of Warhol's friends came. Even Hugo Gallery Director, Alexandre Iolas, who himself had commissioned the exhibition, was notably absent. Iolas, a former ballet dancer turned art dealer, would however turn out to be a lifelong supporter and friend to Warhol. He organized the first and last exhibitions of Warhol's life beginning in 1952 with *Fifteen Drawings Based on the Drawings of Truman Capote* and ending in 1984, when he commissioned Warhol to create works based on Leonardo Da Vinci's *Last Supper* fresco, for the Palazzo delle Stelline in Milan. The exhibition of work opened one month before Warhol's death in 1987.

disappointment when Truman did not arrive, and though he never sent him a letter again, he never forgot him.[13]

Five years later, a lavish design of a gold shoe brimming with plant life appeared in a *Life* magazine double-page spread devoted to fanciful footwear. The caption of the drawing read: *Truman Capote as a flower-filled slipper*.[14] Though Warhol did not intend for this florid dedication of a golden shoe to catch Truman's attention, the drawing might have been just the "unsent letter" that did exactly that by means of a third, unsolicited party, and may have been the turning point in Truman's consideration of a friendship when he accepted Warhol's drawing of the slipper as a Christmas present from a mutual friend.[15] Time passed, and years of monologue and letter-writing transitioned into friendship between both men. In the end, it took nothing resembling a direct effort on Warhol's part.

Esperanza Rosales

13.— Andy Warhol, *Truman Capote as a flower-filled slipper,* illustration in "Crazy Golden Slippers," *Life* (21 January 1957)
14.— This drawing was first shown in the exhibition, *Andy Warhol: The Golden Slipper Show or Shoes Shoe in America*, 3 – 22 December 1956, Bodley Gallery in New York. *Life* magazine later reprinted some of the works the following month in their 21 January 1957 issue, describing the shoes, which pictured celebrities as footwear (including Julie Andrews and Zsa Zsa Gabor as a pair of lace-trimmed heels, as well as James Dean and Elvis Presley as buccaneer, pirate and cowboy-inspired boots complete with spurs), as "made entirely of gold leaf ornamented with candy-box decorations."
15.— "He started calling me every day after that. He'd tell me what was happening to him, and his troubles, and about his mother and all those cats, and what he was doing. I didn't want to be un-nice or anything, so I sort of put up with it. Then one day when he called up my mother, she told him not to call any more. She was drunk at the time. Like all alcoholics, she had Jekyll-and-Hyde qualities, and although she was a basically sympathetic person and thought he was very sweet, she lit into him. So suddenly he stopped writing or calling me. I didn't hear from him or about him until suddenly one day D. D. Ryan bought a gold shoe Andy had dedicated to me in a show and sent it to me as a Christmas present. She told me, 'Oh, he's becoming very well known, very up-and-coming.' Even then I never had the idea he wanted to be a painter or an artist. I thought he was one of those people who are 'interested in the arts.' As far as I knew, he was a window decorator… let's say, a window-decorator type…" Truman Capote in Jean Stein and George Plimpton, *Edie: American Girl*, *op. cit.*, 196–97.

THE CURATORS

BART DE BAERE, CAROLYN CHRISTOV-BAKARGIEV & HOU HANRU WITH ADAM BUDAK AS MODERATOR

WHEN IS A BIENNIAL A SUCCESS?

Zoë Gray— So here we are for the last seated session of the day… When we first spoke about the panel topic with Adam Budak, who is moderating, he got slightly nervous and said, "But I don't know the answer!" And we thought this was good because [turning to Adam Budak] it means that you can also investigate with us. Each title/question is meant as a trigger for a broader discussion, so I think we'll begin with them but then the discussion could move beyond that and I hope that you [turning back to audience] will really add *your* questions.

Adam Budak— I would like to approach the question in the most subversive way, so instead of talking about success, I would rather prefer to talk about failure. When I shared this with my distinguished colleagues, they agreed, because they claim that they are totally *un*successful. I think if we are able to define what failure is, we can certainly approach success in the most successful way. Therefore, what is failure and how can you define the failure in your work, especially when working on the exhibition that is the main topic of this panel discussion becomes: the biennial? I wanted to start with Hou Hanru, a veteran, who has defined the biennial as a sort of vehicle to produce new localities. In a way, there's a kind of self-critique included in this question since the whole panel could be perceived as a sort of therapeutic session.

Hou Hanru— Thanks Adam. Thanks for giving me this chance to confess. You don't make a confession every day.

I really find your question about failures very interesting. I guess you know I have this new job to curate the Lyon Biennial. Basically I just found myself being a curator by default, meaning that I am someone who goes to the restaurant, waits and then, if someone leaves something on a dish, I jump on it and eat it. The director of the Lyon's Museum of Contemporary Art asked me if I would be interested in doing this after Catherine David resigned.[1] I have a little trouble with my reputation as a fireman – I'm supposed to be someone who puts out the fire. But actually, when I think about this, and speaking about failure, it would be a failure if the fire was extinguished. If you come up with a project that is supposed to be successful and you succeed in making it successful, that's a total failure. What I would like to do, usually what I try to do, is to create an even bigger fire after the biennial happens.

I had a conversation with a Chinese journalist a couple of years ago, when I did the Guangzhou Triennial and he asked me, "After curating the Shanghai Biennial and a few other biennials in Asia and Europe, including in Venice, what's your feeling now?"[2] I said that I'm learning how to be underground again, how to be in the opposition again. I think it's really interesting when the biennial is not only a nice exhibition, but a continuous struggle

1.— Since its inception in 1984, Lyon's Museum of Contemporary Art has been directed by Thierry Raspail.
2.— See Hou Hanru's biography (p. 254) for datails of these exhibitions.

with high complexity, intensity, and maybe contradictions that bring something totally irrelevant to a place, so as to make it relevant again. This is what I meant in saying that a biennial is a way to produce locality.

When you think about locality in a global context, it's about bringing – from outside or even from inside – all those things which do not belong to the establishment, perhaps to disturb the public opinion so these things can be integrated into the future of a place – to help this place to become something else. And I think this is why we need biennials somehow. So concretely, in my personal experience, which means chairing around twenty-five biennials – small and big – every time starts with an attempt to identify why this place *needs* a biennial and how a curator together with the artists can bring a kind of new energy, new thoughts, new visions to make this place change, not only catch up with the momentum, but also propose a new kind of momentum…

A. B.— Sorry to interrupt, but are you presenting yourself as a sort of biennial machine, producing, producing…? My question is about the routine: When you approach each new local context, do you apply a new strategy?

H. H.— With time, and after twenty years of working in this job, when I look back, it's really an Al-Qaïda type of practice – creating a kind of terrorist attack in every venue, creating a global network that can bring in a global perspective or a suggestion for cultural change in terms of the necessity of each place. I've had an opportunity to work in really different contexts around the world and every time it is different. For example in Shanghai, in 2000, at the moment that contemporary art in China started being visible in the larger society – to do a biennial in that official museum structure was really to help to push a little further this agenda of making contemporary art socially acceptable as a normal form of cultural production. A few years later, in another city in China [Guangzhou], it was about how to propose alternative views to the mainstream. Then in Istanbul, I did the tenth edition so after twenty years of experiences we needed new necessities to continue a biennial there.

A. B.— When entering this new situation, you encounter either acceptance or rejection. Success or failure very much depends on the extent to which whatever you want to bring into a place is resisted by the people.

H. H.— Well, I've never seen a curatorial panel with the size of audience that I saw at the Istanbul Biennal, almost two years ago now. But many people thought it was not very interesting. *Le Monde* sent a journalist, who wrote a very positive review, but there was one thing which she said that shows me how a biennial can be successful in that political situation. She said that, at the opening there were a few thousand people, but we didn't see any Turkish people, only an international crowd. As a matter of fact – and since the new team of the Istanbul

Biennial is present here[3] – we had around three hundred thousand visitors for the last edition. I think this biennial has become such a popular event. I met this journalist at a dinner and said, "You know I'm very happy that you wrote the review, but I don't understand why you said there's no Turkish public." And she said that her editor-in-chief told her that because this was happening in Turkey, she had to write something negative. And so she invented this story to make it seem a little bit negative. This shows what is relevant, what is irrelevant in which context and how a biennial actually functions. It's similar when people talk about China, even when talking about building a bridge somewhere, people always talk about how many political prisoners are still there or about Tibet. It's exactly the same kind of automatic intuition, deeply implanted in the body of this thing. If a biennial can bring out this very interesting situation, I think it's a very successful biennial.

A. B.— Thank you. Let's move to Carolyn… You were always critical about biennials and you once wrote that a biennial is comparable to a trip to the mall. And you introduced the notion of the "biennial syndrome," based upon the Stendhal Syndrome, talking about the collapse of aesthetic value caused by the overproduction and the omnipresence of biennials, and the visibility of art. Could you comment on this, focusing more on your recent experience at the Sydney Biennial?[4]

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev— Yes, first of all thank you for the question and thank you for having me here and thank you for bearing with us at such a late hour. The "biennial syndrome" was a term I used once in conversation, recalling Stendhal's trip to Italy during which he writes about approaching Florence and thinking about seeing all the great works by the great masters. Here something very important happens: He almost faints. This syndrome is more referred to in literary circles than in artistic circles, indicating an illness or disease or a collapse due to an excess of aesthetic emotion. But what also happens in the novel, which people do not comment often upon, is that he loses his passport. And this idea of the *sans papiers* being connected to an excess of the art experience is interesting in terms of today's urgencies and problems around globalisation and how the art system and the art world is participating in this process.

I am *not,* however, part of the family of "biennial bashers." I actually used to be, but when I approached the process of doing the Biennale of Sydney, I realized how, in Western circles, criticizing this multiplication of temporary, international exhibitions around the world actually has to do with a sense of loss of the old centers, a loss of centrality. The same people will not criticize the multiplication of art fairs and often will also curate in art fairs, which is something I've always refused to do.

3.— Members of the Zagreb-based collective, What, How & For Whom, who were invited to *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Curators* included Ivet Curlin, Ana Devic, Natasa Ilic and Sabina Sabolovic.
4.— Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev curated the 16th Biennale of Sydney entitled *Revolutions – Forms that Turn* (18 June – 7 September 2008).

There is a very important shift in terms of the platforms where people can speak or cannot speak. For example, I was a little bit surprised to hear that the discursive model is *the* model of the exhibition now, because this is of course true in a province of the world. It is not true everywhere. And it is true for sure in Western circles where the collapse of a certain traditional structuring of subjectivity has brought in this idea that the discursive or relational could take the place of that loss of modernist subjectivity. It is *one* of the things happening in the world, but it is certainly not the only one. And there are situations where objecthood is actually very important and where the discursive is not very important and, in this sense, it's necessary always to maintain a critical awareness of one's practice.

I was interested in Irit Rogoff's talk this morning, where she discussed how never to extract ourselves from the things we're talking about and how one can construct this "being implicated." In that sense, it would be wise to think about the relationship between the models we are creating and the embedded power structures that we are criticizing. This panel takes the format of a discussion on TV, where there's a question-and-answer mode and a time constraint. This model is also a physicalization of the Facebook model. This kind of communication is both connected with democratisation, but also connected with the problems of abdicating responsibility as communication becomes a "utility" that you can enter in and out of. You can be on Skype and turn off Skype, whereas if you are saying something physically in front of someone, you then have to take responsibility for what you say and accept the consequences – you could be shot for example. So that was a "premise"…

Now, to answer your question about success: Well, the Biennale of Sydney was successful because from a numerical point of view we had three hundred and fifty thousand visitors and it had all good reviews except for one or two by very conservative art critics. So that would make it a success according to a certain set of parameters. There were also only two artists that were a little bit angry, which is also a very good result, and financially I did not go over budget, which is also a success. But this means nothing. I think, I agree with you that failure is a very interesting thing to think about. But if one decides to remain in the zone of failure then one becomes decadent, so we cannot. If we come here and say, "Oh I believe in failure because it's anti-productive and it goes against productivist logic," and so on, then we are actually part of the productive system, we are actually taking the position of art since the late 1700s, which goes against the productive bourgeois society, but which itself is structured by that same bourgeois society. So the binary opposition between success and failure is not interesting to me, but what is interesting are the gaps that one can make with exhibitions. I think that perhaps what you [to Adam Budak] are mostly interested in is this moment when something is "put out," which for me is a decoy constructed in order to explore the gaps within it and around it. And within these gaps, culture is produced. We live in an age where we have to work in the folds,

and therefore one could be naïve if one were to do a biennial around, for example, a theme which is directly political or that seems to have a direct effect on society. Most probably one would construct a very authoritarian model, where the curatorial impulse goes against the impulse of the singular works that you are trying to celebrate or the singular experiences that you are trying to create. You would simply be doing an exhibition which positions the viewer in a pre-modernist period, where content and form (or the phenomenology of the body in the space) are separate. And as we know, good and evil speak the same language. Hitler took art lessons and he was actually quite a good draftsman. So are the 10 minutes up? But you wanted more… precision?

A. B.— Just to define failure more, I think for me it generates a certain moment of awakening and is stronger than the moment of success…

C. C. B.— That's true, but paradoxically we cannot speak of it lest we position it as a form of "success." It's interesting that there's a kind of intellectual *humus* in Italy right now, which has to do, not with failure, but with *withdrawal* and which is maybe a more interesting condition than declaring failure. But all artists know that failure is productive – you try to copy and you cannot copy, then you are original. All culture is a failure…

A. B.— But it's basically about making things better?

C. C. B.— It is?

A. B.— Yeah, in a way failure is more constructive in generating reflection that leads towards improvement…

C. C. B.— No, I cannot think in the logic of failure and success. I don't understand that opposition.

A. B.— Well I'm not juxtaposing them in a conservative way. I consider failure as something mobilizing in order to make things better…

C. C. B.— You mean that… it opens up spaces?

A. B.— Yes.

C. C. B.— When something doesn't go as one predicts…

A. B.— Right…

C. C. B.— One changes perspective…

A. B.— To improve it…

C. C. B.— Yes, and to look at things from a different point of view. Then, of course, there are many projects that, as a curator, one does and that could be considered failures, according to the preceding proposition. For example, Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla wanted to sell the entire Biennale of Sydney at auction and Sotheby's Australia initially agreed and we had so many meetings, but ultimately it failed because the head office of Sotheby's apparently decided that this was false advertising as I wouldn't actually be able to sell the Duchamp or whatever. And therefore we didn't do it and it turned into something else: they made a Western Union money transfer to Sotheby's of an enormous amount of money and then cancelled it – so you actually have to make that passage and then change your mind, delete, cancel it. And we exhibited the cancelled money order. So you could say that this is indeed failure and I welcome these failures in exhibitions, if that's what you mean. I mean giving birth could be considered a failure if one thinks of the fact that one is not able to keep this child…

[consternation, then applause]

A. B.— That's a very brave statement. [short pause] Maybe to avoid the failure of this panel, from an organizational point of view, we have to move to the last panellist: Bart De Baere. We'll remain within the terroristic field, as horizon and underground works were the topic of Bart's entry into the Brussels Biennial, which I think was a real highlight. [To Bart De Baere] In your writing and talks, you are *also* very sceptical about biennials; you say that all biennials fail as projects but they generate an event, which is successful in socio-economic terms. So you go on to introduce the sort of dynamic between gains and losses that a biennial implies. I would be interested to hear of your experience as an advisor to the Johannesburg Biennial because I think that it was very important in terms of generating a new model and new local situation and consequently the other work at the last Brussels Biennial.

Bart De Baere— I want to take a slightly more basic approach to failure this time than I did in the articles you are referring to. It's because of the Al-Qaïda metaphor; Al-Qaïda is not about terrorism, it's about Islam. It has a project, a very clear project, which is different from my project: It's about a state that is no longer a secular state but in which everything has a religious dimension. It seems to me that, in a certain way, any work of art, or any valid exhibition, has the same kind of aspiration that is without an end, but it has this in a more open way, essentially accepting its own failure or living that. For me, Johannesburg was an extremely clear experience. It was just after apartheid and there was not only no infrastructure, there was no society or a completely fragmented society. Traveling the country, seeing the complete incompatibility and the lack of bridges between groups of people, it was the right time and place for

this amazingly ambitious project of the city to happen. The sky was the limit at that point, everything had to be invented and could become true. So many things might have happened and many things did, but obviously there were even more possibilities that remained unrealized. I always think that the level of that which is not realized determines the level of that which happens. And I think you can translate this maxim also to less dramatic, less extreme situations. In the 1998 Biennial of São Paulo, where I had the pleasure of curating the European part, Paulo Herkenhoff made an amazingly complex, multi-layered and profound project. What is remembered of that now is nearly a caricature, however positive the image is. The image, the reception, limits the potentiality too.

The Gwangju Biennial, which Hou Hanru did together with Charles Esche, was also such an amazing exhibition, in its realization on the verge of breaking down: At 11 o'clock in the evening, just before the opening, the artists revolted and broke into the administration. For the whole morning, the organisors were still busy preparing video displays, meanwhile at 10 o'clock in the morning there was the president giving a video speech and there was a successful opening going on. That project was an unforgettable experience – between collectives and individuals, between spaces and works of art – it addressed the ways in which we evaluate groups of people. It realized a kind of texture or a richness and a density, which I would have loved to continue everywhere in a certain way, but that doesn't happen. And now I want to make one turn and say that all of what I've said so far was perhaps not true because, if I'm speaking really profoundly, I think success is actually that which is not noticed; true success is really about when discontinuity becomes continuity. The result of this is that the shift is actually imperceptible because people start to live the new paradigm, the new references and expectations. So, from that moment, the shift is not noticed anymore because it's taken for granted. Also the fact that one succeeds in keeping a continuity up to that level becomes barely noticed. This happens with many successful biennials: The audience starts to take them for granted and the only thing that is still seen is the most magnificent first one, not as a real shift that is then continued but as some isolated magical moment that only existed within its own time. What is forgotten is that something changed and that, because of *this*, all the continuity exists – that is taken out of the picture. So it's always reduced to a kind of very limited reminiscence.

To come back to your initial point, I would want to bring something to this table, which I think both of you touched upon, and that is the meaning of a kind of banal success. I think that perhaps, certainly in this setting, we have to advocate all these banalities. Really, yes, I think we have to go for them: It's really good that [to Carolyn] you succeeded in making a biennial without deficit and that you got three hundred and fifty thousand people and there were only two artists malcontent. These elements are really important too because they assist in the making of a durable social space in a factual way.

Irit Rogoff [from the audience]— I've been really struggling all day because I feel that we're positioned between two very contradictory models. The bodies of thought that have nourished us for the last couple of decades have been pre-occupied with how to make a kind of ongoing seamless drive of thought impossible; so that this *huge* project of critical theory, philosophy, post-structuralism etc. has dedicated itself to questioning the assumptions that underlay the ability to just kind of steam roll ahead. In this model – the one that we're gathered around – there is a sort of overwhelming productionism. These are not divorced worlds; they feed and nourish one another all the time. And so my question to this discussion on biennials would be not to deal with the binaries of success and failure, but what is it that they make *im*possible? It seems to me that's what we need to address. The going around and the looking at a lot of stuff and bringing things together – that's transparent and available and at the surface. But one of the things I've been thinking about is that the proliferation of biennials around the globe has created a situation which I would think about maybe as one of linked peripheries, where a kind of conversation might start out between Johannesburg and Guangzhou and Cairo and Tajikistan and Istanbul that bypasses the center. So maybe one of the things that a proliferation begins to allow for is the decentering of the places through which one attributes value, or produces authority, anoints something etc. It seems to me that, if we're going to mash together the two things that feed us – a critique of production and the production of knowledge – then that's the kind of question we need to ask around biennials. What is it that they make impossible, not in terms of lack of success, or failure, but in terms of the kind of steaming ahead in an unquestioned way?

H. H.— May I answer this question? Sorry, I really cannot help but say one thing: This question really comes too late. It has been repeated for the last ten or twenty years, so I guess we should not come back to it anymore. For people who think that way, it is totally impossible to understand why we need biennials and actually maybe this is a very brutal answer but this is my answer.

B. DB— I would say that there's a larger urgency in asking what biennials make *invisible*. I think there are many things that might seem to be made impossible but that might actually be there nevertheless. The interesting thing about biennials is that, in a certain way, they offer a heterotopic space, a space in which many very different energies come together in a way that's completely out of control. For example, you get local energies, local artists, young artists, students, poor people... You have all these things that interact in unpredictable ways and, as a result, many things become possible but, at the same time, they may be rendered invisible by the system. If you really want to, you can let something

happen. The only thing you cannot always make happen is that it also becomes visible. There's a lot more which may be happening there than we could speak about here in our theoretical, reductive way. For me, the more interesting question is: What do they make invisible?

> **Jens Hoffman [from the audience]—** I have a question for Hou Hanru: You said before that everytime you get asked to curate a biennial, you look at whether or not there's a necessity for a place to have one and I was wondering if you ever felt that there was a place where there wasn't the necessity and you actually declined the offer.

H. H.— Very good question. When you are an independent curator, you have to think about how to pay your rent every month. That's the reality. On the other hand, I did turn down some invitations – even in the last week I turned down one invitation, but I'm not going to tell you where. I think that when we talk about necessity, it's about creating a dynamism. Basically, it's like selling Coca-Cola. You know that nobody wants Coca-Cola in India but it sells so much. But we are not selling Coca-Cola, we are selling something that would make people produce an aversion to Coca-Cola. I guess this necessity should develop naturally, in terms of going out of control, so it can generate its own particular forms in different locations. Coming back to what Bart was mentioning about the Gwangju Biennale, that I co-curated with Charles Esche and Song Wan Kyung seven years ago, when I was young: It was very interesting because basically the first idea we came up with was to make the biennial into a huge platform for so-called self-organizations. That proposal came at a very specific moment when the Asia Pacific region was looking into building American-style infrastructures (museums, galleries, markets) and we were looking to see what makes contemporary art alive in this context, what kind of infrastructure could be built there for the future. We made an out of control curatorial proposal and put our office in the middle of the exhibition. I called it the curatorial suicide project. Basically, we asked a designer to design a platform for us. The artists would work and we sat there every day, during the preparation, exposed to them. Of course every artist asked for something more expensive than we could afford so we had to struggle with them, we had to make them happy and then, during the exhibition, we had to answer the questions of the audience. This kind of open platform never happens in any other biennials – curators sitting there, totally naked. So that was actually using the biennial to look at what kind of cultural infrastructure we can come up with and at least there was a proposal.

> **J. H.—** Can I just follow up with this… I'm not 100% sure about the idea of artificially creating necessities and I was wondering if Carolyn would respond to that, whether or not you agree with Hanru.

C. C. B.— No, I disagree. I think the question "what is to be done?" is a much more important question than "what is necessary?" which I find authoritarian.

> **Stefan Kalmár [from the audience]—** I just think it's closer to the Bush doctrines than to Al-Qaïda.

> **Zoran Eric [from the audience]—** I also wanted to make a comment and pose a question regarding this Al-Qaïda story: Two possible social models that we can learn from Arjun Appadurai, are the "vertebral structure" and the "cellular structure." And of course I think that this cellular structure is worth considering in terms of biennials, if you understand the metaphor. The question then becomes: How to break the vertebral structure?

C. C. B.— I think Appadurai's writings are very interesting; he is basically saying that we live in majoritarianism, but that there are these transversal networks – which is a little bit what Irit was referring to in terms of the condition of biennials and it is what Hou Hanru was saying is an old discussion. I would agree that it's also an old discussion because the whole question of center and periphery and networking and small transversal networks developed throughout the 1990s, which were the years when Appadurai was studying this phenomenon in general. But I actually also would like to say that all discussions about biennial are also very old, as are curatorial discussions around curating. But everything is always double. Nothing is *always* the way it seems. I think maybe what is made impossible now is ontology; so that one must now look at what it means to have a lapse of ontology and how one can imagine an ontology that's not simply a re-establishing of western notions. Kant was part of that, of course, but he was also the first to bring in this idea of the subjective, which is very important for opening up ontology. So I suppose that this is where one should try to think: The question of ontology is impossible right now because of relativism. But it's a question of the focal point; one can choose to look at something from up-close or from here or from here [indicating increasing distances]. And now we have moved back the focal point. So our current points of reference lie in the social sciences, in anthropology and in those philosophers who are closest to anthropology and the social sciences. But these are actually very conservative points of view. If one looks at aboriginal systems and forms of knowledge, for example, there's no reason in the world why one should consider them as mythological. They present ontologies different from Plato or Socrates. I mean these are forms of philosophy and yet we don't use the word philosophy to describe them, so maybe that's a direction of impossibility that could be addressed…

SETH SIEGELAUB & KITTY SCOTT

HAS THE RISE OF THE INDEPENDENT CURATOR AFFECTED ART PRACTICE?

Kitty Scott— What is an independent curator? It is difficult to define precisely, but I think we can agree that whatever the formulations are that identify such professionals, they do indeed share one commonality: Independent curators are not permanent employees of an institution, and still others may have nothing to do with institutions. This possibility opens the door for more research, risk taking and creativity. People who call themselves independent curators, unless they want to have a long established relationship with a particular institution, can behave very badly and then leave afterwards. People that have jobs cannot do that. If they behave badly, they usually *have* to leave!

The practice of the independent curator has a complicated genealogy, arising in the early 1960s. He (mostly he) or she was an exhibition organizer, publisher and entrepreneur. This practice, at the moment of its inception, was closely tied with the revival of avant-garde practices, including the critique of the art object, the place of the artist and the framing role of the institution. Within this formation, a transformation of the role of the curator became increasingly urgent; the traditional gate-keeping role of the museum was called into question; conservative values of connoisseurship and judgments of quality with respect to masterpieces were set aside in favor of what Harald Szeemann called "intense intentions." Within this history, the early development of conceptual art plays a central role, and it is a pleasure to have with us Seth Siegelaub as one of the pioneering protagonists with respect to curatorial activity of this period. Seth was born in the Bronx in 1941, and is best known in the art world for his innovative activity in the field of exhibiting and publishing on conceptual art. It has been stated that he was among the first to emphasize ideas rather then objects.

I will list a few of Seth's projects, in order to remind us all of some of what he has accomplished. He ran a conventional gallery from 1964 to 1966. In 1968, he was working primarily with Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Barry, and Lawrence Weiner, by responding to and working with their dematerialized practice. No longer attached to a space, Seth found spaces when he needed them. Other projects included: *Douglas Huebler,* November 1968; Lawrence Weiner *Statements*, 1968; *The Xerox Book* from 1968, with Carl Andre, Barry, Huebler, Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Weiner; *January 5 - 31, 1969*; and the *July/August Exhibition Book*, 1970. There was also, of course, *The Artist's Reserved Rights, Transfer and Sales Agreement* from 1971. We will return to these projects as they are key to this dialogue.

The past decade and a half has seen a rapid proliferation of curatorial models, both inside and outside institutions, all of these occurring within an economic climate characterized in the art world – no less than in the housing market – by an irrational exuberance. This created a paradoxical situation: On the one hand all these dollars allowed for an abundance of curatorial freedom, innovation and perhaps experimentation; on the other hand, all this activity was an integral component of an exponentially growing and hungry system that required spectacle after spectacle in

order to repeatedly brand itself. The question today then is whether or not these experimental practices can thrive and develop without the capital that has enabled them in the past. This afternoon we have the privilege of exploring the legacy of this earlier moment and its transformations from the man who was there, and who is sitting next to me now. [To Seth Siegelaub] Could you tell us a little about who influenced you? Who were your models? What were you looking at and thinking about in the 1960s and early 1970s?

Seth Siegelaub— Before I get involved in a brief history, I just want to first say that I'm quite surprised about the bumper crop, the number of curators in this room, which is quite a phenomenon as far as I'm concerned because I grew up in a much smaller art world with fewer people, and to have so many curators, or even artists, is quite a surprise to me. But to get back to my personal history, which dates from the mid-1960s in New York, which is to say 45 years ago: It begins with my work as a rather traditional dealer with a very traditional gallery, not particularly successful, not particularly clear: just a young kid opening a gallery, looking around.

Before the role of what is now called curating, there were a number of art world practices going on, which could be considered as predecessors of curating, you might say. This concerns particularly art critics, whose primary work was analysis, criticism and support, and who occasionally did exhibitions for museums, people like Harold Rosenberg or E.C. Goossen. They were probably at the beginning of the post-war curating experience. When I was young, a curator was very simply somebody that worked for a museum doing exhibitions. And there were very good curators and very bad curators, but they were both characterized by their attachment to power, as part of the permanent staff of a museum, and they would work in this context. My appearance in the history of curating was directly linked to the presentation of a certain kind of art, and my working very closely with a group of artists to find formats, conditions and contexts that responded to the art that they were doing, which, among many other things, did not necessarily include a permanent gallery situation. While my initial attempts to deal with these artists has since evolved in a certain way to become a "curatorial practice," at *that* time I never thought of myself as being any kind of curator. I was just somebody promoting and working with a certain group of artists, whose practices called for new kinds of exhibition conditions, the most important of which has become the book as exhibition. But there were many other attempts to try to get away from the sacrosanct nature of a specific art gallery space that was canonized as a site for "art," which was the way most museums and galleries functioned. One regularly went to the same galleries, which were like so many white containers, and you went to see who was filling up the containers that week or month! The art that these artists were making pushed me to think about other possible kinds of exhibition formats.

Another critical factor at that time was that the world of art

was very much smaller than it is today, in terms of quantity – fewer galleries, fewer museums, fewer art collectors, fewer art lovers, fewer art bars, whatever. And thus the economic means that exist today for grants and funding were not available then. I have previously described the art world as a pimple on the ass of capitalism; or perhaps a sort of ghetto. Over the last 30 or 40 years, it has been increasingly enlarged and absorbed by the body, into the core values of the society in which we live (i.e. capitalism). The art world has evolved to be able to function within the values of capitalist society. And this I think is what we have seen over the last 40 years – the "professionalization" of art and artists, the increased amounts of money going into the arts, the construction of impressive buildings, the multiplication of museums, etc.

K. S.— When we were talking earlier, you mentioned Warhol as being important to your practice…

S. S.— Not so; not so influential for me. Warhol was there and quite noisy, but I spoke of two particular people who personally influenced me, not so much with their curatorial practice but with their relationship to artists. The first was a dealer called Dick Bellamy, with a gallery called Green Gallery [1960-1965]; he had a very close relationship with the artists he dealt with and I found that to be a very important value.[1] And the other person was Eugene Goossen, who was an art critic, writer, and head of the Hunter College Art Department, which was where many artists taught to be able to support themselves. Goossen also organized exhibitions.[2] Dore Ashton was important, but in a more traditional way.[3]

K. S.— Do you want to pick up two of your projects and talk about these in a little depth so there is a common understanding with the audience?

S. S.— The highlight, I am told, was probably the *January 5-31, 1969* exhibition but before we get to the show, I should try to mention that the collaborative nature of my work with the artists was very close. We would all sit and talk together and figure out what kind of exhibition should be done and how we should do it, and it was my job to find the money and the spaces or other practical activities. As far as I'm concerned, the most important factor was working very closely with the artists, because I've always felt that artists are very important to the art world [audience laughter]. It sounds like a joke and maybe it is, but this aspect is the thread that runs through my relationships to curating and to the exhibitions I did.

1.— Richard Bellamy (1927–1998) worked for over forty years as a gallerist in New York. He began his career at the Hansa Gallery, a downtown artist cooperative and was then director of the uptown Green Gallery.
2.— Eugene C. Goossen (1921-1997) organized more than 60 art exhibitions, including a 1973 retrospective of Ellsworth Kelly at MoMA and a 1969 retrospective of Helen Frankenthaler at the Whitney Museum of American Art.
3.— Dore Ashton (b. 1928) is professor of art history at the Cooper Union in New York and senior critic in painting/printmaking at Yale. She is the author or editor of thirty books on art and culture.

The January 5-31, 1969 show was an exhibition that involved four artists: Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner. I found someone through a friend who had five thousand dollars, a lot of money at the time, believe it or not. We found a space for free on 52nd Street between Madison Avenue and Park Avenue, which itself has since de-materialized. We agreed to buy four works from each artist, so the artists got 250 dollars each. I got 500 dollars. There was a part-time secretary, a woman who has become quite successful, Adrian Piper, and she got 25 dollars. We produced a catalogue and we all agreed that there would be eight works in the catalogue, and there would be two works from each artist presented in the gallery, like "samples." In other words, the catalogue *was* the exhibition, and what you saw in the space was like an "example."

I was constantly searching for the means to be able to do these exhibitions. There was no one I could appeal to except personal friends. There *were* a few collectors who were helpful, who would put up a few hundred dollars or so. It was very small scale, even probably by the standards at the time. We were able to do lots of things with very little money, due partly to the size of the art world and the relatively few people you were talking to, as well as the inexpensive materials needed to make the art works. Ads, publicity? One didn't have to worry about those sorts of things.

Barnaby Drabble [from audience]— Who came to the exhibition?

S. S.— Frankly I don't know. We did what everybody who had an exhibition did and we had a guest book. I don't know if anybody particularly important came; perhaps 200 people during the month. One of the reasons that I didn't do a gallery is because I found it extremely boring, hanging around a gallery, waiting for people to come in and talk you ear off, so I was not there very often, but in any case it was definitely not a "blockbuster."

K. S.— Would you describe yourself as having had a critical approach?

S. S.— If I want to do a project, I want to kick ass with it. I want to do something that really changes some aspect of the nature of the subject I'm working on, no matter what it is. Art was one of the areas that I worked in this way. Yes, I think that you need to have a critical, questioning attitude in the work one is doing. Our moment was very definitely influenced by the political issues of the time, especially the Vietnam War. There was a need to take a position *vis-à-vis* the institutions behind the war, what was called institutional critique at the time. There was also a whole series of aesthetic and social problems linked to the commodity nature of art, how to avoid it, or how *not* to avoid it.

Little by little my *personal* interest moved away from attempting to create famous artists, and my interest in art developed in a more general direction. That happened beginning with the *The Xerox Book*,

which included seven artists. Then *The March 1969* show involved 31 artists working all over the world with a broad range of art projects, and the catalogue was like a guide to an international exhibition, in which each artist on one day of the month did a project somewhere, over which I had no control. It was up to them to do what they wanted to do.[4]

So my history moved from this specific interest in four or five artists to a general problematic about art-making and exhibition-making. For example, I did an exhibition in the pages of *Studio International* in London called the *July/August Exhibition Book* (1970) in which I asked eight art critics to each edit an eight-page section of the magazine, which was later published as a book. Again, it was an attempt to avoid simply promoting great artists. And the last project, which is known as *The Artist's Contract*, was an attempt to codify and deal with certain of the problems concerning artist's rights that were very much in the air in the late 1960s.

K. S.— When we talked earlier, you said you wanted to talk about how you felt that your activity changed the role of the artist, of the institution, of the curator; in a sense, to talk about the things that *have* changed since you've been doing what you did in the 1960s, i.e. how an independent curator might function today; what the relationship to the institution is, to the market.

S. S.— Many of these current problems had nothing directly to do with us. These are large-scale social, political and economic issues which force everyone in a certain direction; framing all our activities in a certain way. And even yesterday, when we were listening to the last panel about biennials, it came to mind that no one mentioned the fact that biennials, like art fairs, have become an integral part of municipal tourist policies. They are about filling up hotel rooms, and many other not-so-wholesome artistic activities; a way to put yourself on the map of tourist destinations. On the other hand, many people go to these fairs and find them fantastic, and I'll tell you why I think we like them. One: You see a lot of work in a very short time. Thus, you save a pair of shoes from running all over the world. Two: It's a little "vacation" where you meet your friends. I wasn't implying that biennials or art fairs or big blockbuster exhibitions are bad as such, I'm just saying that there's a logic allowing them to happen and develop. For a city to fund a *documenta* involves millions of euros, but it also involves upgrading the name Kassel. How many people would have gone to Kassel if it wasn't for *documenta*?

To get back to the heart of what I was saying, many of the changes that have taken place have to do with how the art world has become part of "the system." It's not like my practice (or anyone else's practice) suddenly

4.— *March 1969*, New York, also known as *One Month*. A group exhibition of North American and European artists in which each artist was asked to make a work on an assigned day during the month of March 1969. The participating artists were Terry Atkinson, Michael Baldwin, Robert Barry, Rick Barthelme, N.E. Thing Co., James Lee Byars, John Chamberlain, Ron Cooper, Barry Flanagan, Alex Hay, Douglas Huebler, Robert Huot, Stephen Kaltenbach, Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, Richard Long, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Alan Ruppersberg, Robert Smithson, De Wain Valentine, Lawrence Weiner, and Ian Wilson.

changed the world, but it opened up other possibilities. There's absolutely no doubt that one of the reasons that there are so many people in this room aspiring to be curators is that there are so many museums that need curators to do their shows. It has become a possible profession. If there were only 20 contemporary museums in the world, there wouldn't be 300–400 people sitting in here wanting to be curators. We're probably looking ahead to the reduction of museums – certainly of museum operating budgets – over the next few years if the recession continues. So probably if you did this symposium in two years, you would have half as many people here!

K. S.— I'm curious to turn to the audience now, to hear what people think are the lessons for the future, things that we've learned from Seth's way of working.

> **Sabine Breitweiser [from audience]—** One of the criticisms of your *Artist's Contract* was that you transformed art into a product. Looking at what happened in the years since, with the ongoing explosion of the art market, how do you consider your paper now? I discuss this often with students and artists, and I have had to deal with your contract in several instances (Hans Haacke, as you know, is still using a contract as is Adrian Piper, in a way that is not actually very useful even for them).

S. S.— Well, firstly, the project itself was a proposition and the proposition was very simply to delineate what rights or possible rights an artist could have in relation to his or her artwork. Period. Needless to say, being in the (capitalist) society that is framing our activities, everyone focused on the 15% profit on the resale of a work. You can be sure, many people were against it. I spoke to many hundreds of people over the course of drafting the text, but we know how competitive the art world is and we know that once a collector or museum wants to buy a work, the use of the contract by an artist is very difficult, unless the artist has a lot of power. Yes, there was criticism concerning how the contract turned an artwork into a commodity, and that's perfectly legitimate. Some people have even gone further, they have even suggested that it's my renunciation of so-called "conceptual art" because it made all artworks into a commodities. What do I think about the contract now? I'm still very happy with it, not simply because it is still around, but because it stimulated and focused a certain generally-acknowledged problem becomes artists' rights, whether artists are social beings or not. I mean, people have said Gerhard Richter would be even richer than he is now if he'd used the contract, which is besides the point. Even he said that, I am told.

> **S. B.—** Would you update this contract? Because the resale right is fully installed in Austria, and the artist gets a percentage if the collector sells the work again.

S. S.— No, I wouldn't. It doesn't passionately interest me anymore; it was done at a certain moment almost 40 years ago. Probably if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't ask for 15%, I would ask for 5% or something, to make it more palatable. You can criticize one or another aspect of the project, but the principle issues are still there. No one criticizes royalties to authors or to musicians as being some kind of outrageous inequity; the fact that The Beatles or Bob Dylan make millions of dollars doesn't change the basic issue. We're not going to solve the problems of this nature with a single contract or piece of paper; it is a much broader social issue of how a society supports its cultural producers. Our intention (I say "our" because it was written together with a socially-conscious lawyer, Robert Projansky) was to lay out the rules of the game, because there are many rights that artists *can* control. For example, the right to borrow back their own works for exhibitions; the right to repair a work, or even the right to be notified that a work has to be repaired or exhibited. However, as you mentioned it's the 15% that really got the businessman-collector saying "Hey wait a minute! What happens if I lose money, does the artist give me back 15%?" If you go out and buy a car for, say 10,000 dollars, and two hours later it's worth only 5,000 dollars, no one thinks to go back and say: "Hey General Motors, give me my money back!" So the contract has to be understood as a step towards what is called a "level playing field," not a final solution.

Manray Hsu [from audience]— I hate to draw the discussion back to the usual biennial and the changes in the so-called "marginal world," but what I want to say is that when it comes to these big international events and fairs or biennials, there's usually also a local need for one. There is the need of the politician who wants to promote a city's image, but there's often also very general need of the local contemporary art community. In places where artists face very conservative academies, conservative museums, a lot of young artists have nowhere to show their works. Normally, a contemporary art biennial becomes a very important push for these artists to legitimize their practice.

I'm very curious about one point that you mentioned, and I think that this is a dividing issue for our discussion. When Barnaby [Drabble] asked how many people came to see The *January* Show, basically you said you didn't care. The reason why you didn't care is because there was already some kind of art community, perhaps small, yet concentrated in New York at the time. The whole conceptual linkage, or network, between these people was already somehow powerful enough. However, in countries like Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, small art initiatives usually only attract a small public of like-minded people. However, the issue of addressing a bigger public is always there, because you are not going to make it into the market by making a lot of small exhibitions. And it's not only about getting into the market, it's also about *how*

to link these people, how to make this network, how to strengthen this network. I think this is an issue that is getting lost in our discussions.

S. S.— It is definitely an important reason for doing these biennials by a local or regional art community. But I'm talking about the larger picture, where these funds comes from, why these events are sponsored. I was not arguing this because I am against biennials, I'm just saying that you cannot understand them unless you understand them as part of larger municipal policies. The prototype, I believe was the Centre Pompidou. It was built with very democratic intentions (open access books, programs, internet, etc.), but to do this they moved out all the poor people living in the neighborhood, got rid of the market, built shopping centers and gentrified the whole area. I was arguing that biennials, particularly in what is called the "Third World," serve a very definite role. Could there be other possibilities? I'm absolutely sure there could be. What they could be is not my immediate concern. All I was trying to say was that you don't have that scale of investment in time, energy and money unless it's linked to some larger political or economic vision.

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev [from audience]— I wanted to comment because you bring up the panel that I was on yesterday. The reason why this discussion that you are now making was not brought up is because it has accompanied many of the discussions throughout the West over the last ten years. It is what we refer to as "biennial bashing," which is, at this stage, clichéd criticism of these events as simply serving the purposes of competing cities on a global platform for their positioning in the economics of globalization. I think we avoided this yesterday because it brings us nowhere. What I brought up when I distinguished the multiplication of art fairs and biennials is that the common practice of lopping them together in the same category is a mistake that needs to be rectified, because they serve very different purposes. When an art fair begins in a city where there is a biennial, it usually marks the end of that biennial. And the other aspect that I think is much more useful and interesting is to understand that it depends on the point of view. You're speaking from the point of view of someone going there, that is why you speak of tourism and going on a holiday, but the majority of the audience of the Gwanju Biennale or of the Biennale of Sydney is certainly *not* the Western art world. There may have been 20 or 30 people that I know from the West that came to the Biennale of Sydney, the rest were the local audience of Australia and New Zealand, and partially from the lower Asia Pacific region: Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and so on. I don't think that from that point of view, it's of any interest to consider biennials as merely cultural tourism. They serve a particular function within their specific landscape.

S. S.— I'm not going to argue the issue, but Sydney does not put up the kind of money and the infrastructure that this kind of project requires unless they see some larger profit to be gained. Even mentioning it here in this room – saying "Biennale of Sydney" – already gives a certain quality and attention to the city, even if no one goes.

C. C. B— It's fine to look at it from that point of view, but it's not necessarily the *only* point of view. We are looking at it from *our* point of view. "How does it position Sydney within a global platform?" and so on and so forth. I feel, then, that we should be wondering "Why this event is here?," "What feedback do [the organizers] get from having your presence here and my presence here?," "How does it reposition Witte de With in a stronger way for more funding?," and so on. These are all valid questions, but I don't necessarily think that they are the most productive at this stage in terms of the discussion around biennials, that's all. I think it's more interesting to psychoanalyze why this attack on biennials is mostly coming from Western circles, which are also those that are least strong right now in terms of emerging artists or filmmakers or theoreticians. This is a kind of subconscious result of this kind of criticism, which is also maybe an attempt to disempower certain platforms that are being celebrated where they are occurring on different levels, not just the tourist agency. The other thing is I actually *do* question copyright on many levels, also that of writers and of The Beatles, the whole works!

S. S.— That kind of problem of course leads us back to how an artist lives from their work. And in solving that problem, we're as far today as we were in the 19th century. So, yes, you can be against copyright, you can be against artists' creative rights, *droit de suite* or whatever you want to call it. You can say, "We're not going to give them any of this. Let them live and teach, work in the hardware stores!," as many artists have. But it doesn't confront the problem. If an artist is going to get some kind of remuneration for his or her work, normally that takes place in the academic sphere of teaching and uses the academic institute as a source of funds to be able to keep them living. But if an artist is to benefit in some way from their work… we're back to capitalism.

Paul O'Neill [from the audience]— Seth, I'm asking this as a fan more than anything else, but I kind of want to push you a little bit in this idea that you seem very insistent on: The idea of having left the art world in the early 1970s. The first time that we spoke, you talked very much about this idea of this moment in the late 1960s/early 1970s being about the demystification of the role of mediation in artistic production – that curators, mediators had a role to play and how the production of art was received in question of authorship etc. The last 20 years has seen the writing of

a kind of history around curatorial practice, and in the last ten years since Alex Alberro's book was published in relation to your practice, there has been a rising interest in what you were doing in the late 1960s/early 1970s.[5] But, it must be noted that you've been more present in these discussions around curatorial practice and its historicization. With this idea of having *left* the art world in the early 1970s when you felt that everything was becoming kind of repetitive, and of having begun your process of curatorial practice as being about demystification, I was wondering whether by continuously telling the same narrative over and over again, you might be re-mystifying this position that you have in a particular kind of curatorial history?

S. S.— It would be difficult for me to discuss the details and the fine points of curating in the last 20 years because I've not been around to be able to appreciate them in any real way, so it's difficult for me to change my position other than saying that this is coming out of my own experience and out of how I view the art world, what I did there and why I left it. It would take me as much work as any sort of serious art historian to go into all of the fine details of the contemporary curatorial practice to be able even to begin begin to answer that kind of question. And I don't want to go there, I prefer to look at the world somewhat as an outsider, to try to understand how the art world has evolved since I was involved with it.

I never called myself an independent curator. It never occurred to me to use that phrase. This is some category of practice that came about because there weren't many people who were involved with this kind of question. In an economic sense, an independent curator is very much linked to the changing nature of museums and exhibition-making, particularly in the capitalist world as we know it. It is clearly linked to the fact that museums have given up a good part of their "traditional," scholarly pursuits. They strip down the museum to the absolute minimum as far as curatorial staff goes, and the independent curator functions almost in the same way as rock groups did in the 1950s, who would make their "demo" and shop it around to all the big distributors hoping to find someone to pick up their work. This is very much in the interest of museums, as they don't have to pay for a curator's upkeep, health insurance, etc. Of the museum curators that are left, most of them work on funding-related projects, and other types of unrelated public-relations business. Financially, it's much more interesting for the museum to keep its eyes open and select from a pool of very interesting curatorial projects, pay the person whatever is necessary, and let them do their shows. A museum curator can be rather expensive including health insurance, pension, and in certain cases, maternity leave. This type of "outsourcing" has also taken place in many other areas of capitalism, so it's not particularly strange.

5.— Alexander Alberro, *The Politics of Publicity*. [Cambrigde, MA: The MIT Press, 2004].

The independent curator fits into this model relatively easily. And it does solve a real problem, but it doesn't mean that there can't be any great exhibitions, any more than having tourism as an underlying reason for financing big projects doesn't mean that the project is not going to be interesting. I'm just stating what I believe to be a fundamental underlying aspect of independent curating, particularly the reason why independent curating has become so important, why there are some many people attending this conference.

K. S.— I'm not sure that there's anything called an independent curator anymore. And I would say that curators are *dependent* on many different things. Everybody in this room knows what curators are dependent on! Thank you Seth.

IS THE CURATOR PER DEFINITION A POLITICAL ANIMAL?

Paul O'Neill— I'll start with just one quote from the beginning of Aristotle's *Politics*:
Nature, as we say, does nothing without some purpose. And she has endowed man alone among the animals with the power of speech. Speech is something different from voice, which is possessed by other animals also and used by them to express pain or pleasure. For their nature does indeed enable them not only to feel pleasure and pain but to communicate these feelings to each other. Speech, on the other hand, serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust. For the real difference between man and other animals, is that humans alone have perceptions of good and evil, the just and the unjust, etc. It is the sharing of a common view in these matters that makes a household and a state.[1]
In consideration of Aristotle's opening passage, I have asked a number of artists to reflect upon the concept of the curator as a political animal, and to provide questions for our panel.[2] I will act as their interlocutor and bind the questions together in a live editorial process, employing some of the artist's questions in a manner that might make sense as a discussion develops. The hope is to build upon Zoë's invitation to me, and by extending it to a group of artists we hope to elaborate the central idea of human beings as desiring machines, with the need and also perhaps the capacity to organize ourselves socially. And extending what Seth Siegelaub was saying earlier, that the people he admired were those who had close relationships with artists, I thought we could look at how this idea of a close proximity to artists could be a value for judging how a good or a bad curator might operate politically, ethically or otherwise. Whatever we all do curatorially, we do it with artists and we do it with some view of what we think and express as good or bad art, *per se*. So I'm grateful to all three of our curators for having agreed to this format.

The first question was from Liam Gillick who asked "Where is Nicolas?" Of course he's here, but I think what Liam was perhaps suggesting is that within these kind of gatherings, there's a propensity for people to say that they're going to turn up and then not. So if I could use Liam's question as a way of talking about the idea of choosing to associate oneself with the particular publicity around an event and the well-known capacity that curators have for not actually turning up, maybe I can frame it another way: Have you ever not turned up to something that you said you would and without valid reason?

[Audience laughter, long silence]

Nicolas Bourriaud— What's turning up? Is it a question about our agenda, our time to kill, or about choice?

1.—*The Politics*, c. 340 BCE
2.— The artists invited included: Amanda Beech, Dave Beech, AA Bronson, David Burrows, Gerard Byrne, Jason Coburn, Rainer Ganahl, Liam Gillick, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Barbara Holub, Mark Hutchinson, Matt Keegan, Jeremy Millar and others.

P. O'N.— Have you *chosen* to *say* that you were going to turn up and then *chosen* not to, without valid reason?

N. B.— Yes, in a certain way…

P. O'N.— Okay, perhaps I'll move swiftly along! Gerard Byrne's question builds out of this paragraph that I read out at the beginning, and his question picks up on Aristotle's statement that "it is the sharing of the common views in these matters that makes a household and a state," and this idea of politics being attached to notions of friendships and social relations, which Aristotle establishes in his notion of politics. Gerard's question is: "Politics begins in the home. To what degree can the contemporary curator's relationship with the specificity of artistic practices be characterized as *neo-liberal*?"

Enrico Lunghi— We curators are probably the best providers of symbolic capital of the neo-liberal world. The rise of the independent curator can be linked to this neo-liberal world. It also relates to what Irit [Rogoff] said yesterday: We might provide some supplement to the neo-liberal world, but we are just part of it. And I would even go a bit further in saying – as Hou Hanru said yesterday when he talked about Al-Qaïda – the contemporary art world is just like one of these sort of groups, of course much more sympathetic (we don't put bombs anywhere, we don't have this very restrictive ideology to defend), but we are just playing out the same strategies and the same movements. Carolyn [Christov-Bakargiev] talked about the de-territorialization of the art world – and this is exactly what Al-Qaïda is about, to de-territorialize Islam, to be able to make moves even in territories that are not culturally and historically Islamicized and have no link to the culture of the place – and we are doing the same. The neo-liberal system wants to destroy every tradition because tradition is resistant to neo-liberalism. I hear us (I include me also in this) talking negatively about local traditions, or local situations, or local people who have been working in museums for twenty or thirty years, trying to do their job as best as they can. Then we say "oh, he is very conservative," and so we bring our biennials, our art fairs, our very well curated shows, we bring them *our* values, and this is exactly what the neo-liberal system does.

N. B.— I'm afraid of this dilemma, or the opposition between tradition on the one side and neo-liberal ideology on the other, because that's exactly the kind of division that we have to avoid. That's exactly where the enemy wants to lead us. We have to refuse this fake choice between tradition and the neo-liberal system. I'm working a lot on this question and I think there's a need for different alternatives to this problem, because it's a problem in the terms that are actually chosen *by* the neo-liberal system. But getting back to the question, there's something that we should start with – it's the Marxist idea that we cannot stand outside of any

system, because we are linked to it by ideology. It's a very dangerous position, philosophically speaking, to be so naïve as to think that we could be like a god, standing outside of the situation that we are living in. The curator is exactly in the position of the ideologist, between philosophy and practice and that's why ideology has a strong and powerful effect.
I would remind you of Louis Althusser's definition: Ideology is the imaginary representation that we produce about our everyday life. Any exhibition which provides and produces a discourse about art is part of ideology.

P. O'N.— Perhaps that leads us to the question posed by Barbara Holub: "Does a curator have to be ethical? Should a curator be ethical? What does it mean to be ethical as a curator?"

Beatrix Ruf— The question of ethics links into what has been said. Depending on which cultural field one works in, one has more or less dialogue between public and private funding and the changing necessities that come from this neo-liberal demand. It is tempting to fall into traps. It is extremely important therefore to define what ethics are – it is a very difficult term to use, of course, and I can only speak for myself. In my situation, with an institution which is predominantly privately financed (not 100% as in America, but to 60% or 70%), it is always about a negotiation of the relationship between public and private interests. And my basic understanding of the institution is that it's part of the public domain, that it is not only public space but also a tool or container where public interest is being discussed or public dialogue can happen. And the fact that there has been such a need for private funding, particularly in the last years, makes it an extremely interesting but also dangerous field to act in.

P. O'N.— "We understand a 'political animal' to be a passionate and human visionary – someone who bridges gaps, negotiates the impossible in order to generate change, even slight change, movements, a shivering. Beuys doubted if artists could and should be the ones to change the concept of art – because most of them have an interest in perpetuating the traditional concept for selfish reasons: financial, careerist, stylistic etc.
As a variation on this thought, one might ask: Do curators politically push, bridge, negotiate the concept of art, to generate a changing view on a particular situation, way of thinking or way of seeing? Or do most of them have an interest in perpetuating the traditional concept for selfish reasons?"

E. L.— Well, I guess both types of curator exist. I come from a very particular situation: Luxembourg is one of the smallest countries in the world. The City of Luxembourg is a very small city with a very small art scene and I've been there all my life. I used to joke about how I'm the most local curator in the world, because my professional life has so far played out within a radius of about two kilometers. The country is between France, Germany and Belgium, so it's an interesting place. It developed a

lot in the last twenty years, also culturally. To some extent I was part of it, I was implicated in this change. I think differently now than fifteen or twenty years ago. When I started out as a curator, I wanted to change everything. I was very neo-liberal, without knowing it. Now at least I know that I am part of it! What is very important to me is that I have been in one spot so long. I worked for fourteen years at Casino Luxembourg, I founded it and we started, like most of the institutions, very, very slowly and precariously. During the early years we fought for our survival, because the original idea was that we would close as soon as the new museum the Mudam (where I am now) would open. I didn't know that I would end up there! But because the Mudam had a huge delay, we had time to reinforce ourselves: we did *Manifesta*, we did a lot of shows and now nobody in Luxembourg thinks about closing the Casino. In such a small town, with time, you can change people's perception of contemporary art. Contemporary art is probably more present than in other bigger cities, because it's closer to the people. Working over time and in one location has a lot of implications, and to change something is a question of working long-term in a particular situation. Now, after two months in my new job at Mudam, I really feel that contemporary art has a place in Luxembourg and a lot of things are more possible now in contemporary art than they were twenty years ago.

P. O'N.— Maybe to turn the discussion back to talking about art, I can use Liam Gillick's second question: "Can the large post-war, mega exhibitions be recast as functional sites for new work, or are they perpetually stuck in a parallel zone of instrumentalization facing celebration?"

N. B.— I'm not sure of the pertinence of the opposition between celebration and instrumentalization. I'm not certain that there's an opposition here.

B. R.— I was joking on the plane this morning with Hans Ulrich Obrist that I feel that I'm not a curator. There are so many different roles in which we work, in providing this place – and I intentionally say "place" – for things to happen. There is a presumption that curators are defining what the critical potential of art is. I am totally with Seth Siegelaub on this: Artists *do* play an important role in this system. And I understand that the role of the curator/director is to provide this space in a societal context, as someone who creates freedom for things to happen. We constantly have to work on structures and the same is true for biennials, triennials, *documenta*. So maybe we have to say "no" more often, "no" to situations where there is no production budget, "no" to situations which do not enable processes that are interesting not only for the artists but also for an audience. That's a very political moment and this working on structures is very crucial.

N. B.— The question of meaning is very important. Who produces meaning? There's always this never-ending discussion about the curator who imposes meaning or imposes the concept of art, of what art *is*.

I think it is a wrong opposition. Every artwork produces its concept, or a concept of what art is. And the role of the curator is not to *produce* a concept of art but to invent, to fabricate, elaborate reading grids or coexistence grids between them. So it's not a battle for a concept of art, it's more dialogical, the organization of the coexistence between the artworks and meanings.

P. O'N.— And this may also be a question of the art world's (as a social sub-system in the world) inherent organizational structures linked to power. This is a question from Mark Hutchinson: "[Slavoj] Žižek has talked about how the revolution must strike twice. It is not enough to seize control of existing power structures and so on. The revolution is not secured in a moment of euphoria when anything seems possible. The values of the old order are embedded in its established habits, routines and customs, however innocent or non-political they may appear. The second strike of the revolution, and the more difficult task, is shifting these entrenched habits. Without this violent reconfiguring, everything will drift back to the old order and its habits and values. In relation to curation, what are the habits, routines, and customs that must be overthrown in order to affect any radical change?"

N. B.— It comes back to the previous question about ethics. If we talk about ethics in contemporary art, what do we exactly point at? Is it the gaze of the beholder? Or is it the *production* of the artwork, is there an ethical issue here? Is it *distribution* and the way you show artworks? Or is it, last but not least, the way institutions and structures are functioning? Structures are ideologies, crystallized and functioning within the city, so they do produce a certain relationship to the artwork. They produce a certain beholder, a certain gaze onto artworks. This is an ethical responsibility. Institutions are actually *producing* a type of viewer or beholder and this is really about ideologies and the way you turn them into solid structures.

E. L.— Structures change with the rest of the society. At Casino, we set out to change something. We believed in the ideas and joy that art produces. We wanted to share this, so we created the Casino and made it very simple. We had a structure and, like Nicolas said, a structure is the crystallization of an ideology. But, my point of view was always to say: "Okay, we are now changing something outside, but as soon as this outside changes, we have to change again." We cannot just stay the same. More people become curious about what we are doing and they reflect and criticize. This is the idea of a reaction and also implication. We try to understand what our new position is, and then produce something out of this position. Structures and institutions might be heavy, but they are not static. The more you try to understand what's happening *in* the institution in relation to what's *outside*, the more this dynamic is possible. It's the same in the relationship to the artist: If you just stick to one model of artist and you

carry this on for thirty years, it can be very interesting, but you don't see the movements that happen in the art world. It's important to constantly question the perception of what is the present position. I would not claim to call it revolution. There can be revolutionary moments, but no revolution lasts more than a few years and very often it ends in blood. I don't want that, I prefer movement and change, whilst trying to respect the situation.

P. O'N.— This is question from David Burrows: "Do you think that there are such things as art scenes – that is, informal presentations of art practice – different from the formal presentations and strata of art?" I think the question is about: Is it possible for art scenes and their informal forms and mechanisms to exist outside the formal presentations or strata of the art world?

N. B.— We should first all agree whether or not art scenes do actually exist. What is an art scene anyway? The spontaneous answer would be: It's a set of people who actually know each other within the same space. Or, if we don't talk about this very local anchorage, we're talking about networks of people who communicate with one another, with no idea of localization. I'm not sure that things like art scenes really exist and if they do, they don't exceed this definition of just a relational sphere of people who are able to work or discuss together in particular places. But that's already an existing reality. I'm not sure if it's useful anymore to define a specific way of relating to the art world.

P. O'N.— This is a question to Beatrix from Rainer Ganahl: "I met you in 1996, when I was part of a very fancy Schafhausen-Biesenbach show called *Nach Weimar*.[3] You asked me to come to Switzerland and to do some work about Swiss German, without having any institutional affiliation or money. I agreed to do it and we spent a couple of days together doing our work, which I think was shown in some lobby of a music theater somewhere near Basel, if I remember it correctly. I really enjoyed your effort and energy to make something happen out of "nothing." After that, you accomplished a very quick and successful run through institutions and have been holding, in my view, very powerful positions of decision-making in the art world. My question is: Why have you never invited me to anything afterwards, when you actually had the institutional support to do so? And why have you never expressed interest in that language piece, which we organized and basically made together?"

[audience laughter]

B. R.— Maybe one reason is that Rainer remembers things wrongly? The project was in kind of an institutional context,

3.— Neues Museum Weimar, *Nach Weimar*, curated by Klaus Biesenbach & Nicolaus Schafhausen, Weimar

in a city that is close to Switzerland, Austria and Germany at the same time. Do curators have to have a marriage-like relationship with artists as galleries do? Maybe we can do it in the Kunsthalle tradition: only once.

P. O'N.— The second part of Rainer's question is to Nicolas: "I met you in 1992 [audience laughter] when you asked me to write a text for your magazine *Documents sur L'Art,* which I called "Foucault… Bourr.text1" published in February 1993. You seemed to have enjoyed the text, but nonetheless I've never heard from you since…"

N. B.— Not correct!

P. O'N.— "Is there a specific reason why you've never, never anymore included me in any of your thousands of adventures or even mentioned me, given the fact that your curatorial and writing interests cross so many of my interests? This is particularly peculiar as I've been making engaged works that I would call relational aesthetics without interruption to this day, since I started to use teaching and studying foreign languages, basic linguistic services, reading seminars and other interactive works systematically as part of my artwork."

N. B.— My answer has two parts. The first one is: Rainer is a big liar because I participated in his seminar in Venice two years ago where we worked on some text by [Antonio] Gramsci. The second part is that it raises an interesting question actually. There are several artists you get along well with and talk with, and yet somehow you never come to work with them. It depends first on the nature of the projects. There are artists who I have actually been thinking about for five or six exhibitions and it never really happens. It's purely anecdotal what I am saying, as the question was also.

E. L.— I guess that if there's no question for me, it's because I never invited Rainer. However, he is now in a show at Mudam, but it is my curator that invited him before I joined.

N. B.— You really are a political animal!

P. O'N.— Rainer says: "Hi" [audience laughter]. This is a fragment from a rather longer question by Amanda Beech about contingency and the potentiality of contingency linked to the politics of resistance, which I'll edit down and paraphrase a little: "The theory of art operates as a correspondence theory between art and political change, which reproduces those exact forms of representation that it sought to overcome. Bearing this in mind, I'd like to ask the panel: Can art aspire to radicalism, action, change and transformation whilst taking into account its own production of (and participation within) these logics of representation?" – It goes back to David Burrow's question in some way – "And finally, and perhaps most

importantly, does the panel identify the politicization of art through curation as capable of producing new hierarchies of power without falling into the paradox I've just described?"

E. L.— Rosalind Krauss wrote a text about minimalism in the late 1970s or 1980s that I found amazing. When minimalism emerged with its industrially produced elements, it was seen as a very new and radical, even revolutionary way of thinking about art. Rosalind Krauss wrote that actually, when you look back now, it was providing the symbolic capital for industrial production, because it ended up nourishing the art market and putting into art exactly the same values that were useful for the production of repetitive elements in industrialized society. I don't think that art changes politics or changes the world. We probably all did shows where we wanted to highlight certain dangers in our society, yesterday we had this good example from Rein [Wolfs] who introduced the NDP in the museum. [4] However, as far as I know, no show has ever changed a vote in any city. It's not with individual shows that you can produce these changes. You can add something, but if you want to change politics you have to go into politics. It's not useful to make a show about politics, because the people who come to the show are anyway people who think like you do. Nobody right-wing would come to an exhibition and change his mind afterwards.

N. B.— I mainly agree with what you're saying. But what's interesting to see is that, if you can enumerate them, there are four ways of talking about the links between art and politics. The first one is on the level of content, actually the message, the specific message to broadcast. It's the weakest level of relationship, mainly for the reasons that Enrico has talked about. There's another level that is the structural level, the level of the model – art as a stratus that allows us to see, look at and understand reality in a different way. That's a very efficient level. The third one would be slightly the same, which is (according to me) the level of cartography, the representation, for example of power. What is power today? What does it mean to represent power? In my opinion, it has to be abstract. Power is more and more abstract, the political organization of the world is a huge step towards abstraction. What is the potential of representation that art has today? To locate things, to identify the sources of power, this is a structural way of functioning that is quite similar to what I was talking about before. The fourth level, which is very distinct from the three first ones, was embodied by the Artist Placement Group created by John Latham in the 1960s. It's very close to the political line of the French Maoists of the late 60s, which was called *Le mouvement d'établissement.*[5] Their leader at that time was called Robert Linhart and wrote a really fantastic book called *L'établi.*[6] The Maoists decided to install themselves

5.— Also known as *La ligne du maoïsme.*
6.— *L'établi*, Paris, April 1981.
4.— Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD), invited into the Kunsthalle Fridericianum by Christoph Büchel as part of his 2008 exhibition *Deutsche Grammatik.*

within the factories to prepare the revolution from the inside. I would sum it up by saying that if we're talking about curating, it's also about a battle of ideas. Even when we talk about the very concrete ways of distributing and locating artworks, in a way it's a *Kampfplatz,* a battlefield, an ideological battlefield. So, politics is actually everywhere.

P. O'N.— Perhaps that relates to a question by Barbara Holub: "How do you see that a curator has courage? How would you describe that? When would you know that this curator behaved courageously?"

B. R.— I just heard a very interesting case in New York (I won't mention names). In America, it is much more common for artists to get phone calls everyday asking them to donate works (and of course that's also a political involvement of artists in a system). So this artist was invited to donate a work to an institution, and he started to make paintings with the theme of the fundraising idea. He also had a show at a very famous gallery and named the show after an institution in New York, showing – very metaphorically – the particular context of this institution, which in a way put the work itself as well as the gallery and the institution in an obscene triangle. The institution forbade him to use that image, not only in the show, but also as a poster. That simply should not happen, because it means that institutions do not even guarantee artists the right of free speech and are afraid of discussing certain themes in a public context. I don't think that curators should be afraid of discussing matters publicly.

N. B.— I would just answer in a different way. I would go to the Lacanian definition of courage, which is: "Never give up your desire." That's the best piece of advice.

P. O'N.— Perhaps that relates to a question by A.A. Bronson that is both probing and metaphorical: "Do you swallow?"

N. B.— I absorb.

P. O'N.—He was hoping for a one worded answer to that one! We have about ten minutes left and I think we should open up to the audience.

> **Unidentified [from the audience]—** There was a show at Kunstwerke in Berlin called *Political/Minimal*.[7] Klaus Biesenbach curated it and it was basically taking the forms of minimalism and infusing them with political ideas, which he said was a break from what Minimalists thought to be the meaning of art. And it was a successful show curatorially, because he used many different forms, many different artists to express

7.— *Political/Minimal* (30 November, 2008 – 25 January, 2009), Kunstwerke, Berlin.

> this. But he stopped short of taking it out of the gallery and into public space. So you have all these pieces that are making really important political points, but the only people that see them are the people that come to the gallery. And if we are the bridge and we value the relationship and the proximity of ourselves as curators to the artists, shouldn't we also then value the proximity to and the relationship with the viewer, if we're expressing such political ideas that actually do make a difference and have the potential to make a real change? So much has been said about the value of curators' relationships with institutions and with the artists that are in the institutions. If we are the bridge, what is the value and the relationship with the audience?

N. B.— It seems to me the audience today has become the big Other in the art world, the structure of anxiety. Everything that cannot find its audience, its public, is highly suspicious or very problematic. This was not so thirty years ago. But we are slowly brought into this idea that what we do should all be about audience figures. This is the biggest pressure for most of us curators. I don't think we should avoid talking about it.

E. L.— For me, it's very important what you said. Being a Kunsthalle or Museum, you have to address the public in some way. And, I agree with the idea that the "audience" is just figures, but there *are* publics for museums and to these you can transmit the message, because if the artist produces a piece and then the institution shows it, and nobody sees it, it is a problem – we can say "it's also for the art world," but that's not very interesting in the end. To make a change, as you say, you have to know the people you are addressing. You can change things not with one show, not with two shows but with 20, 30, 40 shows, when people don't come only once to see a show just because it has a nice title, a good poster or a good advertisement, or because it's a big event. It's very important to make biennials and so on, but every local situation is different. I think we have to rethink also these local situations. In the 1990s we used to say: "Think globally, act locally." I changed my mind, we have to think *locally* because every local act has a global impact. So thinking locally allows you to better understand what is happening with people around you. Like Nicolas said, it depends on the content, the message and the structure of art, which new ideas it can bring. And we also have to rethink working on a local level and always work on the long term, although I don't like the term "sustainability" because I think it's just a political smokescreen.

> **Ute Meta Bauer [from audience]—** I just wanted to come back to Enrico, when you said before that art doesn't change politics or it has no impact on the world. But, definitely politics changes art and changes institutions and I would like to hear what you have to say

about recent developments. Anda Rottenberg was fired when she showed Maurizio Cattelan's pope.[8] Then Corinne Diserens had a lot of trouble when she showed a crucified frog by Martin Kippenberger in the Museion.[9] She got fired later and they said it was because of fiscal reasons. Then we experienced recently two museum directors in Rome who were fired with the change of mayor. We shouldn't be too naïve and think that there is no exchange between politics and art. Maybe the curator becomes the animal of the politicians.

E. L.— The pet cat, yes! No, I totally agree, politics has a big effect on the arts, and if you are fired because of political reasons, the question is: What to do then? There was a time – Seth Siegelaub talked about it – when not so many institutions for art existed, yet the art was still marvelous. So, if we are fired because of what we want to show in our institutions, then let's invent something other than an institution to show the art.

N. B.— Even the fact you are showing, promoting, discussing objects and processes in spaces which are *not* made for immediate consumption, which are *not* obligatorily understood by the masses, *is* a political fact, it's a political gesture. We shouldn't minimize this aspect. The cultural climate is getting more and more suspicious. Art is increasingly threatened – this is the *Kampfplatz* that we were discussing.

E. L.— Ute, I understand the problem in your question, from very personal experience. At Casino, we showed a piece by Olivier Blanckart, called *Le Bity* and it was a caricature of Jacques Chirac. It was in a show curated by Hou Hanru and myself, called *Gare de l'Est*, in 1998. We produced the piece and the ambassador of France went nuts about it and she called the Minister of Culture to say that "this piece must be taken down!" The day before the opening, the Board of the Casino came together (usually it takes always two or three months to get the Board together, but they were here in one day, all five members) and they said: "What's happening here? We don't want a problem with France, because we don't want a war with France. So you have to take down this piece!" And I said: "I'm sorry, but as long as I'm director here, I won't take it down. You want to change the director? Then the new director can choose what he wants." Then they said: "Ok, you don't have to take the decision, we take it as the Board." I said: "Oh great, you are the Board and you decided that the piece cannot be shown here, I accept that." Then they said: "Perfect, so take it down and everything is fine." I said: "No, I won't take it down, I won't tell my team to take it down. Tomorrow when we open, you can stand in front of the door, or close the door, or you can call the police, whatever you like, but I won't take it down." And till the evening there was a lot of

8.— Former director of Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, for showing Cattelan's *La Nona Ora* (The Ninth Hour), 1999.
9.— Director of the Museion Museum of Contemporary Art in Bolzano, who showed Kippenberger's *Prima i piedi* (Feet First), 1990.

discussion and finally the piece stayed. That was ten years ago. But it was not about making a career for myself!

Philippe Pirotte [from audience]— I experienced two occasions where this political influence actually happened. When I arrived in Switzerland, there was the so-called Hirschhorn scandal. It was about a piece by [Thomas] Hirschhorn at the Centre Culturel Suisse de Paris. And it had an effect on politics, probably not the kind of effect we would desire, but absolutely a direct effect. The politicians took away funding money from Pro Helvetia as a reaction to Hirschhorn's project.[10] But what surprised me more is that afterwards, the Swiss art world did not collectivize in order to do something about this kind of harsh intervention and indirect censorship. The second occasion was a moment of absolute collectivity that maybe had an effect (maybe it was wishful thinking). It was in Antwerp before very important elections, which ran the risk of ending up with a very extreme right-wing result, when both musicians and visual artists organized themselves. The musicians gave concerts with a message for the population to alert them about the risks of voting for the extreme right-wing party; and the artists collectively signed an art piece that consisted of sounding all the sirens of all the institutions in Belgium, where the fire alarms rang for twenty minutes. The extreme right-wing did not win, but I don't think it was only because of that project. However, what was interesting about the project was that the Socialists, Liberals, extreme right and Catholics were very afraid of it. Nobody wanted to try to recuperate it; they were totally reluctant about it. It was interesting that a mute thing, which was *not* discursive, had an enormous impact on political debate in Antwerp during those days.

P. O'N— I believe we've gone over time. I just want to thank Enrico, Nicolas and Beatrix for being such good sports, as they say. I want to thank all the artists for sending me their questions, including those whose questions or answers we didn't have time to pose or respond to. I'm very grateful to them. Finally, by way of completing our session, I would like to end with Mark Hutchinson's short question for us to reflect upon and to consider. He asks: "Reform or revolution?"

10.— Kulturstiftung Pro Helvetia, Swiss national cultural funding agency.

JAN HOET & ANN DEMEESTER

IS CURATING NARCISSISTIC?

Ariadne Urlus— Ann Demeester describes Jan Hoet as her own personal curatorial program. Having worked closely together in the past, they now come together to ask themselves what sort of curators they are today. Whilst Hoet tends to distance himself from the position of curator as author, and place the artist in a central role as the prime creative agent, the question remains whether an exhibition is nonetheless a portrait of its curator. I welcome to the stage Jan Hoet and Ann Demeester.

Ann Demeester— Welcome Jan, welcome audience. I must admit that I found it rather perverse that Witte de With asked me to interview you. I think there was even a secret idea that somebody would play *Master and Servant* by Depeche Mode before we started. But as Ariadne said, I very often say in public that you are my own paramilitary training in curating, because a lot of my ideas and opinions and a lot of the things I do now, as a curator and as a director, I developed in a continuous conflict and combat with you. And although there are also a lot of affinities, the major part of the training was in confrontation. That is why I think for today we should first try to be as confrontational as possible, to have a sort of verbal boxing match. I am very good at giving monologues, something I also learned from you. One thing I did *not* learn from you is how to be a good moderator, so that is also what we are going to notice and hopefully overcome today.

Jan Hoet— She knows me very well!

A. D.— I think the central topic of our interview, the question "Is curating narcissistic?," we should keep for the end, because in talking to some colleagues briefly beforehand, it became clear that we have to redefine narcissism. For me, narcissism is not necessarily about self-obsession. I think it was Juan Gaitán and Dieter Roelstraete who remarked yesterday that narcissism can also be the refusal to talk about oneself, the refusal to become personal, the refusal to actually be honest about what your own personal drives and motivations are as a curator. So, the first question I wanted to ask you has nothing to do with any form of narcissism. When I recently visited the Ludwig Museum with Kasper König and Charles Esche, König said, "The problem with your generation of curators is that you are obsessed with archives, you are very nostalgic, you are constantly looking at the recent past, at the sixties and the seventies, and you try to revive that." I remember that one of the big reproaches that you made against my generation was that we are a networking generation, that we are glued to our computers, obsessed by email and by maintaining our databases. Those two remarks, although they might be true, are a little bit superficial and general. How would you define the difference between curators of your generation and people in their thirties and forties?

J. H.— I think that our generation came out of a bourgeois culture, a bourgeois education, from people who were very

patriarchcal, who were always looking for an aesthetic value. I remember my parents – my father was a psychiatrist, one uncle was a lawyer, the other uncle was a solicitor – it was all in the old style with beautiful classic furniture, original tapestries, and with beautiful paintings on the wall, because they were also collectors. There were very few collectors of contemporary art in Belgium at that time, and there were very few references where you could find information about contemporary art. So it was a very elitist situation. The communication was also rather singular.

A. D.— Meaning?

J. H.— Very simple: In an exhibition, for example, there were very few visitors, and they were mostly men. So the men went to the museums, fifty, sixty years ago. The women waited until the men came home. That was the value. We, the children, were very well protected by these values, but we tried to be more rebellious. So when the paintings were in a solid environment, we tried to look for the rebellious character in art. For example, in Belgium we had the references of the Wide White Space gallery in Antwerp, and we had Spillemaeckers in Brussels, and Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf, one of the great innovators in contemporary art.[1] We were looking at all these things, and you could say this was also a network, but it was a physical network, a present network. You could not speak about things without seeing them, without being there, without having a discussion with these people, with Panamarenko, with Broodthaers. We went with Broodthaers to the café, we walked with him in the Beaux Arts in Brussels, and he was meditating. He had his personal philosophy about art, and he always tried to destroy the evidence of a statement.

A. D.— Do you mean that your generation was much more into real life, human contact, real exchange?

J. H.— It was real exchange. Absolutely. We saw each other, we had to know the artists, and we had to go into their studios, because we could not see anything in newspapers. We had to go into the houses of collectors, or to exhibitions. We always had to see it physically. When I did an exhibition with foreign artists, nobody knew them! For example, for *Art in Europe after 68*, with Buren, Toroni, etc., people in Belgium did not know that work.[2] They were all curious, so they all came to see it. Now you can see it on the Internet immediately! That is one of the dangers for this generation, that they are looking on the Internet and not at the art itself. Of course, I'm speaking generally.

A. D.— But hasn't that changed for you as well?

1.— The Wide White Space gallery opened in Antwerp's Plaatsnijdersstraat in the Fall of 1966 and closed in 1976. It was an initiative of Anny de Decker and Bernd Lohaus. Galerie MTL was founded in 1970 by Fernand Spillemaeckers in Brussels. Galerie Schmela was founded by Alfred Schmela in 1971 and it remained in the same Düsseldorf location until 2002.
2.— 1980, S.M.A.K., Ghent.

J. H.— For me? No, I don't think so. We don't have to look at the exhibition because we make exhibitions ourselves. That is the first thing. We are looking at the works. And depending on the moment and your own perspective and your own interests at that moment, you pick a work. I pick one out, because I'm looking in a specific direction today. I'm looking for art today that is not spectacular. What *is* spectacular – in my eyes – is what [Olafur] Eliasson is doing in America. It is almost a disco, a beautiful decoration for a disco. I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in Eliasson, as a person, as an interesting artist, but not always in his works. I do not criticize the artist, but I am criticizing the way he is going now. To me it seems a pity, because we need a time which is not spectacular. So that is the reason why, when I am in an exhibition, I pick out things that are not spectacular. I'm not looking at the names, I look at the names afterwards. First I look at the works. I'm very happy that here at Witte de With, the names are not on the wall.

A. D.— But it is a solo-exhibition so we all know who it is![3]

[audience laughter]

J. H.— The names are not on the wall! You have it on a paper instead, that is interesting.

A. D.— Do you also mean that when you visit an exhibition, that you never consider the exhibition as such? That you never look at it from a meta-perspective, examining how the curator has used the format of exhibition?

J. H.— No never.

A. D.— Yet one of the things we will all remember you for is the *Chambres d'Amis* exhibition (1986), which was a re-invention of the exhibition format. It was the idea of making the private public, and using the domestic environment as a presentation space.

J. H.— First, it has to do with the circumstances, and also with the autobiographical – maybe that is the narcissism you are speaking about. Autobiographical, what does that mean? My father was a psychiatrist in a village in Belgium where the patients were not in a clinic, but housed with families. They diagnosed the patient and then looked for a family that could connect with this patient and his sickness. At that time, when I was a child, there were 3800 patients in a village of 18000 inhabitants. So the village was well known as *de zottekes van Geel*, or the crazy people of Geel. I lived there 15 years, so I know that village very well, and the patients in the houses were like the artists in the houses of *Chambres d'Amis*.

3.— Edith Dekyndt, *Agnosia* (February 28, 2009 - April 26, 2009) at Witte de With, curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen and Juan Gaitán.

A. D.— Meaning that you just copy-pasted real life?

J. H.— I always considered the museum as a kind of private institution, although it is public. It felt like a private domain.

A. D.— Private as in the private realm of the director?

J. H.— No, as in private because the particular public, the staff members, were all in the field of art. There is confusion between private and public today, but there was also confusion at that time already. What is private becomes public, because of television, because of all the communication possibilities. And the public becomes private. In the beginning, when people came to *Chambres d'Amis* they were happy to be voyeurs, but after three houses they were no longer voyeurs, they lost this feeling, because the private was really public. That was the interesting thing. And of course people thought it was because I did not have a museum, and I would like to have a museum, but no, that was not the case, those were the anecdotes around it. The critics in Belgium then were not that educated in art.

A. D.— Are they today?

J. H.— Absolutely not!

[audience laughter]

A. D.— Maybe we are approaching an interesting zone here, because one of the things I think you are very famous for is your abhorrence of theory and of the discursive turn in art. I have always wondered, where does that come from? Is it because you are trained as an artist? Is it because you were traumatized by an art historical education?

J. H.— I go back to my parents again.

[audience laughter]

A. D.— I did not know this was going to be a psychoanalytic session, I'm not trained for that!

J. H.— My father and my mother, they were both collectors. My father knew everything. He would have been a fantastic art historian, he knew everything. When he was choosing a work of art, he could situate it in the context of his mind, the mind of the artist, the evolution of the artworks of the artist, and so on. And he had a beautiful collection, I have to say, with Beuys and Panamarenko, Broodthaers, and the Expressionists and beautiful Ensors. But my mother bought also. When my father bought a work, so did she. And she did not know anything.

She could only cook! [laughter]

A. D.— Jan, is this a provocation? I did not know your mother but this sounds denigrating.

J. H.— No really! She could only cook! From morning till evening she was in the kitchen, she had seven children, and five patients! She did not have the time to study. And when she was 15 years old, she had to stop studying, because she had to take care of her brothers who went to university and she had to cook for them. But she always went with my father and me to the artists' studios and when my father said "this work" she would say "and I would like that work." And when I look back at what they collected, everything my mother chose was better [laughter]. Voila [applause]. I also studied art history. I did, I was a very good student, always the first of the class, but I was always jealous of my mother, really jealous. How did she do it? She said, "You always have to look afresh. In a fresh way."

A. D.— So you basically now say that your abhorrence of theory has to do with the fact that you trust pure intuition?

J. H.— You have to complement the intuition with a certain experience. Intuition in itself has no value, that is not possible. You need also experience. But my mother was also part of a family in which culture held a central position in education. Maybe that environment helped.

A. D.— Are you saying that every curator is the product of personal circumstances? You grew up in a cultivated environment in which you had both the erudite, knowledgeable father and the intuitive mother and that shaped you. But that is non-transferable, that only applies to you.

J. H.— That's a pity! [laughter]

A. D.— That is non-negotiable.

J. H.— I know, what can I do? There are a lot of these curatorial programs today – Grenoble, they started with this, then de Appel – I do not believe so much in these things.[4]

A. D.— I know, but can you explain why not?

J. H.— My example: my "grandfather" in the arts is Johannes Cladders (who recently died) form the museum of Mönchengladbach. He became a great friend of mine. He did the opening of Joseph Beuys in The Wide White

4.— L'Ecole du Magasin, founded in 1987 in Grenoble. The Curatorial Training Programme, founded in 1994, now called the Curatorial Programme and run by Ann Demeester at De Appel, Amsterdam.

Space Gallery in 1968. Where did this come from? It was like a flower in the desert!

A. D.— What do you mean? That he had no background?

J. H.— He was an art historian, of course, an art historian in the classic sense, because in my time, there were no contemporary art courses at university. I was the first student to do a thesis on a contemporary artist, on an artist who had not been dead for over 50 years. That was the norm, the criterion. I had chosen a contemporary artist and they did not allow me, so I said: "Voila, I stop with the university!" And voila, I stopped. Then my professor at university saw me walking in the street and asked me "Why did you stop?" I explained why and then a week later he called me, telling me there was a committee meeting, discussing my thesis, and they agreed I could do it. And then I returned to university.

A. D.— When I hear your stories, I always almost believe in this Romantic myth of the curator as a natural born talent, shaped by his or her environment, ending up in the profession by mere chance and coincidence. But the fact is that nowadays, the art world has expanded globally. There are many more curators, so there is more competition and maybe if you are a young person and want to give shape to your passion for art, you cannot rely on chance and have to do it differently from how you did it and maybe also differently than even I did it. How can you translate your experiences to now?

J. H.— I think what is necessary is that everybody with ambitions has to make a statement about art, always starting from himself. Always start from yourself, that is what the artist does also. I think a curator also has to have this kind of epistemological construction. That is absolutely necessary, because it has to do with an identity, with an autobiographical analysis. Out of this autobiographical analysis, you construct new methods, new strategies, new networks, and so on.

A. D.— But then you basically say that people should abandon all curatorial training programs and go into psychoanalysis instead.

J. H.— If you can do it without the psychoanalysis, even better. It is interesting to know who you are, and from there, why you are interested in art. Today art has a central position in the society – you cannot deny that. In my time, it was on the side, it was out of the field, it was purely elitist. And curators from my generation – Kasper König, Bazon Brock (Harald Szeemann was just before us, although he was the same age) – they tried to be a medium between their art obsession and the public. They made it central, although it led sometimes to catastrophic consequences. I'm not afraid of the situation today. I go to an exhibition at

Witte de With, then at MuHKA in Antwerp, then in Berlin, or at K21, wherever in the world, I can always pick things. The problem is, how to learn to *select*! And the selection has to do with this analysis of yourself, with your identity, and the confrontation of your identity and the identity of society. That is the thing: society has an identity. The problem with society's identity nowadays is that it is a bit too uniform; we are all depending on stupid bureaucratic rules, on money, we are all driving the same Mitsubishi. There is no design anymore! It is all uniform.

A. D.— Do you say – in the sense of another quite Romantic notion – that both the artist and the curator are those who are not willing to adapt, who are unruly, who resist the system? Is that underlying it? Because there is something striking in your biography: you actually never worked for an institution, you always *made* the institution that you desired.

J. H.— That is very important. With art, you can change the world. That is an utopian notion, I know, but utopia is a non-place, you have to construct this image of the utopian, and only in art you can do that, in film, in literature. The museum can do it physically, with the images we show, and than we have to take care that we do not become a monopoly.

A. D.— As a person or as an institution?

J. H.— As an institution. That is a great danger.

A. D.— How do you avoid that? Because Jan, in Belgium you were an institution as a person, you were the pope of the Belgian art world. Even my stepmother, who has no idea about contemporary art listens to the radio, to your commercials for beer and kitchens, and knows who you are. So how do you avoid that monopoly? How do you find this balance between turning yourself into a media personality to access more people and yet avoid having this monopoly?

J. H.— I always tried not to have this monopoly. That is the truth. Because, when I did *documenta IX* (1992), I was a star in Belgium. What did I do next? I did *Rendez(-)vous* (1993), a very simple exhibition. *Rendez(-)vous* was the opposite of *documenta*, which was all about the artists. For *Rendez(-)vous*, the people of Ghent could bring an object they liked to the museum.[6] I think I had 3000 objects from people, and then we thought "What can we do with this?" Bart De Baere was my assistant at that time and we found the idea. We invited four artists: Jimmie Durham, Ilya Kabakov, Henk Visch, and Huang Yong Ping. They dealt with these works in any way they wished, they made the exhibition with these objects, and suddenly you did not see the objects anymore, you saw a Kabakov, a Durham, a Huang Yong

6.— *Rendez(-)vous* (29 April – 27 June 1993), at S.M.A.K., Gent.

Ping and a Henk Visch! That was an interesting show, but it was sentimental, the starting point was sentimental. All the people who knew a little bit about art attacked the idea for its sentimentality, but I did it on purpose: to change from masterpieces to nothing.

A. D.— But didn't it have a reverse effect? For example, one of the pieces in the *documenta IX* (which I never saw because I was too young) was Haim Steinbach's piece in which he reinstalled all your personal *cabinets de curiosité* in a circular shelf.[7] If you read that piece very one dimensionally, it was the artist glorifying the curator, putting the personal profile of the curator at the center. And with *Rendez(-)vous*, because you made this sentimental gesture, that again put you in the center.

J. H.— Voila, that is the thing, that is what I tried to say. When you try, you never get it [laughter]. I tried so many things to change that cliché, but I never reached it, never. Very strange. Terrible, but that's life.

A. D.— Is that a source of frustration?

J. H.— No, because I like to be in a humble position. Really true, I'm not humble [laughter]. That is always the confusion.

A. D.— I think the big paradox in the concept of "Jan Hoet: The Curator" is that you were always the one that almost dogmatically said: "The artist is the center." Not the concept, not the idea, nor the theme. At the same time, you are such a dominant personality and so overly present – that seems a contradiction. I always wondered how you balance that for yourself.

J. H.— You have people in Belgium who think I'm the artist. The work by Jan Fabre, on the columns of the university in Ghent, people think I did this.[8] With Kasper König it is the same, and Bazon Brock also, although Bazon Brock has become an artist now! He is making artworks! That is very strange. I'm absolutely *not* an artist. I tried to be an artist, because I was always looking up to artists. For me, the artist always held a fantastic position in society because he/she changed things, innovated, had new ideas and was a mirror of society. I realized I was not an artist, because I could not invent, I couldn't see. I was always doing things that had already been done. When I took a train simply to experience my view on the world, I always saw things in the landscape that had already been done by artists, for example, the stripes by Buren. Everything I saw was Pop Art by Andy Warhol! I did not know what to say about society. I need art to reflect on society, I need this medium.

A. U.— Can we open up to questions from the audience?

7.— Haim Steinbach, *Display #30 – An Offering (collectibles of Jan Hoet)*, 1992.
8.— From the exhibition *Over the Edges* (1 April – 30 June 2000) at S.M.A.K., Gent.

J. H.— We did not answer the question about narcissism yet.

A. D.— I think you already answered the question rather elaborately.

J. H.— But only like Narcissus, from Greek mythology. I like this very much, looking in the mirror. But maybe, also, out of the mirror. I am also a little bit Ophelia. [laughter]

A. D.— Maybe the question has been incorrectly phrased. Maybe the question should have been: Do you have to be self-important as a curator? Do you have to consider your own personality as important? I think the "narcissism" intended in the original question was actually a very blunt frame for this conversation, which is why we maybe have to reframe the term, because we are not analyzing it and using it in a correct way. Hence the question of self-importance.

> **Dieter Roelstraete [from audience]—** I think that we are touching upon the politics of narcissism. Yesterday, one of the panels dealt with the question of the curator as a political animal. It would be interesting to hear Jan also about his experiences as a political authority. To what extent does he think that this strong subjectivity that the director has to embody is a political fact? To what extent is what you do "political"? Or do you try to refuse the political?

J. H.— I think I'm a very bad politician. I was in an election, and I was elected! Only for one day, for the Christian Democrats in Belgium. The Socialist mayor of the city was against the museum of contemporary art. He said to me, "Go into politics if you know it better!." And I said, "I will!" And he said "Not in my party!," and I said, "I'll look for another party!" [laughter]. And so I went to the Christian Democrats, they said yes, and I was on their list, and I was chosen! And then the new mayor of the city came to me and said "You cannot be a museum director *and* on the list, you cannot do both." I said "I know, it depends on your decision. When you make the museum, I'm out of politics." And he said "You have your museum." Voila! [laughter and applause]. I've learned that if you have to fight, you always have to fight with the same weapons as your enemy. Always.

A. D.— You instrumentalized a political position to get what you wanted.

J. H.— Like Machiavelli, of course. The aim was to have a museum. Absolutely. Because if you do not have a museum, art can never be in a central position in society.

> **Unidentified [from the audience]—** I would like to touch upon a subject that we haven't talked about over the past couple of days, and that is the question of the audience. I would like to tell an anecdote about you. I went to an exhibition by you in the eighties at S.M.A.K. in Ghent, and you were there on a Sunday, talking to the public, and actually miming an artwork by Bruce Nauman: *Clown Torture* (1987). You were next to this video, jumping up and down, miming the clown, and the public was really having a lot of fun, and at the same time you were telling them about the art. For me, that was a really good example of how to touch the public, how to educate the public. So I would like to ask you: How should we approach the public with art?

J. H.— As a curator, you always have to be there. You have to be present with the staff, with the people, with the administration, with the guards, you have to be present in a museum, you have to be in the café. That is very important! You can meet people there, and you can talk with them, with the critics who come, with the collectors, and with other unknown people in art.

A. D.— But that is physically impossible. I know you did it, but you have this social compulsion! If every curator were to spend the entire day in the café of the museum, you'd have to sacrifice, in a way, your entire life.

J. H.— Yes, but this is what politicians are doing also. A minister does not have the time to do other things. He is the minister. And a curator – he has 24 hours, he has to be there, present. Always present. Always engaged.

> **Unidentified [from the audience]—** I have a question in relation to the previous symposium, where Achille Bonito-Oliva was saying that curators are the critics of today. I was wondering how you would respond to that remark?

J. H.— That is not always the case. You cannot always interpret the work of the curator in this way. Critics are important for a curator; they are the mirrors for the curator. I too read *Texte zur Kunst* and *October* criticism by Rosalind Krauss etc., but I try to get involved in the artwork. I am more involved in the way the artist is thinking. The position of the critic is another position, and we need that other position to construct a discourse. You cannot construct a discourse if everybody is a critic [laughter]. In our times, we always made a very straightforward differentiation of the position of the curator, the position of the critic, the journalist, the artist, the dealer, the collector. I have the feeling that today the danger is that everyone interferes with each other: An artist is making an exhibition, he is also making a text about it, he is criticizing another exhibition. It's unbelievable!

A. D.— It is called multi-tasking.

J. H.— All the positions are overlapping today. And when everything is integrated, then you do not know anymore where you stand. That is dangerous, I think.

A. D.— Maybe a difference is that this conflation of roles is already happening and is no longer shocking. People simply accept that every position is contested and maybe double.

> **Barnaby Drabble [from audience]—** Jan, your fervor for bringing art to the public is formidable. You say, "we were trying to force the public to look at art," and I think it is interesting now – with the enormous amount of art that is surrounding us, with the enormous amount of opportunities – to think about how may curators would say their job is to force the public to look at art, with that almost evangelical mission. Yesterday Ute Meta Bauer made a comment about withdrawing from making exhibitions because she felt a curator has to have something to say, and she felt at particular points that there wasn't anything to say. Maybe that was a suggestion from Ute about saturation. How do you see that? Is it still an evangelical mission to force the public to look at art, or are we at a point of saturation? Do we have to be more selective and think in more complex ways about our public?

J. H.— I think certainly, yes, but there are other mechanisms to think about the audience in society today. The mission is the same, the subject is different, the name is different. For example, today the value of art has exploded. Everywhere, collectors still have this virus to buy, because it is a sort of illness, buying art. In the art fair in Berlin or the art fair of Turin, I've seen these guys buying young artists today! That is fantastic. That is the first time in history that they do not buy big names. They buy young artists, because it is cheap. [laughter] If society knew the importance of the position of an artist, the mentality of an artist, the vision of an artist, then in every factory, they would have an artist. All factories should have an artist. And he doesn't have to do anything, except speak about his ideas, be crazy (or not), to give another aura to the space. That is the role of the curator today. First it was the *artwork*, now we have to put the *artist* in society, in everything – the bureaucratic rules, the money rules, they all should be shifted by the vision of the artist. That is my idea.

WORKSHOP

Differently from some collective activities that follow from the selection of motives and forces and result in an organized pursuit of agreed-upon goals, this workshop produced more possibilities at its end, rather than at its beginning. We started in the middle, attempting to identify the energy and interests of the participants and then tried to figure out what would happen if these became sources of action. What began as a straightforward classroom conversation about ideas, voids and desires, later turned into a pursuit of the whole range of impulses and thoughts – this, instead of following one direction among many. Forms of interests multiplied and diversified. Despite a certain desire on my part for the workshop not to produce anything, its participants, acting individually and through self-formed sub-groups, exercised sheer force in making things happen, creating situations, collecting records, and questioning themselves about why they were doing all this. The workshop felt neither like the reflections discussed by older colleagues upstairs, nor like an isolated classroom session. Curatorial work often comes off as an endless creation of opportunities, and this workshop became a self-curated exercise of that.

Raimundas Malašauskas

AUTO-INTERVIEW

What is an interview?
After all this, I am not certain anymore.

Why do you like questions?
I am a scanner who needs to interpret the world.

Why did you consider this necessary?
It was forced upon me.

What will remain after the symposium?
One crowd, many waves.

Was your presence there necessary?
My presence, like yours, was accidental.
So yes, it was necessary.

Why do you crowdsurf?
I do not. What a strange question.

Where are you now?
In a place where I will stay and go.

Do you like others?
I am others. I like myself.

How do you deal with art?
I deal with art like I deal with myself or with curators. I have affairs.

How you gonna do it?
kneed it.
rest it.
rise it.
eat it.
(in that order, then repeat till fade)

Do you find the symposium necessary?
I offer you three answers: One: the vocation of curators is not a utopia. Through capturing accidental ideas and setting them into motion, curators are necessary as they give movement to desire, action and decision. Curators are essentially real. They are urgently needed. Everyone should have at least one amorous affair with a curator. Two: we could say that these are the marginal scribbles that we produce, which in turn allow us to form further connections with ideas, objects and people revealing the blind-spots that are not annotated in event documentation and commissioned texts and are usually dismissed as personal meandering. This is similar to networking. Three: on another note, rumor has it that Darius Miksys introduced himself to his parents as an artwork. If Miksys is an artwork, then the conversation that would ensue over dinner with his family would be an exhibition. The forms of knowledge production are the same, what differs is what you're being served and your conduct at the dinner table.

What seals the deal?
Prayer.

Do you think this is related to the workshop, the symposium?
I have always had great sympathy for the Romantic notion of irony. Irony can be about bringing oppositions together, without dissolving them. When oppositions are forced together without being absorbed by each other, they can – I am speaking conceptually of course – interrogate each other. In this mutual cross-examination, new concepts, different ways of thinking and unknown potential can arise. This is then a consequence of irony, but even in the ironic position itself (the junction of two incompatible entities) a new phenomenon originates, namely the antagonistic creature.

Regarding the entire conference, which phrase did you consider most necessary?
Three stayed in my mind: Raimundas Malašauskas critically pointed out that curatorial discipline is probably the one that is mostly affected by the idea of always changing the model, without actually trying it. Seth Siegelaub was saying "You do hear me, but you don't want to hear me." I like to remember the most precise question coming (remotely) from AA Bronson: "Do you swallow?" And, of course, Nicolas Bourriaud's answer: "I absorb."

What will remain of the symposium?
Shared thoughts, curated in a way.

Do you find a curator necessary?
On the one hand, curators are quintessentially "impossible" rather than necessary. The vocation of the curator is not a utopia. Through capturing accidental ideas and setting them into motion, curators are necessary as they give movement to desire, action and decision. Curators are essentially real. They are urgently needed. On the other hand, it depends. Sometimes the curator needs me. Otherwise curating wouldn't exist, no?

I would dare to say that I find curators to have one of the most important jobs in the art world, which is mediating. After all, I would say yes, absolutely, or else this conversation would make no sense at all!

Did you find the symposium necessary?
Probably it was. For sure it was. We are all on a quest for knowledge.

Shall we finish our interview with clapping?
Yes. Let's clap in repetition.

Why are you conducting this interview?
To be reflective, to be creative, to think and register, to be productive without producing anything.

Do you find a curator necessary?
Everyone should have at least one amorous affair with a curator.

Are you an artist?
After what I've been through, I might have just become one.

So what will remain after the workshop?
Probably nothing tangible, and certainly nothing that will fully comprise the event. But there will be rem(a)inders of it, traces.

Shall we finish our interview with clapping?
Yes. Let's clap in repetition.

Isabel Andreu, Hendrik Folkerts, Timea Lelik, Roos van der Lint, Jens Maier-Rothe, Elise Noyez, Sarah Rifky, Jay Tan, Rieke Vos

THE SOUND OF NETWORKING: ANATOMY OF A SYMPOSIUM[1]

I was intrigued by the conjunction of high-level academic discussion with a certain amount of partying and tourism; by the mixture of cultures; and by the idea of people, all of whom know each other, converging from all over the world on various exotic places to talk about fairly esoteric subjects, and then flying off, only to meet each other again in another exotic venue. This is where I started: a kind of academic comedy of manners, with a global dimension. The characters would travel widely, having adventures as they went.[2]

In David Lodge's "campus novels," like *Small World: an academic romance*, a significant part of the plot takes place in academic conferences, which act as platforms for exchanges of both a professional and romantic nature. Here, the framework of the symposium becomes the background and the pretext for weaving a complex system of liaisons among the participants, in ways that reveal personal weaknesses, amorous pursuits and tragicomic consequences. The author's choice to place his characters within the microcosm of the conference is not merely a random decision, but one that stems from observing (and wishing to expose) the rituals and the paradoxes of the conference's structural mechanism.

Although Lodge's novels describe imaginary situations with humorous undercurrents, it seems fitting to draw upon his interest in the setting of the symposium in order to analyze the workings of *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Curators*.

The structure is familiar: For three consecutive days the "conferees," both audience and speakers, have to follow a specific outline in terms of timetable, spatial arrangement and sets of activities (as designated in the provided leaflet-guide). The *mise-en-scène* is put together by the organizing agency with the intention of offering food for thought in a hospitable environment. More specifically, the participants are split into audience and speakers for the duration of each of the "dialogues," which in turn correspond to two modes of presentation: the panel discussion and the coffee-table conversation. Whereas the former is the addresser-addressee format

1.— I owe the first phrase to my fellow classmate in the curators' workshop, Jens Maier-Rothe.
2.— David Lodge interviewed by Raymond H. Thomson; see http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/intrvws/lodge.htm.

typically found in conferences, the latter seems to imitate a television-show type of setting, in which an interviewer asks the questions to a guest.

The whole event is also thus choreographed so as to provide time for a short rest, food in the form of snacks, and alcohol as fuel for breaking the ice and unwinding, by means of frequent intervals that culminate in the final "Talk and Drink'" session. These intervals seem to serve a purpose of equal significance with the curriculum of the scheduled dialogues: that of interaction and networking. During the breaks, the panel/coffee-table discussions become conversation starters whereupon acquaintances, friendships, collaborations or antipathies are built and developed. The speakers descend from the "throne" and blend with the crowd so as to share their wisdom or meet their equals. A promise of "more" is offered to a selected few in the form of the after-dinner or after-party, an occasion which accentuates the element of entertainment as part of the symposium and makes the experience somewhat akin to a tourist trip. (After all, symposium means "drink together," in Greek). It is in this respect that the symposium becomes a pole of attraction for academic tourism: professionals from all over the world travel to various locations for a short period of time in order to engage in both intellectual stimulus and interpersonal bonding, reminiscing of what Lodge refers to as a "pilgrimage."[3]

Inter-cultural dialogue is a key element in most conferences. The breadth of nationality and the range of ages amongst the participants are meant to secure a politically-correct outcome and a more fruitful juxtaposition of points of view. In practical terms, the arrangements of the panels (as in who discusses with whom) either tend to reinforce gender or national binaries or play them down. The levels of tension and interest fluctuate according to the synthesis of each panel: the imprint that the discussions leave on the audience (besides their content) is often defined, on the one hand, by the same- or different- sex interaction among speakers and, on the other hand, by geopolitical "center-periphery" categories of separation. In any case, the role of the catalyst – the agent who interrogates assumptions and opens up the discussion to include further parameters – is left to the audience. Figuratively speaking, the panel-members can be viewed as performers who lure or avert the audience through their ability to juggle with speech, humor, appearance and body language. It is perhaps in this sense that they can be associated to music bands, while the speaker who invites the audience to ask questions is on a par with the singer who launches into stage-diving and crowdsurfing.[4]

One could perhaps also argue that the symposium is yet another form of heterotopia: it operates temporarily but recurrently and it is situated simultaneously inside and outside of the public sphere. Each time, a symposium addresses a specific amount and category of participants who have to perform certain rituals and abide by instructions and codes of conduct. Its "otherness" is also manifest in the relative utopia of its goal, that is: to act as the ideal platform of socio-cultural exchange and to promote dialogue between members of the same professional "clan."

However, beyond the educational, informative and cosmopolitan *emballage*, what lies at the heart of the symposium is ultimately the hope or the actuality of establishing a network. The themes of the speeches, be they curating or any other issue, are often what matters less, and this is why I have chosen not to refer to them in this essay. The focal point for the attendants is chiefly what happens in the background: the talks, the drinks, the neutral yet pleasant decoration, the frequent intervals and the choice of participants are all pieces in the jigsaw of building public relations. The event is thus orchestrated so as to enable the birth or the strengthening of already existing connections, which will potentially flourish or lie dormant until the next symposium. In the unique environment of this occasion, the whole spectrum of human emotions in the form of aspirations, sympathies, narcissism, dignity, scorn, snobbery or indifference can find space wherein to unfurl under the aegis of the professional meeting and in accordance with the conventions of a public social gathering. What remains after the symposium is finished, are the recorded traces of the speeches/performances, and the distant echo of the sound of networking.

Athena Exarchou

3.— Ibid.
4.— The terms "stage diving" and "crowdsurfing" accidentally came up in the workshop discussion, and this is how I choose to appropriate them.

AN UNRULY CONVERSATION ABOUT CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The roundtable that ensued, and of which you will be reading the abbreviated transcript, was the product of a set of conversations shared between episodes of intent listening and furious talking both inside and outside the Witte de With building last March. As participants of the workshop led by Raimundas Malašauskas, we were invited to partake, intervene, react or produce something in relation to the Curators symposium. A sentiment we immediately shared and felt strongly about was the complete absence of the notion of responsibility in relation to the wide scope of discussions on curatorial practice. We drafted our notes, speculations and conversation snippets into three questions relating to curatorial responsibility and in impromptu fashion we invited three curators and one theorist [Ute Meta Bauer, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Ann Demeester and Irit Rogoff] to engage actively with those questions and issues. Trying to circumvent the tricky terrains of the curator's responsibility in relation to that of the artist and the audience, we focused on the curator's responsibility – or response-ability – to cultural policy, to discourse and to history. The curator was understood as a synthesizer and producer of thoughts and ideas, who is implicated in the conditions of production. We also probed the curator's pedagogical responsibility, in light of the unprecedented formalization in the field of curatorial education. The one-and-a-half-hour-long conversation took place amongst the workshop participants in the Witte de With library. In editing the complete transcript we have tried to remain true to the nature of the conversation, which was quite relaxed, anecdotal and speculative – in an everyday sense.

– Hendrik Folkerts and Sarah Rifky

Hendrik Folkerts— The first issue we want to address in this roundtable conversation is the responsibility of the curator - or as we have stressed before, the ability to respond - in relation to cultural policy. We believe that this is a theme/question that has been somewhat overlooked in the (previous) panel discussions of this symposium. A useful point of departure for a discussion about this subject is yesterday's panel debate that coined the curator a political animal." In this respect, it is important to note that policy and the political share the same etymological root, which is a playful yet interesting starting point of our talk. We want to focus particularly on the question: In your curatorial practice, what do you feel is your own responsibility with regard to cultural policy? Do you feel the need to relate to this at all? Or do you believe that cultural policy should exist solely outside of the curatorial realm? Ute Meta Bauer's remark yesterday, that we are indeed implicated in state and institutional agendas, is also something we want to include in this discussion. We are very curious to hear your responses.

Ann Demeester— Maybe I should start, seeing as I am currently based in the Netherlands and am very familiar with its internal operations when it comes to policy making. I think it's an extremely difficult question because you actually presuppose that there is some kind of tension between the institution and cultural policy, or a kind of risk of being instrumentalized in executing a political agenda. If I look very closely at de Appel (Amsterdam) and the Dutch political structure, then I think we have the great liberty of defining our own agendas, defining what we want to be as an institution, in a much more open way than would be the case in the surrounding countries. If I reduce your question just to cultural policy coming from the Dutch Ministry of Culture, there is a positive evaluation of the existence and necessity of mid-scale contemporary art institutions such as Witte de With (Rotterdam), de Appel or Mares (Maastricht), which implies that the Ministry allows us to define our own position and, most importantly, our own function, which is quite an unusual situation. For me, the threat of instrumentalization is much more visible with regard to other factors, which would have to do – in the case of de Appel –with the Dutch obsession with creative industry and, consequently, the constant negotiation of art institutions over contributing or not to processes of gentrification and urban renewal. This is another matter, however.

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev— I am a bit of a leftover romantic and don't have much to say on this subject, although I think it is a crucial subject. There are difficulties for policy makers to maintain a healthy relationship between cultural production and society - basically "politics" does not mean "politics" - policy is more about the police and politeness. I don't see myself engaging

with policy in any constructive way. I think there are people, who choose to govern, whose mission is to allocate funding and to distribute grants for community development projects. These people have a large role and responsibility. I don't carry that burden. I have never chosen to carry it, and I choose to continue not to carry it in my work.

Ute Meta Bauer— No, I think you *do* care about policy. You just told me yesterday about the ways in which politicians interfered with your own institution [Castello di Rivoli, Turin].

C. C. B.— "Care about" is different than "taking care of." I mean, I "care about it" in the sense that it upsets me to know that local politicians in Turin who are not culturally informed decided who the next director of the Castello di Rivoli was going to be, and they chose badly. Complaining about bad policy of course is different from deciding I can act in policy making. I don't have the legal knowledge and perhaps the ability and choose not to take up policy as part of my practice. In a way, I don't think it's useful for me to try to solve the contradiction between – for example – great reactionary art and progressive revolutionary politics.

U. M. B.— Let me go into another issue of responsibility in relation to cultural policy making. I just came back from Hungary, where I visited artists whom I've worked with and know for twenty years. One artist was in such bad shape physically and professionally. I told one of the curators I met there that I think it's a shame that policy makers don't take care of his condition as I think it's also part of their responsibility as a government-funded institution. This experience is maybe more on a personal, of even human level. I don't believe I want to develop policies *per se*, but I think that as curators, we also have a responsibility to say something, at least to give them a certain visibility, at least to give a certain visibility to crucial necessities...

C. C. B.— Yes, but to say something is an opinion, and I don't want to generalize my opinions, and make them as predetermined policy for others. It stems from a kind of anarchist background and distrust towards all policy makers. I am shocked by the Leftist policies in Italy, in the 1970s, which attacked Pasolini and Arte Povera, as much as they could, and today celebrate them as part of a Leftist heritage. I don't trust policy makers in terms of what they claim to understand in the short and long term on behalf of societies.

U. M. B.— It's not about taking care of that yourself. It's also about pointing out – as a curator, as a part of the contemporary art world – that something is severely wrong. And as long as nobody says anything, nothing will change. I am not in favour of bureaucrats or policy makers *per se*, but there is so much policy that rather destroys than supports. That's what I was talking about, and that is where our own responsibility lies.

Sarah Rifky— Irit, you spoke about implication. Perhaps we can use that to understand a curator's responsibility in relation to cultural policy. Some curators, like Carolyn, choose to separate their roles clearly from that of policy making, but could we argue, through this idea that you laid out, that we are all "implicated" in being somewhat responsible for what goes on in cultural policy, even as contemporary art curators?

Irit Rogoff— I don't think "responsibility" is a useful term. I think setting up things in terms of responsibilities automatically creates a situation of responding to a set of preordained expectation and to a kind of moral code. Instead I think there is a set of necessities, urgent necessities and not so urgent ones, which somehow navigate much of our work and lives. Parallel to that is an understanding of how deeply implicated we are in everything and that, if we are operating critically, then we find ourselves having to expose the levels of our implication. I think the problem with the notion of responsibility and response produces exactly the kind of situation where you [Carolyn] might have to say "I don't do policy, because that is not where my abilities lie" and you [Sarah] would say, "we have a responsibility towards certain things," which would mean that we can contain ourselves and our activities within an idea of "the professional." You know that I work in a different context where I have a task and that is to "think" within the art world, which is something that doesn't happen often enough. Rigorous, critical, highly informed and self-reflective thinking that is; and I am concerned that there should be a far greater integration between different elements in the art world – making, displaying,

enabling, reflecting, viewing, participating – that they be responsible as it were, to something larger than their professional realm. As far as policy making bodies go, the question is: "How do all the things that we do, produce challenges to that [art] world?" I don't mean by denouncing and praising policies as lousy or inspired, but let me give you a concrete example. I am part of a large EU funding network. They fund a lot of our [Goldsmiths] extra-institutional work. Besides all the work we want to pursue, my contribution, or our contribution to policy in this case is not to try and give information on how to make *better* policy, but to say: "you're looking at the wrong things, in the wrong way with the wrong vocabulary, and here are some possibilities to start reorienting yourself and the notion of a common good." Not to produce the desired outcomes as they might be envisaged by policy, but to introduce policy to that which it does not know how to think.

C. C. B.— That is what we were trying to talk about this morning at breakfast.

I. R.— I was still sleepy this morning at breakfast, so I am not quite sure what we were trying to talk about. Anyway, this is how I would plug into this. I don't think we should entertain enormous questions about responsibility. I think we should examine carefully where we might operate between necessity and implication.

U. M. B.— We can do thinking and thinking and thinking, while urgent matters desperately need our attention. I think we have a lot of luxury problems here. So the chasing of millionaires might not work, but in the former East the personal and professional conditions of many artists, of a generation now in their sixties, are ignored. They were too old to adapt to the new structures or denied it. And there is a necessity of responsibility here and thus a need to react! Not only should there be a responsibility of the state to take care of its citizens, but as I said, also a responsibility on our side to point out less fortunate situations. As you said, Irit, there should also be a cultural policy in the UK to protect certain works and to make sure that institutions do what they are supposed to do. There should be a policy to protect artists to a certain degree, artworks and to regulate what happens in public institutions. Sometimes, if we are not putting pressure on policy makers, the response comes too late.

S. R.— My next question pertains to responsibility, if I can insist on this word. Or a responseability, towards criticality, towards a history of thought and ideas. As curators, how do we remain faithful to events and writings that produce history and critical thought, through our exhibitions and projects without reducing these events and ideas to thematic surveys or gimmicks?

C. C. B.— I see, how do we *not* suffer from amnesia? Well maybe it's good to suffer from amnesia. My Australian experience brought me to think that perhaps we should suffer from an amnesia of critical thinking. In the relativistic paradigm of postmodernism, we broke down the so-called master narratives and the idea of a linear history up until and throughout the 1980s and 1990s. While this breakdown affected the linearity of the Western art historical paradigm, through all of these [postcolonial and feminist] studies, what was never discussed by the old intelligentsia was the necessity of critical discourse itself. Artistic practice was discussed, but the root of the discussion was missing: critical distance was never questioned, for example, and it is perhaps not certain that it is the reason and its articulation can still be the basis for equality. Perhaps other aspects of animal and human nature could be more useful, such as imagination. If reason and critical awareness are requisites, then there is no space for the hysteric, and the slave.

S. R.— Who do you mean by "intelligentsia" here?

C. C. B.— Everybody who had a voice and who thought that only those who are endowed with critical consciousness are allowed to speak. These "things" to them are not art. For example, practices of a remote community of Aboriginals will produce works that might be classified as neo-exoticist by the "intelligentsia" and therefore never be supported by major institutions, such as the Tate Modern or the Castello di Rivoli. That paradoxically leaves such practices to the mercy of consumer culture. In fact, that people are doing something in Patjar, even in the most radical political sense, will never make their work part of our discussion according to "critical thinkers" because they do not know that what they are producing could fall within the framework of

what we might call contemporary art. They cannot be part of the discussion, because their work would be classified as primitive.

S. R.— As you said, there is the role of the intelligentsia, which I understand as those who determine the terms of inclusion and exclusion in the art world and the conditions of production. Who then are the curators in relation to the intelligentsia and how does the contemporary art curator in this position act out their responsibility? Through their projects and exhibitions, curators are able to contribute to the expanding canon of contemporary art; here, there is a responsibility to remain faithful to the historical canon and to critical discourse. These are matters of power, politics and representation, all of which reflect on, if not govern, the relationships between art producers, curators and institutions. I am particularly thinking of what is now referred to as "contemporary Arab art" in relation to the series, *Contemporary Arab Representations,* curated by Catherine David, and how that project has influenced the spectrum of how contemporary art practices from the Arab world have been perceived, categorized and canonized.

C. C. B.— That's a big question. To continue what I was saying – the problem with this hegemony of critical distance, or criticality in art is how to imagine an alternative, how to maintain a form of intelligence and knowledge production without identifying that with critical discourse. I don't know. It's a real problem, because the alternative is the end of contemporary art, in a way. I suppose one must then think beyond the necessity of working within the field of contemporary art and focus rather on the cultural field at large, the world, for example, of imagination and story-telling.

A. D.— I'm wondering more about the nature of your question. Is it a question of powerlessness or a question that you feel that the system is so monolithic, and certain approaches get so much visibility that you actually cannot question it, that you cannot posit an alternative?

S. R.— I am wary of placing the agency solely in the hands of the curator or the artist. I would rather understand the notion of agency as it is embedded within language and a larger more inclusive system of implication. We are then, all agents of this language in a way. Language in this sense includes the larger space, which binds us with histories, a network of institutions, funding bodies and governments.

I. R.— I would absolutely agree with that. The place from which you start implies that we should not forget Edward Said – and of course we can't forget Edward Said, so you don't have to set yourself up as the person who will rescue and recuperate his reputation. It is important not to narrow the paths too much in this field, which would exclude you from understanding that you actually have quite a lot of possibilities in shaping much more around you. The very premise of your question on responsibility in relation to representation already assumes that you need to be in some kind of corrective mode. The thing I learnt most from Okwui Enwezor is that it's never about substituting hegemonic power with a counter hegemonic power. There are exceptional models of knowledge production all around us and they need to be understood in their simultaneity and brought together. In the 1980s for example, the English language in Britain, not the US, was hijacked from its British tradition. The language as we knew it twenty-five years ago was entirely rewritten through postcolonial literature, when the writings of Salman Rushdie and Chinua Achebe, VS Naipul and Zadie Smith for example, began circulating. This change came entirely out of literature and is not what Stuart Hall calls "the empire striking back." But rather, it is a recognition that this is what "empire" is really like now, with porous boundaries and shared cultural imaginaries, that the intermingling has taken place and the culture, British culture, has been renewed through it – no matter how much government tries to segregate.

Now, the other thing is that I use criticality very differently from its common sense use. I use it in relation to critique. Criticality is not about standing outside – about criticizing a situation – it is something I think Hannah Arendt is very persuasive about: it is a recognition that while we may be very sophisticated analysts of any given situation, we also experience its very conditions, we are a duality, we are what she calls "we fellow sufferers," we are simultaneously the intelligentsia, the intellectuals, the critics... We live out the very conditions we try to see through analytically, however. We have to find a language, a *modus operandi*, that references both of these: the experiential and

the critical. And that is criticality – It's live, it's of this moment! It has to renew itself. In ourselves, these two things are coming alive and clashing, producing the most uncomfortable condition through which to live your life. That is criticality – the recognition that is happening to me at the same moment.

H. F.— Maybe it is wise to take a step back for a moment. In the discussion about the issue of curatorial responsibility lingers the presupposition of the curator as a clearly delineated profession. This is also something that struck me about this symposium series at Witte de With, namely that they singled out professions: you have the critics, curators and artists as almost separate entities.

U. M. B.— Yes, this is very interesting, but it does not reflect the reality of the practices. We all shift constantly. Sometimes we are the audience, sometimes we are the curators and sometimes the critics.

H. F.— What do you think is the effect of categorising these professions separately?

U. M. B.— You can use it as a point of departure. Unfortunately, I was not there when Irit gave her lecture, but I think it is extremely important to critically investigate curatorial practice, rather than understand curating as a singular profession. I don't want to be a curator, I curate shows. I'm interested in the curatorial, in the practice, as much as I'm interested in the artistic and in the philosophical way of encountering certain issues. In fact, a lot of the courses in curatorial training program sound like job agencies or vacancies, since they are so focused on the one profession of curating.

Jay Tan [workshop participant]— If you are talking about "the curatorial," do you have a word or a sentence to sum up what the curatorial is?

I. R.— Two and a half years of us tearing our hair out trying to understand what we were after, to sum it up *in a sentence!* In giving a definition, I rely here very much on my collaboration with a very interesting colleague, Jean-Paul Martinon, who started as a curator and has turned himself into a philosopher. He thinks the curatorial is the notion of the send-off, it's the inaugural act. It's not the business of putting objects on display and it's not the business of making exhibitions, but it's the inauguration of a process that this act knows it can only launch but not complete. So you have the notion of the send-off, and the other aspect of it that we try to think about is setting up the event of knowledge. In other words, that the curatorial as an inaugural act includes setting up the event of knowledge.

J. T.— And that's different from the "occasion"?

I. R.— We can think of *the occasion* as that which hosts the event of knowledge – and the event of knowledge is both conscious and unconscious. It is everything that the curator does – and by curator I mean a very broad spectrum of practitioners. It's what all the active agents do in order to set up the event of knowledge, and then the event of knowledge does or doesn't take place. For me, for example, the most important exhibition from last year was Catherine David's *Di/visions* in the House of World Cultures, which was Chapter 5 of *Contemporary Arab Representations*, the four first chapters of which I really didn't like. I didn't find them interesting, I found them really tedious, issues with representation and so on, and then suddenly came this exhibition, which really was an event of knowledge, because she moved away from representing the Arab world, to saying something that I think Okwui Enwezor's approach has been kind of driven towards, namely: while you are listening to the state department and the Quai d'Orsay and the Kremlin and wherever else, political discourse is actually constituted elsewhere. Catherine David gave us sixteen phenomenal thinkers, artists, filmmakers, writers, and I think maybe one person who might say "I am a professional intellectual" and they were producing a political discourse of a complexity and richness that none of us here in the arenas where we think we're listening to political discourse could match; so she produced an event of knowledge that I thought was phenomenal, and, in that sense, it wasn't curating, it was a curatorial inauguration.

H. F.— I want to get back to Ute's comment about curatorial programs as job agencies/vacancies. What are the consequences of the pre-fab professional curatorial courses taught in certain institutions – if I can summarize it bluntly – for the curatorial profession as such?

U. M. B.— I wouldn't want to generalize it like that. Sometimes I think we reduce ourselves by coining curatorship as a singular, independent profession. We are all rather unruly individuals, who never asked for permission, otherwise we wouldn't be where we are now. But if you make it into a profession, it suddenly has rules, it has policies, etc. I think this is how the system is *streamlining* us. Alternatively, a certain kind of disobedience, that is sometimes required, can claim a space for thinking. You have to claim it consciously. Sitting at this table with the younger generation in the curatorial workshop, I would say: define what you want to do, don't define it by a preset idea of what a curator is. Our generation didn't have that, because the profession didn't exist in that way. It would be the same as asking: How do you define A *thinker*?

A. D.— I am so glad you are saying this, since it's something I am also thinking about very often. To situate even my generation, we are still in a position of privilege; when I was studying, there were not these professional structures that were so clearly defined.

C. C. B.— Why is it a privilege?

A. D.— It is a privilege because you can shape what you are, how you name it and how you operate within it. For a younger generation emerging now, there are certain kinds of structures of operation, as well as professional profiles and definitions. If you want to escape that, you would either have to redefine them or agitate against them. In any case, that is not the sort of open situation that existed fifteen, or even ten years ago.

U. M. B.— But you have to *create* these openings by yourself. Perhaps it wasn't always a privilege, it was also a struggle to a certain extent.

A. D.— But a *privileged* struggle in a sense that you created a possibility for yourself, an opening rather than opposing existing structures and definitions.

I. R.— I theatrically accused Raimundas of willful silence yesterday, in reference to the panel discussion "Who Benefits from Curatorial Training Programs?" And today he had to carry my suitcase in penance. I think there is something to be said for not being messianic, and not delivering a fully articulated message, and there's something about drawing your listeners to you through the workings of opacity. So if something is opaque, you tend towards investigating it, in a way that you don't when something is too obviously clear. The question may be, "Could you explain where your [Raimundas'] frustrations are coming from?" because otherwise we don't know what you want to address. To me, this is coming from a certain cultural position I don't know how to read very well, but I will try, you know, and make an effort. Maybe somebody else wants to speak?

S. R.— I think what Mai [Abu ElDahab] said yesterday when she spoke to us about curating being akin to "irresponsibility" is relevant to bring up here. In the way I read this is the notion of responsibility reverts back to this idea of being implicated, posing a necessity for us to respond to, in certain situations. This irresponsibility is then a gesture, that may manifest itself as willful silence or something else, but Raimundas, since you and Mai were together on this panel, perhaps you might also want to comment.

Raimundas Malašauskas— For me, that panel was just an interesting way to be in that moment, to be this person who has nothing to say about that particular issue. If I would not have participated in this panel, well, no one would know about it, but in that case I was there and had nothing to say...

I. R.— So for example, it would never occur to you to say, "I don't want to talk about what I am asked to talk about"? In these situations I say, "that's not the subject." That would be my strategy.

R. M.— You mean you would not participate?

I. R.— No, I would say, these people want to talk about this issue, but I am stating that this is not the subject. But the subject is something, somewhere else. We don't know what it is yet, but let's figure it out.

R. M.— To me it was important being this "animal" that had nothing to say about the issue. I actually had nothing to say about it, frankly. If I had not participated at all, you would not know that I have nothing to say about the subject. It is a statement in itself.

I. R.— In our field, we are thinking about making things manifest. To produce something which is extremely opaque, but which uses that opacity quite actively, is an interesting way of being, right? So in a world that is dedicated to making things manifest, to then turn it around and produce opacity, and produce curiosity through that opacity creates an interesting situation. It explains to me why I was curious, rather than annoyed.

S. R.— I think this brings up a really interesting point and question. Through the many curatorial programs that exist, could you say there is a new form of language that is being produced, and that is able to teach us how to employ strategies beyond forms of resistance towards and from within the field, acts of irresponsibility, and performances of "willful silence" as you've called it? I know Curatorial Knowledge is somewhat engaged in this direction of finding a new language, but perhaps you can tell us how this actually works in practice and how does one transmit these ideas through these educational programs? And Ute, from your experience at MIT, as a large institution, would you say there is room for the students to enact small initiatives that interject in the institutional framework? And do you find a space through your pedagogical position to transmit this kind of approach to criticality?

U. M. B.— Let me first address the performance of "willful silence" by means of an example: There were these critical and curatorial meetings that took place in Jakarta [International Workshop on Curatorial Practices, 6-12 March 2006], organized by the Goethe-Institut Jakarta and the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF). They invited artists and critics of the region and then we – a small group of older, experienced the curators were much more like commentators, giving information. We were the backdrops, and there we could share our experience. It was such a different feeling! The burden of saying something that is absolutely correct or which has some kind of impact has silenced a lot of people – for example on the discussion panels in this symposium. You suddenly feel there is this big group and you wonder: "What do I want to tell them?" Maybe that is the responsibility one has to refuse. A situation like this informal discussion here is much more productive in a way. As for my experience teaching at MIT, I think there's always a space if you produce it, and it doesn't matter where it is, and sometimes you can produce it very modestly in a difficult environment but it's you who has to produce it no matter how much effort it takes. I think our students have to produce this space, and I will not produce it for them, I will support them as much as I can. If they don't initiate it and if they don't have the desire to create that space, I won't produce it for them.

A. D.— I will address your question in relation to my own practice as well. Currently, in the de Appel Curatorial Programme, we are attempting to get away from notions such as training and teaching. The main core of our program is now focused on the notion of "context-responsive curating," which functions as an instrument to allow people to *de-programme* themselves in a very drastic way. A lot of people who apply for the course are already extremely professional, they possess an impressive set of discursive tools and theoretical references, but actually they have no curatorial voice of their own. They don't know why they're in this field, they don't know what exactly draws them to *art* and they don't know how to talk about an artwork. De Appel wants to enable them to find out more about exactly these basic drives. My own objective for the de Appel Curatorial Programme, is not to teach the participants a certain curatorial methodology, because I question and interrogate my own methodology every day, but to allow people within the very contained duration of the programme [8 months] to engage in a permanent multi-logue with each other and other actors within the field of contemporary art and curating – an ongoing discussion which allows them to discover their personal curatorial voice. I want to allow them to find out what they want to do in the art field, and how they can do so whilst both articulating their subjectivity and simultaneously engaging in activities that are meaningful to the outside world.

I. R.— Don't you think that comes about through a kind of endless attempt to adjust yourself as a subject in relation to a whole set of existing structures? I have been working with Florian Schneider over the past three years with a whole network of activists across Europe. One of the things I understood through this experience is that there is an inclination to move away from defining one's self in relation to these structures, towards

what self-organization means. I know, it's a slogan, but in actual fact – and what I understood and saw unfolding is precisely that – a self-definition moving away from defying institutions, hierarchies and authorities and all that juvenilia, and emphasizing instead a possibility of starting from elsewhere. It is a mode of thinking tending much more towards a centrifugal rather than a centripetal structure. *That* gives the work a kind of impetus which can create minor devolutions from within institutions and can begin to function as self-organized entities: small initiatives that can be instigated both from within and from outside institutions that break the bonds between subjects and institutions towards a production of knowledge that moves up against the hegemonic structures. In a way, the necessity of contemporary pedagogy is to re-examine totally the relations between subjects and institutions – as in the interpellative model of Althusser – so as to make clear to people, early in their formation process, that there is a lot more to be interpellated by than an institution.

H. F.— Thank you. We would like to conclude this utterly productive and stimulating roundtable discussion by sincerely thanking you for your time and your intelligent and elaborate comments on our questions. Your participation in this event has been crucial in raising those issues which are so important to contemporary curatorial discourse and practice. Although we are not nearly finished talking about these subjects, we shall leave it at this for now, and hopefully engage with these questions in our own respective practices.

I. R.— Thank you. I wish you much independence.

U. M. B.— We should have this kind of discussion far more often.

THE ARTISTS

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES

THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION / THE REPRESENTATION OF POWER

Nicolaus Schafhausen— The last panel for today – I'm very glad that not so many people disappeared from the panel before, which already addressed the power of representation. To be honest, putting this panel together caused us lots of headaches in the past weeks. Initially we thought of a totally different mixture and as with other panels today, our invited guests had problems with our topic. We had one late cancellation from Sven Augustijnen, but this has to do with his need to write a funding application – this also has something to do with power, as it will enable him to survive for the next four years. For me representation in art has always been associated with aesthetics and semiotics. This is why, as a curator, I am interested in art and not in politics. This also echoes Martha Rosler's comments earlier today. I looked up "representation" and "power" with "art" on Wikipedia, and it says: "Representation describes the signs that stand in for and take the place of something else. It is through representation that people know the world and reality through the act of naming it. Signs are manipulated in order to make sense in the world."

I like that very much and I never thought that Wikipedia was so subjective. I'm extremely happy to introduce our three guests: Sarah Morris, Pierre Bismuth and Piero Golia.

Piero Golia— I really believe in Wikipedia, and that everything you find in Google is true and real. While I was searching for "The Power of Representation" and "The Representation of Power,"I found these two beautiful paintings: *St. Jerome* (c.1606) by Caravaggio, which would be "the power of representation," and the portrait of *Napoleon I on his Imperial Throne* (1806) by Ingres, which I decided would be "the representation of power." And if you continue to follow art history up until now you will arrive at a new era, but you still have the same problem: This dichotomy of Bruce Nauman's *Self Portrait as a Fountain* (1966-67/1970) and Maurizio Cattelan's *La Nona Ora* [The Ninth Hour] (1999), which shows the Pope [John Paul II] being hit by a meteorite. Hundreds of years later, still there is no solution.

You should know Sarah's and Pierre's work more or less, but briefly we are dealing with someone who tries to go more towards representation and someone who tries to escape representation. I'll now ask each of them to give a little, five-minute intro…

Sarah Morris— I'm not sure if I believe in Wikipedia, but you definitely confused me with these examples of Caravaggio and Ingres. For me, "The Power of Represenation" and "The Representation of Power" are quite equal. In this way, you can forget about art history. I wrote down a few points, which I think about in my work, or when I think about approaching a project, within the duality in my practice of paintings and films occurring simultaneously and informing each other: Power is constantly in flux so it's difficult to nail. As soon as you try to speak of it, it shifts again. That belief in the ability to change things by discussing,

representing or imaging them is an important aspect of making art, or at least the way I think about it. The idea of approaching the mainstream – which is a taboo in art because you're supposed to deal with the abject or with the lack of representation – is something I'm interested in. Also, there is the idea of placing yourself in situations or locales of power so as to occupy power, to create little fictions of power so you can distribute an idea about a place, or a fantasy of place. Ultimately, power is actually a fiction. It can also be seen that politics is also a fiction, in this respect. They both use these fictive narratives. Lastly, there's the importance of not having a resolution, not having an ending, not having a *dénouement* and keeping with this idea that everything is part of a fragmented whole, which cannot be imaged or constituted as an image. It can be discussed what the parameters of these politics are, it can be discussed what the parameters of power are at one specific time or another, but it is constantly shifting. Fragmentation has to be discussed as a flux. Going back to the idea of the constant shifting that occurs both in politics and in art, because to me they are the same thing, you cannot make a distinction between fiction or lies and truth. These things are constantly flowing in and out of each other. There is no possibility to isolate the ideas of narrative and fiction and "the truth." But Pierre you can probably talk about this too…

Pierre Bismuth— Well, when I was invited to this panel, I was somehow embarrassed because all my life I have tried to go against these two terms: Power and Representation. Let's go back a little bit to how I started my art practice in the late 1980s. If I remember correctly, we were confronted with *a lot* of paintings. And that was a problem for me, not because of painting as such, but because I was trying to find my way outside of this problem of representation. In this context of painting, "representation" meant mainly "image making" but most of my interest was moving towards process and experimentation. All the work that I have tried to do until now has avoided any kind of aesthetic choice and has tried to find rules that would determine the final form. The idea of representation seemed to me, then, very nostalgic or idealistic; looking at something that has passed or for something that should be. But I am not a nostalgic person nor do I have an idea about what I want. The whole process of my work has involved setting up some rules and following them in order to achieve some kind of form. So one could say that the notion of "representation" has been transformed into the one of "process" and the notion of "power" has been transformed into the one of "rules." So now, I don't know if we can move ahead after this split…

P. G.— Well, I find everything is matching together in a curious way. Sarah, when you speak about the idea of power shifting – and I'm sorry, you will hate me, I'll go back to Napoleon – what happens when Napoleon dies? Which portrait of his is going to stand? At the moment when power shifts, what representation will die with the

power? Representation cannot shift in the same way power does, because once it's done it's done.

S. M.— No that's complete nonsense. A painting is only a painting. The *interpretations* of a painting are what remain interesting. We know that this is always changing. So a painting of Napoleon that ends up surviving – whatever you're talking about with your example of Napoleon, which is such a bizarre image, but anyhow – it's the interpretation of this that survives. That's what history is. It is the dominant reading of the painting that would be powerful or that would have some relevance to us now.

P. G.— That's a little confusing to me… because to me a painting that is just a painting is not worth keeping. The painting that should survive is the good one… There may be a million portraits of Napoleon, but only one will survive. Why?

S. M.— That's incredibly romantic! This idea that only the *good* one is going to survive. This is obviously not true.

P. G.— Going back to Pierre's idea of refusing representation for process, maybe we have forgotten one thing: What are artists to *do* with the power of representation?

P. B.— I'm not sure I understand. Exactly what is the power of representation? What - what is it? You go to the cinema and you are shocked? Or what is it? Is it the capacity of an image to transmit something to a public? It's a real question, I'm not sure I understand.

P. G.— I don't understand because we are thinking along the same lines.

S. M.— The power of representation is completely everything. That is why this is a very wide subject – you're talking about representation, about linguistics and about politics. When you're talking about a painting surviving, or its meaning surviving, you're talking about a specific history surviving – not the image. The image is irrelevant. It's the interpretation that becomes dominant.

> **Emmanuel Lambion [from the audience]—** This notion of surviving is important and the power of surviving is tied to form. When you say, Pierre, that you were against representation, there is still the question of the *presentation* of the process, of the idea. It's a fake debate, a fake opposition.

P. B.— I am not saying that I am not dealing with representation. I even realized after some years that my work is about representation after all, but not about the *power* of representation. It is about the clumsiness or the fact

that we have to deal with it *anyway* because we have a relationship with reality through a series of representations. I'm totally aware that the power of representation is the impact of the representation and I am distrustful.

> **E. L.—** If there is a notion of power in representation, then it is about looking for the most effective form that can make an idea survive.

P. B.— That's a very good definition. That's *exactly* what I was *never* looking for! I'm so glad you say that – the most effective way. Now it's very clear.

S. M.— It's funny because in Washington they use the word "effective" all the time. That's their favorite word. I think the idea of survivability or the idea of something being dominant over other interpretations – multiple interpretations, or multiple images or representations – is key. But which one becomes history? Which one survives? There's a war of these things going on constantly.

P. B.— Can we go back to the idea of film? In terms of effectiveness, in terms of the power of representation, is cinema the most efficient territory?

S. M.— It's actually not as effective as you think.

P. B.— No? That seems to be the way people making films think.

P. G.— No. I think filmmaking is accepted as the only way to make completely real representations because filmmaking is such a huge part of our lives now. But what you see on a screen is not representation of reality any more. It's a *parallel* reality that lives on screen. Film can be the point which brings people together because it allows this double meaning of the word representation. Maybe… no?

[short silence]

P. B.— Yes?

[laughter]

P. G.— It doesn't make sense because everybody is laughing.

S. M.— But Pierre, I know what you mean when you say that film is the most effective way. I know that people in the film industry think it's the most effective way. But, if you look at the economics of film, it's *not* the most effective. Actually, art is much more effective than film.

P. B.— In which way *more effective*?

S. M.— Just in terms of the ease of distribution of an image, of making art. In film, people talk about how much money goes into films and the whole economics behind filmmaking – there are magazines called *Variety* that track the relationship of the image to the commodity. If you study this, it's actually not so effective. It's effective if you're making *Toy Story*, but it's not so effective if you're making other films. More to the point, it's not that cinema has become dominant, but the documentary or the reality show has. *That* seems to be very effective because it's extremely cheap to produce. Everything about it is very economic.

P. G.— What do you mean? I don't understand *effective*?

P. B.— Effective is …

P. G.— No no I understand, but I don't understand…

S. M.— Obama was very effective in distributing his ideas through the Internet, through using images, dialogue and email. Effective describes a way of distributing ideas in relation to time and money.

P. G.— And artists want to be effective?

S. M.— I don't know. He brought this up. Why wouldn't you want to be effective?

P. G.— I never really thought about it. Actually, if I could be effective, maybe I would become a political candidate.

S. M.— I don't know. Pierre, do you want to be effective?

P. B.— No, as I said already, that is why cinema is an interesting territory, because those people know where they want to go and I have no idea where I want to get to.… Well I had the idea 20 years ago that I wanted to make art. But those people in films have a clear idea about what effect they want to produce on the public: and most of the time they succeed.

S. M.— I totally disagree.

P. G.— We are being reprimanded [laughter] that we are not sticking to the topics. So. The two questions…

Jimmy Robert [from the audience] I just have some issues with the use of the word power as to me it doesn't induce respect. What happens when you question authority and when representation fails?

P. B.— So you disagree with what…?

P. G.— He is asking about the idea of power. This is why there was such a problem with the Power of Representation panel. Power and Representation are two things that can be interpreted in so many different ways. Now you were referring to power in terms of political power, no? These guys – they were referring to power as a *possibility* of the media.

J. R.— A potential.

P. G.— You said good answer? [laughter]

S. M.— He said potential.

[burst of laughter]

P. G.— I see two words coming back: "Time" and "Evocation." It's two very similar concepts. They are shifting towards a different field of reality. Maybe representation and power die through time. And that's the difference between art and politics: Art has an evocative part that politics and reality will never have. Reality stays through time while politics die with the politicians.

J. R.— That's what I was trying to aim at – the idea of authority and how it changes through time.

P. G.— But authority shifts, no? That's what Sarah was talking about at the beginning. The idea of power shifting…

P. B.— Authority and power are very different. Artists are looking for authority most of the time, but not necessarily for power. Those notions are very different in my point of view.

Monika Szewczyk [from the audience]— How can you have authority without power?

P. B.— You could even say that authority is more invisible and passive and there basically to legitimize your activity.

Dieter Roelstraete [from the audience]— Authority is also related to the idea of authorship. Basically it's the same etymology. I think there has been this ceaseless demonization of the idea of power. But of course power is also a very productive force, such as the power to intervene and the power to – not change – but alter. I'd like to go back to what Jimmy said with regard to authority. I'm not sure whose side you're on Jimmy? [laughter] Are you with the authorities? Or the powers that be, or the powers that become?

J. R.— I'm just interested in how it effects representation. And if there is still authority when representation fails…

M. S.— There is also something of an idea in art that failure is the quickest path to success. There is this trope of failure as the power of art. In the "cynical" way of Diogenes, you get down to the ground and that's when you're really on top. That's a power game. I don't think it can be divorced…

S. M.— That sounds very romantic.

M. S.— Sure, but it's still true.

S. M.— You're telling your fictional projection on the artist, that's what you're revealing. I don't know what Pierre is talking about when he says artists aren't interested in power. I think he's lying. I don't think people have this idea about failure. I think this idea about exposing degradation, exposing vulgarity, which is the issue you're raising of questioning or intervention or where does the moment come where there might be a possible prescriptive function or a possible ethical function of the image. That's what you're trying to raise. We're getting into this idea of the "image of the artist" really, which is totally another side.

M. S.— I didn't say artist, I just said that in art failure is a kind of trope that is very differently treated than elsewhere.

S. M.— As a subject or do you mean the persona of the artist?

M. S. [from the audience]— I'm talking in general, about exhibitions that think through failure as a strategy, artists who use failure…

P. B.— No, no, I totally understand that.

P. G.— But wait! We have one hour to talk about the most general topic so let's try to go back.

Simon Denny [from the audience]— I'm going to digress a little bit right now, but I just thought as I was watching this panel that there is a nice model of the power of language working here, with the people who have the most dexterity in English having the most impact.

Unidentified [from the audience]— I'm quite interested in this word failure because surprisingly it is being used in the context of artistic practice and how art is received. Is failure the equivalent of misrepresentation?

[laughter]

P. G.— I don't believe in representation and I was astonished when she said that failure is a good step for art. I come from a very solid scientific background. I'm an engineer. To me failure is failure. I can bullshit you and tell you about the most beautiful artwork I want to do in my life, but once you fail it's nothing. Art is something very concrete.

Unidentified— You could say it's still something, only it's misrepresenting your initial intentions. That's where effectiveness lies – it's not in the distribution, it's in the reception.

P. G.— I don't know, I never went to a celebration dinner for a team that just lost the World Cup.

[laughter]

D. R. [from the audience]— I think the idea of failure is important in that it has to do with the single most influential artist working today. Or not working today because he's failed so miserably – Bas Jan Ader. In the last ten years I don't think I've seen more reenactments than those of Bas Jan Ader's work.

P. B.— That's true. But that's different because this is also the aesthetic of failure, which is another thing.

D. R.— But it already mobilizes failure as a powerful image. In engineering we wouldn't be able to pull off this panel. In art we can. This is the very enactment of the potential… of trickery and of bullshitting, yes!

[laughter]

S. M.— I want to answer this Bas Jan Ader thing. I haven't seen this.

D. R.— We probably inhabit different worlds, of course, but…

S. M.— This is the thing with Bas Jan Ader. Very interesting, but in the end wouldn't you say that people who like him don't want art to be effective?

[some consternation]

M.S. [from the audience]— You said, "I haven't seen this," which means it's not there, it's not represented. That's the most interesting thing about representation and it probably goes back to what you were talking about [referring to Jimmy]. It's all about the game of

what is in front of us. You say you don't see and some people say they do.

S. M.— I just wanted him to give examples of where you're seeing this. But I'm less interested in the aesthetic of failure, as Pierre talked about. Why would that be interesting? Why would that be a trope? Because that has nothing to do with what we are talking about here. That's like a side shoot. That's a rabbit hole. Going down that track has nothing to do with the power of representation.

M. S.— Well… it's a critique of power.

P. G.— We all know Bas Jan Ader was a very intelligent man. When he got into this boat he knew he would die.

Matthieu Laurette [from the audience]— I would like to go back to the title: The Power of Representation versus The Representation of Power. We have a very specific example of this antagonism. Both you Sarah and Pierre are sharing a topic. You did win an Oscar, Pierre, and you have been filming the Oscars, Sarah. Can you elaborate on these two projects regarding the title of this panel?[1]

P. B.— I always thought I should do a film about a failure in someone's life that would be perceived as a great success by others. We probably all know that this Oscar is kind of an accident, and even a failure if you will. It would be difficult to plan such a thing or at least I never thought of it when I wrote the synopsis. I could very easily see my parents being disappointed in me because, hoping I would become a respected artist showing in museums, they just see me ending up with a prize from the film industry. What should I say about that?

M. L.— Sarah was saying earlier that dealing with the mainstream within the art world is sometimes a problem…

S. M.— I said it's taboo. The idea of the Oscar is something that Pierre was involved with. Probably the difference here, in terms of positioning, is that Pierre was in it and actually participating and collaborating with the machine – and it has to be said that he is being a bit disingenuous here because people plan for *years* to get that and it actually means a lot. It's a very *effective* little sculpture. Probably what I was involved in was an occupation of a place and some level of engagement – very different from the level of engagement of actually participating and occupying that distribution system. I was occupying a place to come up with a different image of it. My film *Los Angeles* does have to do

1.— Laurette is referring to Sarah Morris' *Los Angeles* (2004), which was partly filmed at the Oscar ceremonies, and Pierre Bismuth's Oscar (shared with Michel Gondry) for the best original screenplay of the film *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), which Gondry also directed.

with failure. The imagery is very much about failure or the idea of delusion – the idea of a representation of power that's extremely distributed and successful by certain standards. But perhaps I don't really know what it says. Maybe Pierre can tell me.

P. B.— Oh God no!… But I want to come back to this idea of narration that we started to talk about earlier with regard to films. One detail: The only reason why Michel Gondry was interested in what I proposed was because it was *not* a story. It was not about representation and story-telling. It was based on a very simple principle that he had to follow. In a way you could say that Michel was very close to Sol LeWitt in his methodology in that he took the rules I gave him and tried to apply them to a narrative structure. Here is a good example of a film that is not based on the desire to represent something. It was based on the desire to propose a system and try to see if we would end up with a story by applying this system. And because Michel is a good filmmaker, it worked. That's all I wanted to say.

S. M.— I think it's interesting that this story – because ultimately it is a story, your thing Pierre…

P. B.— Well, if I showed you what I wrote…

S. M.— Your thing might have been a principle, but at the end of the day it was a story. It was about the *erasure* of an image, a memory. That is the power of an image. It has a memory, it has an interpretation and that is extremely powerful – powerful enough to merit a company erasing it. And I think that's quite political no?

P. B.— Yeah that's true. I agree.

Rainer Ganahl [from the audience]— I'm coming back to the notion of failure. Maybe we should distinguish between real failure and chic failure or flirtations with failure. In terms of artists, the real failure is when people come out of art school and disappear. Artists that nobody talks about…

P. B.— Well I want to say something about that…

R.G.— Then obviously there are other types of failures when people are known for a while, they fail in projects, and then they come back. If you take the example of Bas Jan Ader, he was a real failure as a sailor, he was not a real failure as an artist. In fact, he was very successful. Even on his last trip he went to an exhibition, so he was showing all the time and he kept showing after his death…

P. B.— Okay, I want to say something about that…

R. G.— Power and representation belong together. If you are powerful, if you have a voice so to speak, you have representation. If you have all kinds of means of representation but you're powerless you have no power, no representation, nobody listens. It's all linked. When you're powerful you can sell any kind of misrepresentation as the real thing - as we have seen in politics – *effectively*, if you want to use that word.

P. B.— Okay. I want to respond to what you said before. I'm going to take the risk of being called "romantic" by Sarah. I do believe that things, which are – or might be – a failure in real life can find a place in art. That's why I'm doing what I'm doing. Things that have no importance in society might become something in art. That's where the artist needs authority – to make things that are normally invisible exist and become something important for the public, something that they have to respect. That's my belief and maybe that's romantic, but that's why I'm still doing what I do.

Unidentified [from the audience]— Do you mean you need the ability to fictionalize things?

P. B.— It's just purely a way of not being only interested in what is commonly considered important and trying to give a value and visibility to what you think is important. And those things can be very simple and even stupid.

[some confusion]

P. G.— We all came here and there was this beautiful problem that artists never have answers, but it's good when they come out with nice questions. We all agree on the fact that power and representation are two variables. Some of us think they are independent, some think they are very connected, so we do not really have a conclusion. But one thing we can all be sure of: for $13,280.00, you can buy an Oscar on eBay.

[Applause]

PERSONA

Nicolaus Schafhausen— The next panel is titled "Persona," which can refer to a role played by an actor or even a social role. We have invited artists whom we would like to question about the performative and the theatrical and the autobiographical aspects of their work. I am very happy to introduce Doug Fishbone from London, he is also the moderator, Spartacus Chetwynd, also from London, Danai Anesiadou, from Brussels, Lili Reynaud-Dewar from Paris and Jimmy Robert from Brussels. The first question goes to you [to Doug Fishbone]: Do performance artists have to look better then other artists?

[laughter]

Doug Fishbone— Hmm, I think, that goes without saying, doesn't it? [more laughs] Alright, does anyone have any comments on that one?

Danai Anesiadou— We have brought props as well. We can use props to look *better*. Like this one! [shows a bright pink and shiny lycra overall] I was so nervous to do this that I thought I might instead put somebody else in this catsuit. But then I was too disorganized to find somebody. Jan did want to do it. [To Jan Verwoert in the audience] Are you into fetish? Ok, we will talk later.

[laughter]

Spartacus Chetwynd— I got a lycra catsuit on.

D. A.— I had the idea of an invisible helper who would sit in my chair and answer the questions and I would be just… Oh my god! [laughter from panel and audience as Spartacus attempts to put Danai into the lycra suit]

S. C.— I also recommend eating porridge and eight hours of sleep… [continues amidst more laughs]

D. F.— Always a good idea. Let's get the ball rolling. "Persona" is a very rich subject within the range of performance practices represented by our panelists. The first question that arises: Does performance imply that an artist has to invent a persona on stage? Some people choose to inhabit archetypal personas or theatrical personas of a more or less conventional nature, which they may subvert or not. Others use autobiography. But that is only part of the discourse. To focus solely on persona might run the risk of limiting performance to a question of theater versus reality. But in some cases it hinges more on an investigation of process or context rather than on persona as such. So maybe it is better to frame the question as one of the broader performative stance – the interface between audience and artist – and consider the creation of a persona simply as one tool that artists might use in a range of different ones. When we got together to discuss

the topic, we thought it would be more interesting to look more broadly at the different elements we might use that relate to the theater, or theatricality, etc. because what we are making is not theater as such; we use it as an element. In looking at all of this from an operational standpoint, how do performers inhabit their work? Spartacus, we will start with you.

S. C.— How do I inhabit my work?

D. F.— Well, as someone who has changed your name recently…

S. C.— I can talk about the name thing. I had some really great teachers when I was young, like eleven. I had an English literature teacher that walked into the classroom on his hands upside down, and I had another good one, loads of them. What was really horrible is that they ended up having nervous breakdowns. I thought they were really good individuals, cool humans. But the ones that I liked had nervous breakdowns. Then they changed their names and tried to have a new life.

D. F.— *After* the breakdown?

S. C.— Yes, but they changed their names to terrible names like Joy and Mercy, etc. And what was really interesting is that no one bothered to call them by these new names, which reminded them of why they had the nervous breakdown. They were never given a new chance in life by being called Joy, etc. And I found it really cruel and interesting how society did that. So I thought to pre-empt the nervous breakdown.

[laughter]

And I thought to use a name that is obviously quite protective – does anyone know the history of Spartacus? He was a slave rebel and he was very famous for concepts like solidarity. And I thought that since I work with a group, and I know I am the main motor of it, it would be very representative, like a trade name. By calling myself Spartacus I would reference that I am supposedly working on an anonymous level, even though I am such a dominating person.

D. F.— You were talking before about extending this idea of persona to a point where your actual life becomes an experimental performative platform…

S. C.— Now in the art world, we all have to work with galleries or art fairs, and these platforms are as pressure-filled as a theater stage, and I am finding that my work is not professional enough to pull off that pressure. Once, trying to run away from this context, I did a piece called *Walk to Dover* (2005). I organized a long walk with some friends. It was very

romantic. We walked out of the city and continued for a week, camping at night, a bit like going on a religious pilgrimage, full of adrenaline and nature. I realized afterwards that I work really well away from spectators, and that the next thing would be for that performative energy to move into my life.

D. F.— Jimmy, I know you have a particular interest in the notion of surface. You even used your own body as a surface to be projected upon in some of your work. I wonder if you could speak a bit about how you articulate the notion of surface and artifice and maybe even an extended notion of physicality.

Jimmy Robert— The way I see it, images are where representation fails. Yesterday we talked about the power of representation and I got a little excited. For me it's a matter of extending the existing performativity within images, from the two-dimensional plain to the three-dimensional one. I see physicality as that extension – that is why there is performance. But I don't see myself as a performance artist, although that seems to be what suits the institutions at the moment. Primarily I am questioning the idea of theater.

D. F.— I wonder if you could tell us a little bit more about the re-working of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1966), which you made at Cubitt (London)?

J. R.— Basically, the performance consisted of me wearing a t-shirt made out of masking tape and inviting the audience to remove the tape one by one, just as Yoko Ono invited people to cut away pieces of her clothing. In reading reviews from the time, you find that people were expecting a concert. One reviewer describes her work as a mirroring, really making people aware of what they are doing, as they are doing it. My constructions of installations and images are also about holding up this mirror to the audience and about engaging their own physicality, not just mine.

S. C.— So you make them work quite hard.

J. R.— Well they have to do something! [laughs]

S. C.— What about the audience now?

J. R.— We are getting there…

S. C.— You also make them work quite hard…

D. F.— In my work I do a kind of monologue performance where I show huge amounts of imagery and have a narrative that follows all kinds of tangents. I am really trying to tax people's attention span as much as possible.

S. C.— That is what is really awkward about *these* talks: We are meant to be interesting and that is the pressure point I think.

J. R.— You mean we are meant to perform…

> **Ariadne Urlus [from audience]—** May I comment? I think this is not a performance; you don't have to perform…

S. C.— You are asking the impossible.

> **A. U.—** Well maybe, but there is the difference between this and theatrical performance. This is *talking about* your work, which we are interested in so tell us what you are doing.

D. F.— Yes. I was actually about to ask Danai about the project you did at the 5th Berlin Biennale (2008), *The Night of Psychomagia*, which engages a lot with autobiography. I wonder if you could talk about of how you use that as a tool?

D. A.— Yeah, ahem, just now I decided not to talk about that project, about autobiography…

D. F.— Okay…

D. A.— …because then you get stigmatized as an… autobiographical masturbator! I just use autobiography as a tool or a key to make some connections, because I am interested in these connections. And they happen to be autobiographical. For a long time I was living in the dark Middle Ages and I didn't make any art because I thought I should be a conceptual artist. And that didn't work out. And just recently I constructed or I found a method of working, which excites me and which leads to events. So I make work that references my own life and attempts to be universal at the same time. I guess everybody is doing that, but I'll give you an example of how I approach it: Somebody asks me to make a performance and normally I don't know what to do, because I never re-perform works. It is all about that context. Just before a recent invitation to do something at Etablissement d'en Face in Brussels, I was in New York and I fell in love with somebody, and he said: "You have to taste soft shell crab." We were searching for it but couldn't find any because it was not the season. Then I was back in Brussels and I got this image of a lobster with diamonds, a very beautiful surreal image, so I wanted a live lobster on a leash in the performance. Each work starts like some kind of in-built Google engine in my head, like some kind of psycho-Google. I guess a lot of people work like that, but for me that is the magic… Anyway, for this event I had also organized this band Spasm to do their last concert in memoriam of a friend that died of cancer. I was encountering the disease all

around me, in my immediate circle. These were all signs. And then my soft shell crab lover from New York was insisting: “You have to be patient.” So during that period I was preoccupied with the notion of patience and then one day I bumped into another ex-lover on the street, who does a great cover of Guns and Roses’ *Patience,* whom I asked, “I need you for that performance.” And that is basically how I made a performance about love and cancer. But I gave too much away… now I will have to kill you all!

D. F.— So everything basically came together… Okay. Lili Reynaud-Dewar, I wanted to ask you why you don’t actually appear in your own performance work.

Lili Reynaud-Dewar— Yes, I think this is really visible – that I am the only person on this panel who is never performing in front of an audience. I work with people and I work with objects. For instance, I started working with Memphis design, which is quite strange but I like it a lot…

S. C.— What is it?

L. R. D.— Memphis was a design collective that made furniture from about 1980 until 1987, but they were most prolific for two or three years. I love them, but they are really in bad taste, really horrible and no one really likes them. Now, they are sometimes seen as aesthetically or materially interesting. I think they stand for a concept. They are critical tools. So I started using them to critique consumerism and standardization. And I work with people in the same way that I work with objects. I work consistently with a woman called Mary Knox, who I met in Glasgow. And she is a concept, a very, very strong one. And she is also a little bit like an object, not in the sense that she is a very sexy woman, although she is, but in the sense that she actually can’t do many things because she is so self-conscious and so self-aware and so cautious about how she moves and what she looks like. So I can’t go and say: “Please jump.” No it’s not going to work, so she is a bit like a table. [audience laughter] Mary has influenced my practice very much. I met her in a club and then we worked in a bar together and once I asked her to perform a very specific performance which involved a tale with an historical character called Queen Mother Nanny of the Mountains, who led the Maroon Revolution in Jamaica (c.1720) and helped slaves escaping plantations. And so I asked Mary to impersonate this character who was a black slave, and Mary is actually blonde, Irish, you know. So, that is the first performance we did. And she has been a big influence since…

S. C.— Did she black up?

L. R. D.— Not for this one.

S. C.— But what did she do?

L. R. D.— She just stood in front of a ridiculous sculpture which was a monument to Rastafarian culture and she read this text saying: “Hi! I am Queen Mother Nanny of the Mountain and I am here today to tell you this story…” She has influenced my work – since she is so self-conscious, the work is also very self-conscious. [laughs] Or something like this…

D. F.— I’m curious about the notion of control in everyone’s practice… In my performances, I don’t have any space for improvisation or that sort of thing. Everything is very scripted and has to be timed exactly. Jimmy, are there any elements in your performance that you leave open to chance?

J. R.— That is kind of interesting… you appear as a kind of control freak if you say yes!

[laughter]

D. F.— I am not trying to say you are…

J. R.— What are you saying? [laughs] I don’t know, I mean I don’t think consciously of the idea of control, but I think within the construction of images and objects, there is a certain element of control and maybe I would like to aspire to or apply that control within the parameters of the body. Of course, a lot of things escape you, like your relation to the audience and their interpretation, and I think that is quite essential…

D. F.— Spartacus I know you have a…

S. C.— Yes, yes, I am bursting to talk. Bursting! [D.F. laughs] Can’t keep me back, can’t keep me down and I am going to be problematic too!

D. F.— Right on!

J. R.— Promises, promises!

S. C.— Do you want me… I can tell you…[aside to J. R.] Promises? [sighs] The limitations or the organization of control I have in mind is like a very simple chalk-drawn square on the floor – I am looking at Bertold Brecht, of course, and I am looking at Japanese theater. Within this area, the person who is coming to have fun with me could do anything they like, but the thing I need to have is a certain amount of very, very straightforward control. Say there are a couple of squares on the floor and then there is different music so that you are allowed to do anything you like in one area when this music is on and whatever you like in the other area when another piece of music triggers you. As long as these limits are very, very simple, and you know what you are doing, you can do anything you like within these areas. So I am not controlling

with the individual improvisations, but I am incredibly controlling and straightforward about the limits. It's about composition like a painting and it has to do with looking at the history of theater.

J. R.— I think it is also essential to open up the discussion, to see how performance matters, if it does, and in which way it may be a political act. I think there is something essential and basic in performance, which is about expression. Maybe other modes of representation are failing and therefore we need to be out there.

S. C.— Really good point!

J. R.— [laughs] Anyway that's it. It wasn't a question, it was a way to open up the conversation to the public – to explore the relevance of performance, in which way it is satisfying where other modes of representation are not.

L. R. D.— I don't relate much to the concept of expression but I like the ideas that, when everything else fails, then you use performance. [audience laughter] I am not going to talk about failure today, but it is interesting that performance can be the only thing you have left, the only thing you can use to say something. So, *voila, c'est tout.*

> **Jay Tan [from the audience]:** While you have been talking, I was thinking about who in the room *isn't* a performance artist, or who in the room would not consider themselves as a performance artist? And at what point is your "persona" not active in your work? I ask this because the first time I came across Spartacus' work was via bat paintings that I particularly liked. And then I was quite surprised when you were doing this other stuff.

S. C.— We definitely need to meet afterwards.

> **J. T.—** Okay. I just wondered about being bracketed as being a performance artist – do you do that yourselves?

S. C.— If the people in the audience are performance artists, or if the panel is, or everyone?

> **J. T.—** Shall we start with you [indicating to Lili] and then go backwards?

L. R. D.— Well I am not. Thank you. If I have to develop this: I work with people who are very close to me like my best friends or my mom, my two most beautiful students… I create a very specific context with them to act in and I design costumes for them and objects…

> **J. T.—** But you also speak very well, and you do voices, sit on stage…

L. R. D.— Thank you! That is nice.

> **J. T.—** But the way you were enacting some of the stories about the woman you are using in your performance had a very theatrical mode for me.

L. R. D.— Do you think I look like Mary Knox? Because I would be very happy…

> **J. T.—** The truth is I don't know your work, but I was imagining you just might be Mary Knox while you are sitting there.

L. R. D.— Well, that's a big question. I am not. Maybe I would wish to be. Maybe there is this specific relation between the two of us. But maybe that would be a bit like a short cut… I mean I am completely depending on this woman and I quite like this idea that, if she wants to stop working with me, then I would make other work – I would move to painting or something else…

S. C.— Is she a kind of a ventriloquist?

L. R. D.— No.

S. C.— You never had your hand up her bottom?

L. R. D.— No. Well…

> [Laughter]

D. F.— That we will talk about at the bar…

> **Tanja Elstgeest [from the audience]—** Can I also ask you something? I have worked a lot in theater and with artists and I have found that sometimes this change in environment is really difficult… For example, at the Holland festival, which is a big music and theater festival in Amsterdam and here in Rotterdam at the Schouwberg, they invite performance artists into a theater environment and sometimes this is really problematic as the audience is coming with a mood that is completely different from the art context. And I often see this complete misunderstanding of their work; for example, last year there was Walid Raad doing one of his lectures, and people were coming out saying: "I thought it was a really bad theater piece." So I was wondering if you ever had such an experience, Spartacus or Danai and Jimmy?

D. F.— Actually I have a kind of amusing story about that: I was invited to do a performance at a charity event in London for a very important group of collectors that raise money for arts charities in Israel. And I agreed to do it on the understanding that I would keep it performative, rather then just doing a dinner lecture, since that is not what I do. My performance work involves weaving slide show narratives that are very satirical, at times very cynical and quite over the top in the use of imagery – I am responding to mass media culture in general, so I like to bombard the audience with information, and some of it is pretty touchy. When I did this performance, I toned it down considerably from the way that I often work, but there was just absolute hostility – I could tell from the first comment that I made, that this audience was just utterly against me. But I said to myself, "I am going to get through this." At the end there was just a lukewarm, "golf clap" kind of applause. It was amazing because I thought that, as a group of collectors and people related to the art world, they might be interested in being pushed. I was making fun of the charitable context and playing with the notion of where I was and working with the language of Israeli politics and charities, so I was really pushing a lot of buttons. And people were infuriated. They even initiated a letter-writing campaign and essentially I was black-balled by part of the London art world for a few years, for better or for worse, I don't know which. That was really interesting because the context was so hostile, when I thought it would be very embracing. I've had this experience a few times, and it's always interesting when something bombs.

D. A.— The moment you enter a theater and you sit down in that velvet seat, you look differently at what's in front of you. I mean you don't even have to come from a theater background. But there is a difference between theater people and art people. I have done the same piece in a theater and in a gallery, and afterwards you get totally different reactions. In the theater people ask you: "*Why*? Why did you do this?" And also, they comment on your craftsmanship. And, in a way, in art there is more freedom. It is more receptive. Still, theater conventions are difficult to escape if you are from this background…

J. R.— Spartacus was saying something interesting about that…

S. C.— Did I say something interesting?

J. R.— [Laughs] Yes you did. Yesterday you talked about the fact that the most interesting theater was not happening in theaters anymore. And I think that is quite something to know: Where is it happening – in art institutions?

S. C.— Going back to the question of being labeled, I used to feel really nervous about all these strange art jargons – performance, theater, persona, body politics – but the more I've understood, the older I get, the more theater I've got under my

belt, the more grateful I am for being in the art world because here *anything goes*. I can go and see things that will blow my mind like the Kabuki Season that came to the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. This is the kind of experience Mad King Ludwig talked about in relation to Wagner's operas – which Nietszche called "the birth of tragedy." But quite often you go and see things that are so disappointing because they misjudge the intelligence of the audience.

T. E.— Are there more questions?

Miriam Kathrein [from the audience]— I wanted to ask a question to Doug and Danai – I saw a performance of yours [indicating to D.F.] years ago in London where you spoke about being mugged in the streets of London, a horrible experience and very personal one. And with you Danai, given how you talked about the background of your performance – do you ever think after a performance that you gave away too much of your personal information? And do you feel a little embarrassed afterwards or is this just the energy that drives you?

D. F.— Not really in my case. That particular experience was an actual thing that happened to me, so I decided to incorporate it into the performance. And since I still had two black eyes from the mugging at the time, I thought it could add a real edge to the piece. But I also fabricate stories to manipulate the audience for different effects. I base my performative persona on my own personality, but it is often very exaggerated and I push certain elements in order to be manipulative and seductive as a storyteller. It's all about pushing and pulling. I hope that by the end of my performances, I have brought the audience close to the point of saturation without going overboard, because I'm talking about desensitization through the media. I don't think I push that too far. It is a very calibrated thing. Danai?

D. A.— I am going to reverse the question [indicating to Miriam], because you saw that piece and you didn't know me. Do you think it was exposing a lot about me now that I have given you an explanation?

M. K.— No… With performance art, this is my personal point of view, I sometimes feel a little bit embarrassed for the person who has to perform. Not because I think it's bad or not nice but I always think: "What would I do in this situation, how would I feel?"

D. A.— Performance art in general or the more personal performance art?

M.K.— The more personal…

D. A.— Ah Jesus, is what I am doing *that* personal? [laughter] No! I think with the people that know me, I get a bit excited.

I don't know if it is perverse, but to have these people in the audience or those I asked to perform with me who know more about the situation. It is basically like watching a [John] Cassavetes movie and either knowing the background of Cassavetes – knowing that he was married to Gena [Rowland], that it was their house in which they filmed – or not having that information. Some know more than others, some things have to be kept secret…

J. R.— That comes back in a way to the subject of politics – especially when we're reading certain feminist texts, where the personal is political. I think performance is a way to articulate the political via the personal and therefore through the body. But we have to be very careful of the question of ego and not necessarily see performance as a direct manifestation of the ego. With a lot of performance – if we think about Yvonne Rainer or Trio A, etc. – the body acts as object, which is not trying to be seductive. It is not personal anymore.

> **Monika Szewczyk [from the audience]—** Following up on that: When we were setting up this panel, we realized it was made of several people coming from a theater tradition, rather than a performance art tradition. To me, performance art was originally almost anti-theater, in the sense that people did not assume a theatrical persona, and were objects as you say. And I am curious how you draw the line, not where you draw the line but how? Is it interesting to tone down the theatricality or, in your case Danai, maybe it's important to amplify theatricality – because I kind of agree with Miriam, your work is very… theatrical.

D. A.— Ah theatrical, I thought you were going to say "personal" again…

> **M. S.—** It creates a different experience in comparison to watching the more minimal dance performances of Yvonne Rainer, which seem to say: "Yes we are all modern and rational together." There, the process is not psychological in the same way. Someone like Adrian Piper, when she does *The Mythic Being* works, is totally on the edge. Do you know this? [Lili nods] Maybe you could describe it a little bit and then respond to it?

L.R.D.— Well, in *The Mythic Being*, Adrian Piper performs all the exaggerated identities of "the Black man" in 1970s America, or I should say the vision of the Afro-American man in white mainstream culture: the hustler, the gangster, the macho… She wears a moustache, a tight pair of flashy trousers, platform boots, etc. Those performances are very, very good work because she fictionalizes an existing exaggeration of identity. She plays simultaneously with something very close and very far away from her own self. I don't know if that's clear. The fiction

somehow goes wrong – it's too much and it's so fake, but it's also drawn from her actual experience of being what she called "a pale black woman." And she goes beyond the critique of racism. So she plays with all these stereotypes that are attached to African-American identity and culture, while also cross-dressing – she transforms into a man, which brings up all kinds of new questions. I think this work is really important – and it relates both to the personal and the fictional simultaneously. But I am not sure performance has to be related to the personal. For me it is the complete opposite. I actually work with other people, with objects I didn't make myself and with things that really don't belong to my own cultural identity or to my own experience. And I do it, in a way, so as not to define myself, or maybe to do it better? It is also a way to question: What is a person, what is an identity? In this world, what do people expect from this "white, European thirty-something girl?" But actually I am the author of these expectations. Can I do something that is completely different from what I have been defined as? I don't know if you see what I am relating to…

> **Emmanuel Lambion [from the audience]—** Reacting to your performances and reversing Miriam's question: Could one also say that performative art – as opposed to a static art object – is the best way to control what you give away? Whether you live it as a cathartic experience or as a mediator of the experience, like Lili, you control what you give away…

L.R.D.— Yes, yes, yes, yes. There is a lot of control in that. I am really interested in this question of control and how control can be completely perverse. Strange. Yes I am a control freak and no I am not. For instance in Warhol's Factory or in Fassbinder's anti-theater troupe, you could be operating the machines or you could be an actor, but it would always change. One day you would arrive and Fassbinder would say: "Ok, you are not the first role anymore, go and take care of the machines." Maybe this was not authoritarian, just very open and experimental, very positive, but still… very cruel and perverse. Does this answer your question?

> **E. L.—** Yes…

S. C.— Can I say something, quite quickly: I am really into cathartic release… I think I differ quite a lot from the other panel members because I am really interested in not presenting formal spectacles on a platform. I am really interested in things being completely like seventies freak-outs. Personal – of no quality whatsoever – personal release and cathartic relief, spiralling and ascending into a cult that probably ends in murder!

TOTAL VISIBILITY

Monika Szewczyk— Hello. We are very pleased to welcome all of you back. We have titled this conversation "Total Visibility," after an essay that Kaja Silverman wrote about Jeff Wall's work, where she developed a really interesting dialectic of visibility and invisibility as the crux of image-making. When I first saw Willem de Rooij and Jeroen de Rijke's *The Point of Departure* [2002], it also struck me that there was also a lot happening in this work and other works by Willem and Jeroen, in terms of these dialectics of visibility and invisibility, and that Willem de Rooij and Jeff Wall would likely enjoy talking together. So without elaborating much more I think I'll just turn it over our speakers…

Willem de Rooij— Monika thank you so much for this introduction. I also want to thank Witte de With for inviting us. I think I can speak for Jeff if I say we're both really happy to be here. Thank you for that Jeff. It is a thrill and an honor and a great joy to be sitting with you here today. Jeff and I met today for breakfast and we talked a little bit about the proposed topic of this talk and we spent quite some time wondering what we felt that the organizers wanted from us… and it was very hard for us to come to a point within "Total Visibility" so we decided quite quickly to skip it and talk about something else.

[murmurs, quiet laughter]

That's what we are going to do now. We had a really great breakfast and actually felt that we would like to start talking more or less where we stopped this morning – and that was at a point where I was talking to Jeff about a piece I made together with my collaborative partner Jeroen de Rijke in 2005 called *Mandarin Ducks*. This was an ambitious piece with which we wanted to do many things, but one of those many things was to test the possibilities of referentiality and to see how many references one can put in one work. We wanted to do this because we were struck by the fact that around us we saw so many works that seemed to lean very heavily on references and seemed to legitimize themselves by referring to other interesting stuff, be these artworks or any other reference in the cultural field. And we were talking about that a little bit and then I think I said that I felt Jeff's work to be partly guilty of producing this stream in art and then…

Jeff Wall— …but you didn't say guilty. [laughter] This morning you didn't say guilty… I think you said *responsible*, which is a very different thing.

W. d R.— That is of course what I meant. And then you said that you're aware of that. Is that correct?

J. W.— I think I must be aware of it in some vague sense. My feeling at the moment is that there's a certain fatigue with what we could call "excessive referentiality." And

your point was that it has its virtues and it has its place in what you could call a serious consideration of what art is trying to be. In the seventies, when I began to make the kind of pictures I'm making now, I really did believe that this kind of internal mirroring of other accomplishments must inevitability take place. And that it wasn't a decision that one makes. One doesn't decide to refer to things, one is obliged to accept the precedents of accomplishment – you have to come into a kind of effective relationship with them in order to make something new – in my case, a photograph, a picture.

W. d R.— So any picture that you felt at that moment was functioning, in the sense of it being well produced, therefore related to earlier images because it found itself in a tradition.

J. W.— Yes. If we look back, from the early sixties until about the middle to late seventies, young artists (and I was a young artist then) had to experience an enormous wave of resistance against the picture. And we can also think about the art of the twentieth century – and of the avant-garde of the twentieth century – as a rebellion against the picture. And that was an important and, let's say, decisive process.

W. d R.— A picture being a depiction…

J. W.— A picture being something like *The Nightwatch* by Rembrandt [1642]. That is a canonical example of what we call a picture. A picture is an image that depicts its subject – let's say it's the subject of *The Nightwatch* – giving us an experience of that motif. But we know that we're having another experience at the same time. It's at least two things – it's an experience of experiencing depiction itself. And that's something that…

W. d R.— …that reflects on itself…

J. W.— …not necessarily reflects on itself explicitly, but it tells us that we're experiencing *it,* as well as any subject whatever. And of course that experience is also the experience of the goodness of that picture – its quality. And that is the main tradition of the West.

W. d R.— The goodness being that it's well made…

J. W.— But there had to be – and there was – a long tradition of rebellion against that for reasons we don't have to go into now. And that rebellion led into all things that we know very well, from the first avant-gardes on. As a young person coming in near the end of the period, I had the feeling that the rebellion against the picture was like a tide that had began to move out again. And so I found a way to attach myself to at least the prospect of what had been rebelled against – what

had been the object of a long interrogation, a long de-legitimation. That phenomenon, that thing, that tradition (there's different ways of looking at it) had suddenly come alive again, or at least I felt it. And so the question of the picture then arose for me in the middle of the seventies in ways that I've talked about many times. And this question of referentiality seemed to be – at that time at least – a way to enliven or bring to life the notion of the continuity of that tradition. It seemed – despite, or because of, or through this challenge – that it had created new forms. The pictorial tradition didn't disappear or it wasn't vanquished, it wasn't overthrown, it continued in a new form. I couldn't define the form, but I had intuitions about it. I think the question of photography is beside the point for the moment. But the referentiality question seemed to me a way that one could create what I thought of at the time as a kind of internal mirroring. As if the picture had little mirrors inside it, as if you were looking at a space and seeing something, but also seeing fragments of something else. As if the space was filled with small reflected surfaces that sent your vision back in time or elsewhere in space, or both at the same time and that those things were the outcome of an act of fabrication. And that's what referentiality meant to me. It seemed to be a live need or energy.

W. d R.— And a way to re-associate with the tradition?

J. W.— Looking back, I think it was polemical, in the context of the mid- to late seventies. It was a way of asking once again if a picture could really be alive.

W. d R.— A polemical act. I asked you this morning if it was also an act of rebellion?

J. W.— Yeah, and I answered you that I felt that I had become a dissident in an already dissident situation. As if the tradition that is exemplified by some of my contemporaries, like [Daniel] Buren or Art & Language, had identified itself as the main dissident domain and had in some ways become successful.

W. d R.— …had become a convention maybe also?

J. W.— Well I wouldn't take it that far because I still don't feel that it's conventional in the heavy sense. It's maybe lightly conventional or mildly conventional. But it's established. I don't think people set out to dissent. I think that dissenting is something that is imposed upon you. It's not something that you – or at least I anyway – looked for. But I think I found myself in the position of dissenting from the dissenting norm, if you want to put it that way, and that didn't make me happy.

W. d R.— It did not make you happy? Why not?

J. W.— Because I'm fundamentally an obedient person who isn't interested in causing problems. I'm Canadian, it might have something to do with it.

W. d R.— And you're a Libra.

J. W.— True…which I suppose means that one is looking for a…

W. d R.— …harmony oriented…

J. W.— …resolution of any conflict. That's true. And I got along very well with my father… so I never felt a violently Oedipal impulse. [laughter] So, if anything, I felt – and I still feel – reluctant to diverge from an accepted norm. And I could also say that my relation to past art has always been one of admiration and respect and I never felt I was in a conflict with any of the artists I admired past or present. I think there are other people with other astrological signs, who probably are…

W. d R.— …Gemini, for instance…

J. W.— Are you a Gemini? I see, and so you know what I'm talking about then.

W. d R.— But is it not also a matter of the word you give to it because you say you are harmony-oriented, but when I say the word rebellious you kind of seem to recognize that. I'm probing that notion from this morning because, from my perspective, I find it so hard to understand how the notion of friction, irritation and aggression are not very important motors in the production of work. All those are very important for me, next to all sorts of other motors that are about harmony and happiness. But irritation, for instance, is important for me, and wanting to do things differently is important.

J. W.— And that's a Gemini thing…?

W. d R.— No, I would think that goes for all star signs. But now, talking to you, I understand that it maybe does not.

J. W.— I've always identified aesthetic enjoyment with calm and pleasure and in a way with peace. And I think that's an old-fashioned view, to a certain extent, but nevertheless… And I think as a person, if I had not encountered art the way that I had, I would probably be a much more irritable person than I am. But irritability, as you call it, comes into play in being critical. So, for example, when I wrote "Dan Graham's Kammerspiel" around 1981, I ended up with a rather intense critique of conceptual art.[1] I didn't intend it to be that. As I wrote it,

1.— See Jeff Wall, "Dan Graham's Kammerspiel" in *Jeff: Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007): 11 - 77.

my ideas kind of surfaced. I didn't have a plan. But I didn't write it out of any objection to any of those bodies of work, and after I finished it I realized that I would have probably preferred not to think about that art in that way, but I couldn't deny it or take it back because critical thought has its structure, and the only way it can be authentic is if it's just followed through to its end, wherever that end might be.

W. d R.— And that's what you did…

J. W.— … I tried…

W. d R.— … and it came out harder than you…

J. W.— … yeah well I was probably a reckless person too and I should have been more diplomatic, but it didn't occur to me at the time.

W. d R.— But isn't this the strength of that text?

J. W.— Well I don't think it's for me to judge the strength of it, I can only see it from the inside. But my point is: None of these moves, that would have led to a kind of picture-making that we've been talking about, were made from a kind of surface dissatisfaction.

W. d R.— Well you also said, when we were talking about referentiality, that you changed your ideas about what you were interested in and that you feel very differently about that now. Can you tell me how that happened and why? What exactly changed?

J. W.— Well, first of all, when I saw your film *Mandarin Ducks*, I was intrigued by it because it reminded of films I'd liked from the era of polemical referentiality, mostly Fassbinder. And it intrigued me, this feeling of a mannered promotion of inner disharmony. Things in your film are one way for a moment and then they're suddenly a different way. Space is lit one way and then it seems to be lit another way and so on. And I felt like that was good. I had a very positive reaction to it, but somehow not because of Fassbinder or any number of other things you might want to refer to it, refer *into it*, but just because of its own qualities. I don't think we can avoid doing those things because the tradition *and* the anti-tradition require it.

W. d R.— There is actually one scene in that film where we sort of tried to break the image apart by putting lots of little mirrors in it.

J. W.— Yes, I remember that. So that kind of film requires familiarity with the precedents being referred to. In general, I am not so interested in that these days. But, more importantly, I feel

that what has been happening in the last ten or fifteen years is that the referentiality issue has shifted and it has moved very decisively towards popular culture or mass culture. And that I find somewhat tired.

W. d R.— Why?

J. W.— Because I feel it's unfree. I see fatigue and unfreedom in it.

W. d R.— Because all the sources are mediated in some way?

J. W.— Because mass culture has become so dominant, and so sophisticated I guess, that so many artists seem to feel that they can't move without going through their own relationship to mass culture. I know it reflects their childhood just the way my relation to high culture reflects my childhood. And all artists have to deal with the fact that their childhood is a decisive moment. And therefore it's not nice of me to say as a person of my age to a younger person that you shouldn't do this or you shouldn't do that.

W. d R.— It's not only "not nice," there's no use.

J. W.— Yes I know. It doesn't work. If it worked I suppose we'd do more of it.

W. d R.— Actually, I don't think it's not nice. I think it's totally fine. But it's not going to work.

J. W.— Scolding one's children is not an easy task and it usually ends in failure of some kind, so I don't want to put it in those terms, but that doesn't mean I can't be uneasy with the fact that the balance of referentiality has shifted so much toward what I would call an unfree interjection of mass forms, away from what I would call a more free interjection of higher forms.

W. d R.— Well that's interesting. I didn't expect that at all, because this morning I thought that you had changed your mind on referentiality in general…

J. W.— That too…

W. d R.— I didn't really see that you made a distinction between referring to one type of source or the other.

J. W.— If you think historically, say from the sixties to now, there is a much greater mass of cultural material circulating and it's available in ways that it wasn't, even thirty years ago. We can't deny that the atmosphere has changed for everybody. Not so long ago you really could go down the street in

almost any city and only see one or two signs, and no moving images at all. So that's changed – socially and historically you have to recognize that fact. Now, I'm making a judgment, it's a personal judgment. But I think it has some merit, which is why it is possible to talk about it. It is astonishing to think how massively entertained we are, and I very much wonder about that.

W. d R.— What do you mean you wonder about that?

J. W.— It just makes me sound old when I say it, so I'm not going to get into it, but it just seems that there are better things to do in the day than be entertained. I won't tell you what they are just at the moment because you can think of that for yourself. But for artists, it seems to me a problem to accept the inevitability that your development will have to go through the eye of this mass cultural formation and this material will have to find its way inside your own work, which means inside your own soul somehow. Maybe it is in part the dominance of these elements that is most troubling, the fact that they are seemingly occupying the entire horizon of referentiality. This seems to me a mark of unfreedom and I want to rebel against that.

W. d R.— I'm interested that you stress this notion of unfreedom. Is it because all these snippets of material that enter our world through the mass media have an agenda that we're not always aware of? Does that constitute the unfreedom? So that by engaging in it you engage in that agenda, sometimes unwillingly – is that what you mean?

J. W.— That's more of a political objection and I don't want to make a political objection really, but simply an aesthetic objection. I do prefer, say, Shakespeare to something more entertaining on television. I prefer it aesthetically and I would feel very frightened in a way not to feel that way. It would worry me if I had reached the point where it didn't really matter any more.

W. d R.— I'm thinking about what you're saying because for me, it is obviously really different. I do understand what you're saying very well, but I think I'm already in a totally different age group when it comes to growing up with media – although there were big differences between the US, Canada and the Netherlands, when I grew up. But I'm not sure whether engaging with media means that you subscribe to its agenda or its inherent view. I'm not so sure if there aren't ways to engage with it and *not* do that. Let's just say I am actually very sure that there are ways to have a healthy distance from what it is that you're engaging in, what it is that you're inspired by or triggered by. I see many differences between the agenda of a Velazquez and the agenda of a soap series, of course. But I don't see the difference in the *distance* that I as a maker can

assume to those two different types of material. For me that distance feels more or less the same.

J. W.— But I don't think that younger people should have the excuse that they have a different historical relationship with the media. I don't think that really works because we all have the same relation with these media, with these sources and with the decisions that we make as artists. I don't think we should talk about it in a social sense, in that sense of how the world is going, because the issue is how artists make their work and how they attempt to do it well. That's the only thing that I think we should focus on and therefore, if you're younger, there's no relaxation of the issues. Your problems aren't more difficult and there are no excuses. You can't say, "I grew up submerged with the media and you didn't." Everyone is going to deal with the conditions that they encounter and nobody has any better starting point than anyone else.

W. d R.— No, then the question is whether growing up with one TV channel or eighty is really that different…

J. W.— I don't think it matters really. The question we were trying to approach was whether referentiality is inevitable in art. Let us even concede that some referentiality is inevitable. What is decisive is how what is being referred to is changing and how do those references evolve. And to me the balance has shifted where it becomes a kind of liability in the process of making what we call serious art. And therefore I'm trying to change my own relationship to it.

W. d R.— How?

J. W.— At some point I began to feel that having to know anything discursively about what I was doing had probably changed from a plus to a minus. That might be just part of the aging process – as you've had more experience you don't have to think about things so much. Secondly, I wanted to realize in my work my personal objection about the convention of artists having to make reference to popular culture forms. I don't think that the media and mass culture are in and of themselves a source of social unfreedom. But they seem to be sources of artistic unfreedom. I'm really trying to draw a line between social and artistic questions here.

W. d R.— But *how* so? Can you say *how* or what that consists of?

J. W.— I think it's become very tiring to experience works in which the artist's mediation of a fragment of a trope of a mass cultural form has been turned in three or four different mirror-like curvatures to reflect back that microtrope of some experience that they had at some point in their evolution, and which has come back through some fantasy or dreamworld or

some other thing, etc. In this case, the work of art is an articulation or expression of the subjection of the person to the fragmented element of the culture in which they have decided to immerse themselves. But, as I said, there is no external, social obligation for this immersion – it's not the fate of the artist in our time.

W. d R.— You feel it creates unfreedom for you because it takes away the possibility of engaging with that fragment in the way that you would like to… because it's already been mediated by others artists?

J. W.— There are unfree societies – we know about them – in which people are subjected by force to fates, and that is a sorry situation. But in free societies we are not in that spot.

W. d R.— We're subjected to boring art…

J. W.— But artists subject *themselves* to these things. And I'm willing to consider that subjecting yourself to something far inferior to yourself, making yourself small, smaller than you might otherwise have been, then turning that into a mirror whose curvature makes you look both big and small at the same time – that can be interesting. That could be cool. But there's a decision on the part of a free artist to do that.

W. d R.— You used the word inferior, but the artist in question, the artist X, may not feel that the material that he or she is reflecting on is inferior. They might find it incredibly interesting and inspiring and capable of opening up their mind and their… soul. And they might be very excited looking at fragments of mediated stuff, like you are faced with, let's say, *The Nightwatch*.

J. W.— It could happen.

W. d R.— I think that in many cases that *does* happen. What then? They don't feel that this material is inferior, they think it's amazing and it inspires them…

J. W.— That's true.

[murmurs in the audience]

W. d R.— It's a very positive experience for them…

J. W.— Yes I agree that it's a very positive experience for them. However, we might question their judgment at that point.

W. d R.— That's always a good thing to do, I think.

J. W.— And we *do* question their judgment when we look at their work. And, in the judging, we might ask ourselves why the artist felt so positive about whatever it was that inspired him, or her. It's not uncommon to ask of a work: "Why even do it?" I judge that, as I judge the work.

W. d R.— Yes, me too.

J. W.— But, nevertheless, I'd be happy to be surprised by the success of such a work.

W. d R.— This is also what we were talking about this morning – changing one's mind and changing one's ways and one's judgments. It is so great when that happens.

J. W.— Well it's one of the few compensations of getting older, I suppose. You do change or you reflect upon your own experience. But, despite that, and for the sake of argument here, I want to be very judgmental, at least in this sort of model. Because, please remember, this is a model of a conversation. In this situation, at this symposium, we're obliged to present a model of how we think. We are doing this for the benefit of an audience. So, therefore, what we say here may not be everything we think about the subject, it may be just the occasion demanding a compressed model-making activity, a depiction of our thinking…

W. d R.— I'm not now thinking that you are 200% judgmental. I'm just happy to hear that you are a little bit. Me too. So I'm interested in that.

J. W.— But enjoying art is to judge it and so the judgment will occur at some point in the life of an artwork. Just to clarify: I'm not suggesting that *no* mass cultural elements are valid. I'm suggesting that, at this stage in the development of the problem, the balance has shifted to the point where this has become so conventional that one wants to rebel against it. The balance has shifted because it is artists who have shifted it, and that is because, as free artists, they are doing what they want to do. As I said, unfree people are subjected to things by force and free people subject themselves to things, as they wish. And artists are the freest of all in this sense. Everything that they do is subjectively willed. Therefore if an artist subjects himself to his or her childhood fantasies and so on, in the way I'm talking about, it's entirely their responsibility. There is no external or social obligation to do it. And under the current circumstances, to flow along with this idea that everyone's childhood is so determined by these cultural forms that we almost don't have a choice any more – that's a problem.

W. d R.— But you know what Jeff, in the end, it doesn't even matter so much *what* artists engage with, but it really matters *how* they do it. Maybe the pieces that

annoy you so much are just not well made. And then we can ask, what is it about them that you think is not well done? I'm just completely convinced that it is possible to create amazing pieces on the basis of the worst shit on TV. I know it for sure…

J. W.— hmmmm…

W. d R.— …but it must be well done.

J. W.— If someone succeeds in doing something with material that I personally would find unpromising then of course that'll prove that I would be wrong in assuming otherwise. That is always the way it is because there are no rules in art. So, the issue is not really that – it's why referentiality in art has become a problem, why it has a negative dimension today. Without coming to a conclusion about this, I feel it is central to look at our assumptions about the significance of mass culture forms and their necessity in art now.

WORKSHOP

ABOUT

Me, I always regarded cinema as greater than I. JLG/JLG *is an attempt to see what cinema can do with me, not what I can do with it.*[1]

Me, I, Godard, he, identifies cinema, as an agent who creates by means of the artist. In this formation Cinema does something *with* the artist or *through* the artist. Thus the artist's authorship is always triangulated by way of medium (which for Godard is intensive, historical, vast.) In structuring our workshop *about* the "Artist Talk" my primary interest was in the institutional drive to have the artist publicly testify *about* their work. Under what conditions does it appear desirable or even possible that the artist should talk *about* their work? Is this a desire to trace backwards the making of the work to extract ontological assurances from the artist, which serve to interpolate between object and audience? It's obvious that the artist's talk masks, or pretends to settle, some very unsettled relations between the artwork, the artist, their speech, their authorship and artistic intention. *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Artists* was searching for a form by which to reframe the taken for granted suture between artist and art. The assignment presented to panel participants by the *Dialogues* was to speak on a topic, but not necessarily about one's art, and without the use of any visuals. The range of panel topics suggested discussions of History, Truth, Power. It seemed that the artist should talk about everything, *except* their art. In not wanting to replicate the status quo – an artist clicking through slides in a dark room to a silent audience – this structure more or less preserved a central motif: We believe that the artist should talk. In the pages that follow, the artists who participated in the workshop respond (some time after the event) with images, keeping in mind that words can also image.

This talking artist is an active agent of some yet to be determined type. In the workshop, the most salient text we discussed was Kaja Silverman's "The Author as Receiver." In her title and in her text Silverman references the influence of Brecht's model of the artist as *producer*. In this model the artist is conceived of as a non-alienated laborer whose efforts can be aligned with the working class and the role of audience is one of active engagement rather than passive consumption. Although deeply influenced by this Brechtian construct Silverman contends that, in his work of 1994 *JLG/JLG,* Godard carries out a "radical reconceptualization of authorship" through the idea of the artist as "receiver."[2] Silverman writes about the film as a self-portrait in which the author attempts to erase himself. Godard comes to think of himself, like film emulsion, as one who "receives" and thereby calls into question the causal chain of artistic activity by which social engagement is equated with the "active" agent. She quotes Godard from a 1983 interview, "I am a person who likes to receive," he says there, "the camera, for me, cannot be a rifle, since it is not an instrument that sends out but an instrument that receives. And it receives with the aid of light."[3] According to Silverman, Godard tries to formulate an active receptivity: "he attempts to become himself not merely the blank page where the world writes itself and the receptacle housing sensory data, but also the reflecting surface that allows others to see what has been written."[4]

This artist-receiver's talk is implicitly engaged in a different power dynamic, one in which what has been "done with," perceived or reflected by the artist must be accounted for as much as, what the artist intended or produced through action or analysis. In a voiceover for *JLG/JLG*, quoted by Silverman, Godard describes his artist's talk thus: "In speaking, I throw myself into an unknown, foreign land, and I become responsible for it. I have to be come universal."[5] Given Godard's plays at Brechtian theatrics, we might think he's being ironic here, but he is seriously considering the concept of universality as a parallax displacement of the artist as a causal agent. Through Godard's quoting of Mallarmé, Silverman aligns their notions of the "universal" as that which *posses* us, rather than the universal as a set of shared traits or a totalized "humanity" which we posses. I relate this to Jacques Rancière's "good inhuman" – that kernel of otherness inside us which we luckily cannot tame or dominate, but which possesses us.

We shift from talking *about* to talking in tongues. The artist's sensation of infiltration, or possession, seems most interesting to me if it avoids the conventional (pseudo religious) notions of artist as a vessel, and rather, as in the case of poet Jack Spicer, takes on the idea of the artist as a device, a radio-like receiver/amplifier/translator of spectral (but not divine) transmissions. Jack Spicer (1925-1965) was a remarkable, irritable, and early to die San Francisco poet, who credited his later works to a poetics of dictation. Jared White explains: "...it is not exactly a misrepresentation for Spicer to label his own poems 'translations,' since his entire project depends upon envisioning the poet as not exactly the creator of his poetry, but rather a passive listener to the poems' active music, taking dictation upon their arrival. The mysterious, magical source of poems remains in question, a worthy subject for speculation. In a series of lectures in Vancouver delivered shortly before his death, Spicer offered the most memorable narrative: poetry comes as radio signals 'from Mars.' [...] Mars delineates a proud, tender bunker of otherness, a space of alienation and exclusion from the normative project of being an earthling."[6]

How to account for artistic gestures that feel like *responses* not decisions? When an artist is asked to talk *about* their work, it is this fragile sensation, which is most easily talked over and erased by the speaking "I" and the organization of discourse into thematics and concepts. At times artists refuse to talk about their art, because the positivity of this talk occludes a fundamental unavailability from which the artist (paradoxically) draws. The clear subject-object relation proposed by the idea of "artists talking *about* their work" does not easily invite in the voices from Mars.

Judy Radul

1.— Jean Luc Godard, quoted in Kaja Silverman, "Author as Receiver," *October* 96, (Spring, 2001): 14, 17-34.
2.— Ibid, 27.
3.— Ibid, 17.
4.— Ibid, 30.
5.— Ibid, 24.
6.— Jared White, "Jack Spicer on Mars," *Open Letters Monthly* (January 2009) available at http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/january-2009-jack-spicer/

Rehearsal I..... Do They
Rehearsal II.....Reveal
Rehearsal III..... As Much As
Artist Talk.....They Conceal?

Zeynep Kayan

	Voice	Hands	Body	Text	Position	Remarks
Artist 1	Solid.	Paper/ shaking.	Knee bending, foot on the floor, touching head - removing invisible hair-.	Prepared, introduction video.	Watching with the audience*.	Body searching for relaxation in the mind.
Artist 2	Inner mouth.	Nervous, shaking, turning volume down, up and down again.	Walking around, holding face/ chin, crossed arms.	Short introduction, minimal.	Watching with the audience *.	
Me	Started calm, then halfway text more nervous.	Paper/ shaking.	?	Introduction to the structure of the talk (casual), then prepared.	First part: sitting at the table. Video: watching with the audience*.	The talk broke in half, because I started interpretating my own talk during.
Artist 4	Conversational.	Big gestures.	Sitting, using body to explain.	Explanation of context, personal history, searching for words.	Sitting at the table, engaged.	Searching for answers during the talk.
Artist 5	Normal (?), as in regular conversation.	Natural.	Standing, Leaning against the table, good gaze around the audience.	Steady improvisation, at the end more fragmented/ less focused.	Medium between screen and audience.	Takes the audience by the hand, but hereby raising no questions.
Artist 6	Explanatory.	Natural.	Bit of hopping on feet.	Introduction/ work, Reading a text file from the screen/ beamer.	Medium between screen and audience, watching with the audience.	Ends with a round of questions. (knowledge = control)
Artist 7	Fast.	Fidgeting.	Moving, reordening computer/ text.	Explaining a work, then reading from the screen/ the paper. Then interpretation.	Watching with the audience*.	Text and visuals complement each other.
Artist 8	Natural, soughting, staccato voice.	Big hand movements.	Standing, sometimes leaning against the table, other times active & engaged.	Multi-layered; talking about 'The talk'. Explanatory.	Medium between screen and audience.	Distracting visual presentation, technical problems.
Artist 9	Natural.	Complementing text.	Engaged.	Direct; explaining fascinations.	Medium between screen and audience.	Text and visuals complement eachother.
Artist 10	Attractive low voice.	Silent.	I don't remember.	Not prepared, messy.	Working the computer, watching with the audience*.	Time lost with searching/ adjusting visuals.
Artist 11	Fast and a bit quiet.	Natural.	Passive.	Not very clear explanation of the work, improvisation.	Standing, leaning against the table.	
Artist12	Engaged, searching.	Hands holding eachother and gestures.	Moving in a small area.	Explanatory with the visuals. Expressing from the personal.	Medium between screen and audience, watching with the audience*.	

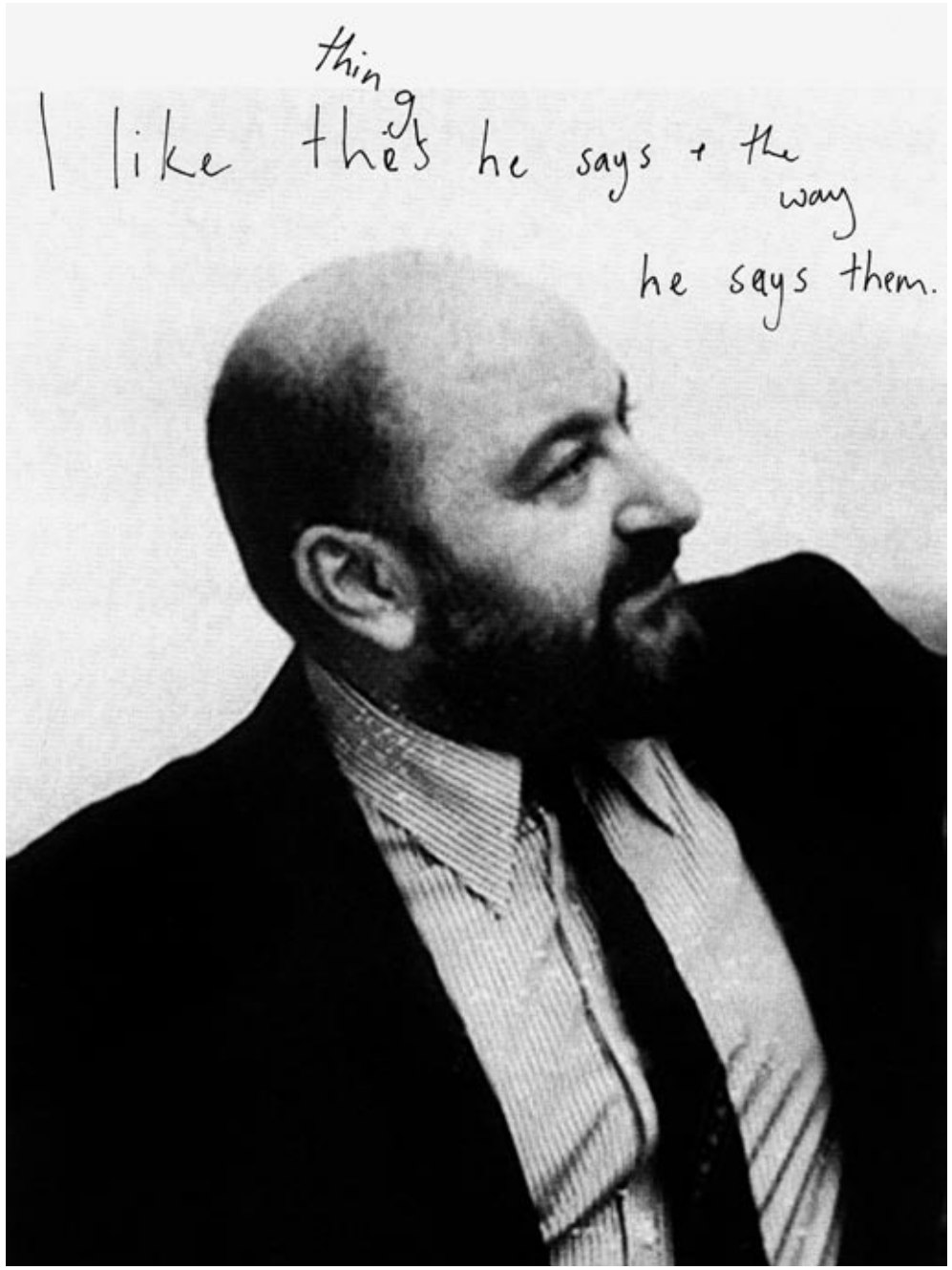
* face towards the visual/ the screen.

1 personal interpretation of 12 artists talks.
Eva Schippers, 17 April 2009.

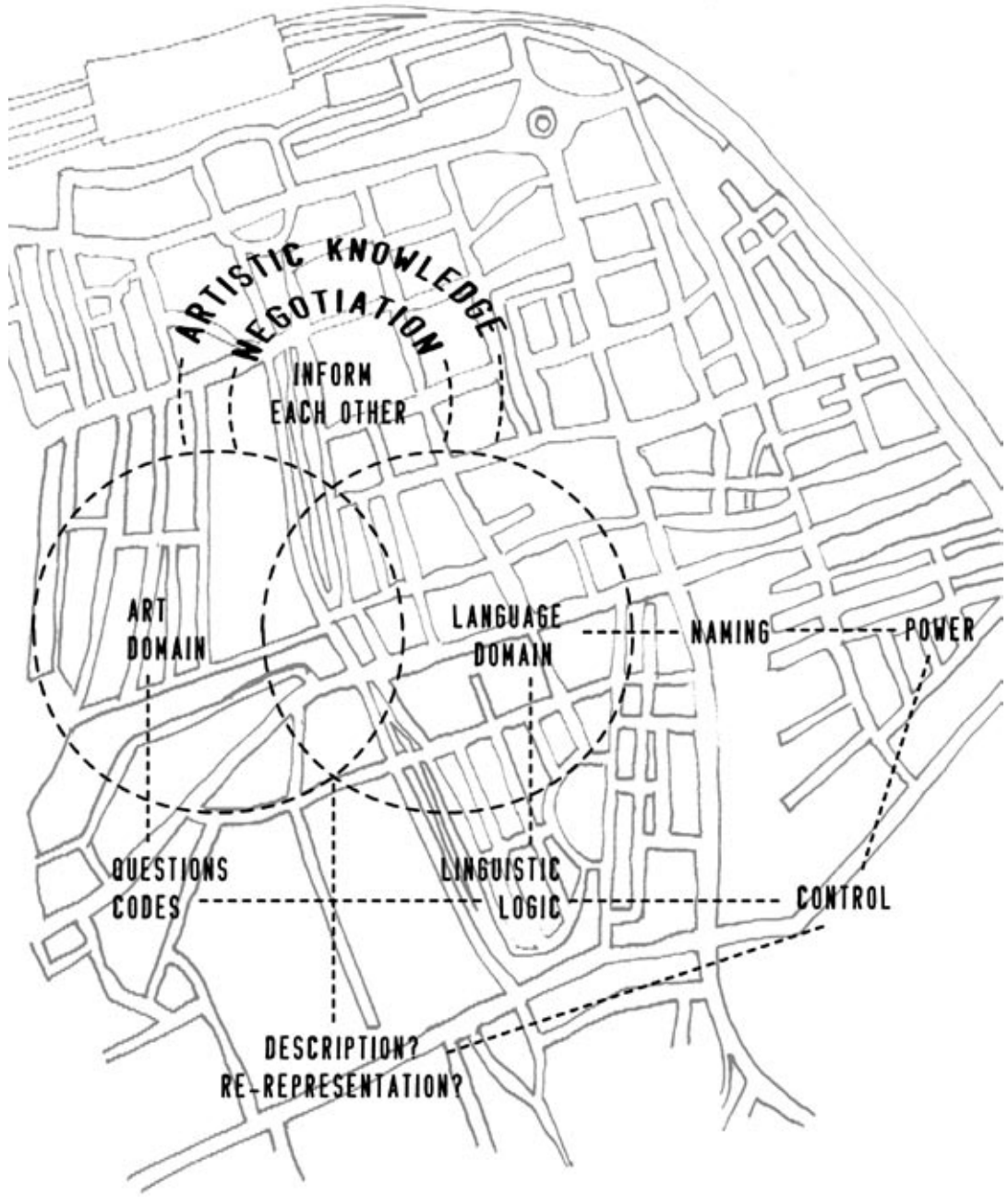
Eva Schippers

10 Die wichtigsten Gesichtsausdrücke:
(1) Freude, (2) Überraschung,
(3) Angst, (4) Traurigkeit,
(5) Wut, (6) Abscheu,
(7) Interesse

The main facial expressions. [(1)Joy, (2)Surprise, (3)Fear, (4)Sadness, (5)Rage, (6) Loathing (7) Interest]
Eva Schippers, modified 10 March 2010.



Jay Tan



Natalia Calderon

Judy Radul
c/o Witte De With Center for Contemporary Art
Witte de Withstraat 50
3012 BR Rotterdam

Amsterdam, 28th March 2009

Dear Judy,

I would like to start my statement of intent with an argument borrowed from Amelia Jones and Jane Gallop viewing art history and art criticism as ultimately relying on 'a powerful apparatus of repression'. According to this observation, what governs the relation of the art historian and art critic towards art is the powerful drive to 'possess' meaning, to rebel against and repress the art object's embodied performativity on one side and the audience's capacity to perform meaning on the other side, in favour of the trained and privileged subject, 'the critic', 'the historian'. I would like to borrow this argument to place it in a slightly different context with slightly different intentions: I personally view the entire network of artist-audience-curator-critic-institution relations as relying on an apparatus of repression. However, the drive to possess *meaning* as such perhaps plays the least role in defining the tensions, actions and passions that govern these relations. Instead, it is particularly the drive to possess the conditions, boundaries, mechanisms and authority of the *production* of meaning.

From these propositions comes my interest in the question 'How do artist talks function': not only the question of 'what' is performed, and to what extent it is being performed, but also 'by whom' and 'at what moment' is this process of meaning production issued. Is the artist talk, as performative and as contingent as the 'work' itself? Is it as performative and as contingent as it is when branded as a lecture performance?

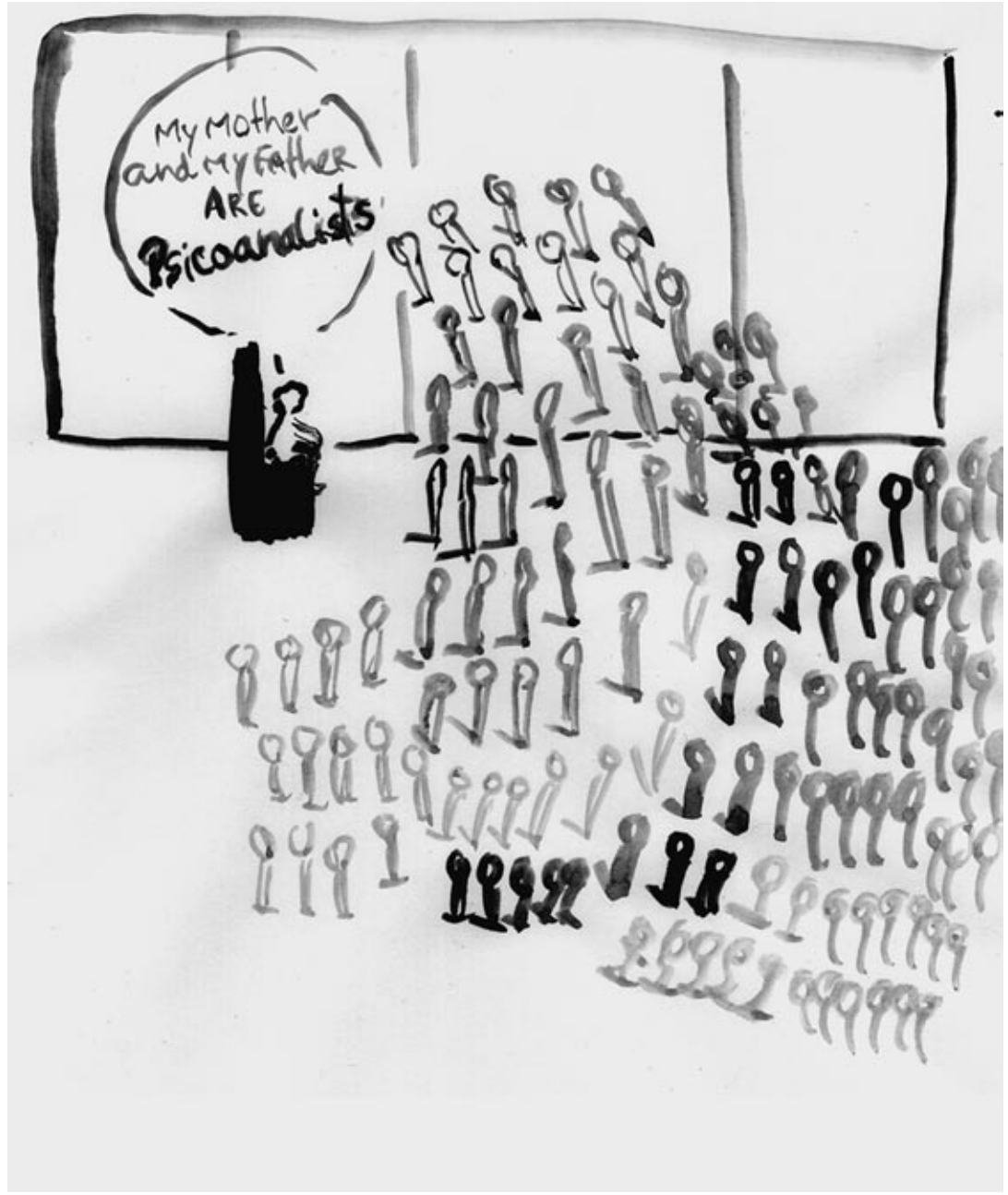
These questions are thematic questions that interest me in my own work. Whether or not there is an actual or essential border between the artist talk (describing a presumably absent artwork) and the performance (where the description itself is yet another present moment in the work) is a question that contributes to the form and content of what I do. My work relies very much on speech. I work with conversations and lecture performances. In both cases, my talks stand in a blurred zone between what appears to be an artist talk and what happens to be a lecture performance. The description of the artwork is the artwork itself. I even do not make a clear distinction during the talks whether the works I describe, discuss, analyse, theorize, and contemplate are real works or fictive constructions that I claim to have made or might possibly make. Therefore all that happens takes place in language, in a hypothetical space, happening in the present tense, the moment of the talk, and does not extend towards any past or future event, even though I speak in terms of past and future tenses. Within the context of the artist talk 'as' a performative event, (and here I do not mean performative only in terms of its innate corporeality and contingency, but also in terms of being an artistic medium), it is the flux between 'absence' and 'presence' (of the art object/work among others), that is my main interest at the moment. These moments of flux, along with the moments of indeterminacy between fiction and nonfiction and the constant shifting of the author's identity and role (whether it is the artist, the audience, the context provided through the institution, etc..) interest me immensely, as they seem to foster a twist to our understanding of history, objects, language and the complexities of their relations.

My high interest in the workshop organized by Witte de With and yourself emerges from this specific perspective. I wholeheartedly hope that you accept my participation in the workshop.

Rana Hamadeh

Rana Hamadeh

Judy Radul



Teresa Maria Diaz Nerio

Eliza Newman Saul

Avigail Moss

Lauren van Gogh

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT NOW?

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES

RAINER GANAHL

Seminar/Lecture, Guillaume Bijl, Lecture by Guillaume Bijl, Between Reality and Fiction, Rotterdam Dialogues: The Artists, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 4/17/2009
1 of 4 photographs, each 20 x 24 inches; 51 cm x 61 cm.

RAINER GANAHL [CONTINUED]

“What are you talking about now?” or “Tweets - Short bursts of inconsequential information”

I’ll try to be brief but I warn you: my text is going to exceed 140 characters.

The question sent to me from Witte de With “What are you talking about now?” reminds me of Twitter, currently the trendiest and most rapidly growing social website there is. It attracts millions of users each month and is based on the single question: “What are you doing?” Twitter’s popularity is expected to reach the value of one billion dollars in 2009 (or be worth nothing by next year) though nobody knows yet how to generate actual money from it. Sound familiar?

Witte de With invited me to be part of the artists section of a multi-part marathon/talkathon entitled *Rotterdam Dialogues: Critics, Curators, Artists.* The whole event could have been labeled a “talk show” had it not been organized by an art institution. Lectures, panel discussions, and interviews were organized around separate questions with separate participants at separate times. “The artists” found themselves answering to the general question, “What does it mean to work as an artist today?” so as to lay bare the “foundational layers” of art making, though artworks were only rarely seen on projections during the conference. We – the artists – were encouraged to be “ourselves” and project ourselves in front of quite a large audience through our physical presence and our speech or silence.

Usually artist talks are related to exhibitions; even Catherine David’s “100 days / 100 talks” was related to *documenta X* (1997). But the Witte de With talks, held over three days, impressed not only with the large number of invited artists – we were flown in from around the world – but also by the fact that the talks were not in relation to an exhibition. Rather, they came in place of an exhibition. I had the feeling of taking part in a large-scale international exhibition even though no artworks were requested. The publicity, the number of artists involved and the scope of these presentations were so professional and well publicized that it felt like being in a major biennial without any frustrations over shipment, placement of works and other logistical or curatorial nightmares.

Interesting enough, social networking sites – MySpace, Facebook, and now Twitter – that consist of nothing more than electronic postings, posing and chatting have become multi-billion dollar enterprises with such enormous economic and social significance that they even helped to hand the US presidency to a man who otherwise would have never had a chance to win. It therefore comes as no surprise that the art world also goes openly social and Twitters over its stakes. Witte de With’s outline asks about the “market forces, [...] politics, fashions, histories and other social forces” and about the “private or personal urgencies” of artists who “negotiate several stakes.” *Rotterdam Dialogues* made of us artists negotiating stakeholders posing prominently on the better side of the audience/participant divide.

The reason why I like to analyze this event in this comparative way is that it was not an isolated event. Only two weeks later I was the host of a similar platform entitled *Our literal speed* (OLS) organized by several art historians. OLS is a three-stage event, held over three years, wherein a bunch of mostly famous intellectuals and a handful of artists are being flown to Karlsruhe (2008), Chicago (2009) and the Getty Art Center in Los Angeles (2010). For OLS, the point is that a talkathon “in the vicinity of art and history” claims to be a performance/event rivaling an art exhibition and performance art. On the OLS website they promoted the first event in Karlsruhe as “a ‘media pop opera,’ or a ‘pedagogical concept album’ – a kind of artistic/academic gesamtkunstwerk [...] encounter(ing) fluid/jagged transitions among presentations, discussions, performances, and lectures.” This temporary discursive laboratory offers a space for imagining “non-formulaic, experientially vibrant, and theoretically precise responses to the modes of distribution, consumption and circulation that drive contemporary art” – forces that currently dominate our neo-Wagnerian institutional atmosphere. In the end, the conference/event aimed to present a microcosmic rendering of the contemporary art world.

Unlike in Rotterdam, most of the OLS participants were academics longing for a new, somehow artistic, “belonging” and not artists happy to be part of a big exhibition/event without showing. Some, if

not most, of the presentations tried to experiment with the presentation format and got quite inventive with it, if not too creative for my taste. The most amazing thing about the two OLS events I’ve attended so far was the fact that it is incredibly self-sufficient and compact, resembling a traveling circus. The mostly US-based academics (with some Europeans) who were familiar with each other arrived not only with their highly sophisticated discourses but also with their own public including their “own” critics which reviewed both events each time in *Artforum*. At the stock exchange, this overlapping could stir regulatory troubles; in the world of networking, it’s social capitalism; and on Facebook and Twitter, it is automated, promoted by electronic linkage and wizards, friendsters and tweeters. In the art world its *conditio sine qua non*.

Even though I’m not an active member of Facebook, Flickr or these sorts of sites, I receive daily invitations to join because somebody wants to befriend me – independent of whether I know them or not. The main reason why I was invited to this well-sponsored, high profile OLS event had to do with the fact that I photograph seminars and lectures as my art work. In the aftermath of my Venice Biennial presentation of 2007, the art historians were very well aware of my S/L images of academics, lecturers and their audiences and wanted me to photograph them. Since the early 1990s institutional critique has turned into “institutional narcissism” which went “literally” into overdrive with OLS: “These emerging, hybrid forms demand a synthesis of collective activity (»OUR«), a self-reflexive examination of art history and its constitutive technologies (»LITERAL«), and an intense concern for the pace and texture of our movement through institutional mediation (»SPEED«).” The curators in Rotterdam, much less mannerist in verbal presentation, didn’t have my S/L photographs in mind when I was invited. As usual I photographed the event.

Earlier this year, my photographic series brought me to a filibuster-like 24 hours non-stop talkathon organized by master of ceremony Hans Ulrich Obrist, entitled, *24-Hour Program on the Concept of Time*. No building could have better symbolized the talk and title better than the spiral of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim in New York. In Rotterdam, artists were separated from curators and critics during three intervals over roughly six months (Fall 2008-Spring 2009); in Karlsruhe and Chicago, artists were far outnumbered by art critics/historians but all were present simultaneously; at the Guggenheim, the balance and speaking order between writers and artists were mixed and the subject was not self-reflective (self-conscious) but given: Speed. Obrist, a man known for his personal versatility and impressive speed, not only invited people from the art world but also theoreticians from the world of music, architecture, science, sociology and beyond. There, the challenge lay in siting for 24-hours, which might reflect the demands of the host city and institution, where space is in big demand and a potential audience is less patient and available over longer periods of time than elsewhere. So why not jam it? In the world of networking and non-stop electronic handholding this was the equivalent of hyper-texting, blogging, tweeting, streaming, befriending, SMS-, IM-, MMS-ing and so on.

On Twitter, an error message for overloading appears in form of a “Fail Whale” graphic showing little red birds holding a sinking fat whale going under. At all these brainy conferences I have been to this year, people just leave if it becomes redundant. Some people also choose to not even show up in the first place. Needless to say, celebrities (of the field) help fill rooms anywhere, anytime and were not missing at any of these events. Online, celebrity spotting is major electronic real estate and numerous websites are dedicated to just that. We all want to be in touch with each other, and a little bit more so with those who we think are successful. A gathering of many well-to-do artists attracting a large audience without presenting any artworks or performances borders on the phenomena of celebrity spotting. From what I could tell, all invited artists felt fabulous – at least I did. I left all these events with the feeling I did something, I belonged for an instant to something even though I couldn’t say what. Even the curators of Witte de With seem to reflect somehow this phenomena of “inflated greatness” since they distanced themselves from the original floated idea of publishing all transcripts of all talks. Now, the organizers must have realized the typical redundancy and prevailing insignificance of non-scripted talks and seem to have opted for this “Tweeteresque” follow up question for *all* participants: “What are you talking about now?” The small

red birds seem to be failing, the fat whales are sinking! And so be it!!

And what am I really doing/talking in **140 characters**:

< Twitter >
GOCRAZY with BABYEDGAR; preparing DADALENIN 4 MAK, Vienna; BASIC CHINESE study; I WANNA BE CHINESE, Brussels; trying 2 fix financial troubles, being on line, &love

< Twitter >
"HAPPY FRIENDSHIP DAY" – luv u guys !

< Twitter >
What's happening right now? Nothing but rain – but don't tell me what you have 4 dinner!

< Twitter >
I really loved these events. I wish 4 more!
U can't find me on facebook, myspace or twitter.
Stay in touch with me via ganahl.info or pleaseteachmechinese@yahoo.com

(New York, 2 August 2009)

GERARDO MOSQUERA

To participate in the *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Curators* was a learning experience for me. Less for what was said – and was not said – at the conference, than for the unique opportunity of having so many diverse colleagues together in a sort of time and space microchip capable of giving first hand the curatorial pulsations of our day. Such an encapsulated constellation of knowledge, situations, agendas, expressions and feelings helped me to become more clearly aware of my own position in the international curatorial map, and clarified certain strategies to follow for my next exhibitions.

The experience was especially enlightening regarding a project I am planning in Amsterdam. It's interesting – the implicit "Dutch connection" between the *Dialogues* and this project – and how "implicated" (Irit Rogoff *dixit*) I am and have been within The Netherlands! Working as an adviser for the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, I have enjoyed the opportunity of talking with young artists in residence from all over the world. Something that always surprises me in our conversations is that many of them do not like Amsterdam, a city that seems so attractive in many ways. Even if they stay there, frequently it is only a result of the support that they can get by living in Holland. When I ask the artists why they dislike the city, a term keeps popping up: artificial. It does not refer to the physical character of a city "stolen" from the sea, but to a general feeling about Amsterdam's life, its culture, its submission to tourism, its paradoxical ruled liberality... a place where everything is under control. Contrary to the impression that a visitor might receive by seeing the Red Light District, the cannabis coffee shops and the ethnic diversity, they perceive Amsterdam as a postcard city and feel that there is no real life in the place, that everything is designed, regulated. Frequently they counterpoint the city to London, Brussels or Berlin, which are considered "real" places. Such opinion is more or less shared by several Amsterdamers I know. This way of feeling Amsterdam is a very interesting reaction, which, apart from other considerations, makes the city's physical and mental structures curiously coincide.

Is there a link between physical and cultural elements that incline us to perceive a place as artificial? Armando Silva has brought attention to how cities are perceived the same way as artworks are, that is, as the result of a subjective relationship, beyond their material, social and cultural patterns. He has researched the psychology of urban imaginaries, the "imaginary sketches" by which the city is recognized in the minds of its inhabitants, and has polled and analyzed how the urban image is symbolically constructed by the people. Silva states that the citizenry goes further than public art goes by its interventions in the city: citizens have always created their city through an aesthetic imagination of it. On these grounds, what would happen if the artists who live in a city reacted to the manner in which it is perceived by many of its inhabitants?

I am discussing a project to summon diverse artists, both from Holland and from different countries, to explore and analyze Amsterdam's artificiality, or to contradict it, working both in and *with* the city itself. By the latter, I do not mean taking the city as raw material or as stage for the work, but having the art intervene in the city in

an active, provocative mode. The project does not intend a sociological or cultural research through art, but to have the artists illuminate, dialogue with, and confront a critical aspect through which the city is perceived. It is my intention that by discussing concrete, focused aspects of how a city is imagined, the exhibition will go beyond to achieve revealing views of Amsterdam in its multiple complexities.

The *Rotterdam Dialogues* also gave me food for thought regarding the paper I will deliver at the Bergen Biennial Conference. My contribution will discuss the Havana Biennial – I was one of its founders, so it remains difficult for me to keep a critical distance from this subject — and the issue of utopia and idealism in biennials, of which Havana was probably the ultimate case. In fact, there is a certain amount of idealism in every biennial that comes from narratives of enlightment and humanism that have been deeply built-in in art. The discussions on biennials during the *Rotterdam Dialogues* hinted at how, around every biennial, a fairy feeling hovers of the event contributing something positive to the spirit, even to make this world better. On the other hand, the practical goals of biennials are frequently the result of optimism about the functional possibilities of art, which sometimes prove to be a failed myth – in the short run at least. Some form of utopian spirit also appears in recent efforts by some curators and organizers to transform not only the content but the structure of biennials, proposing new models that move away from established prototypes, as was also seen at the Witte de With conference.

Utopia can function as an impulse for agency, a machine for positive transformation. It has been a driving force for the creation of biennials, mainly in non-mainstream places, and for the positive transformation of these events to respond to new realities of our time. In this sense, the notion of the exhibition as occasion that Rogoff presented as the opening lecture of *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Curators* has been very inspiring to me. However, utopia is dangerous: idealistic dreams have produced the most cynical, traumatic, Orwellian stabs to force dreams into a reluctant reality – utopia creates its opposite. It tends to ignore the intricate realities of art, its production, circulation and consumption. Perhaps Ernst Bloch's notion of "concrete utopia" could be useful here. Unlike what he called "abstract utopia," a result of wishful thinking, voluntarism and imposition, incapable of interacting with the real world, Bloch argued that concrete utopia – as it happened with the early Havana Biennials – can anticipate and build the future: it is the result of hope and desire as forces for change. He proclaimed that our images of the future are part of the creation of our actual future. But this will only work if concrete, practical utopia functions as an agent for activating potentials that exist in reality, not for imposing a single-view messianism.

PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA

At *The Curators* summit at Witte de With in Rotterdam, I tried to trace the genealogy of the term "radical chic" which was part of the title of our conversation "Radical-Chic curating: Curatorial Practice vs. Curatorial Fashion?" – a touchy subject because nobody wants to be branded as a "trendy curator" – which produced a talk that avoided talking about the topic.

The term "radical chic" was originally coined by Seymour Krim in a November 1962 article for *The Village Voice* where Krim wrote a critique about *The New Yorker* magazine, arguing that it was wrapped in a self-protective cocoon immune to the action on the streets. The term was later popularized by Tom Wolfe in his text "Radical Chic: That Party at Lenny's" published in the 8 June 1970 issue of *New York Magazine*. Wolfe's text focuses on the cocktail party held on August 1966 by composer Leonard Bernstein (principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic but also composer of the musical *West Side Story*) and his wife Felicia at their thirteen-room penthouse duplex on Park Avenue for some of New York's high society to meet and raise money for the Black Panthers. A series of issues were at stake that night, including whether or not the Black Panthers would eat the Roquefort cheese morsels wrapped in crushed nuts and asparagus tips in mayonnaise dabs served as canapés and whether these were going to be served by black or by white servants (actually they were white, Latin American servants, as Felicia had grown up in Chile). As Wolfe wrote "Why not do without servants altogether if the matter creates such unbearable tension and one truly believes in

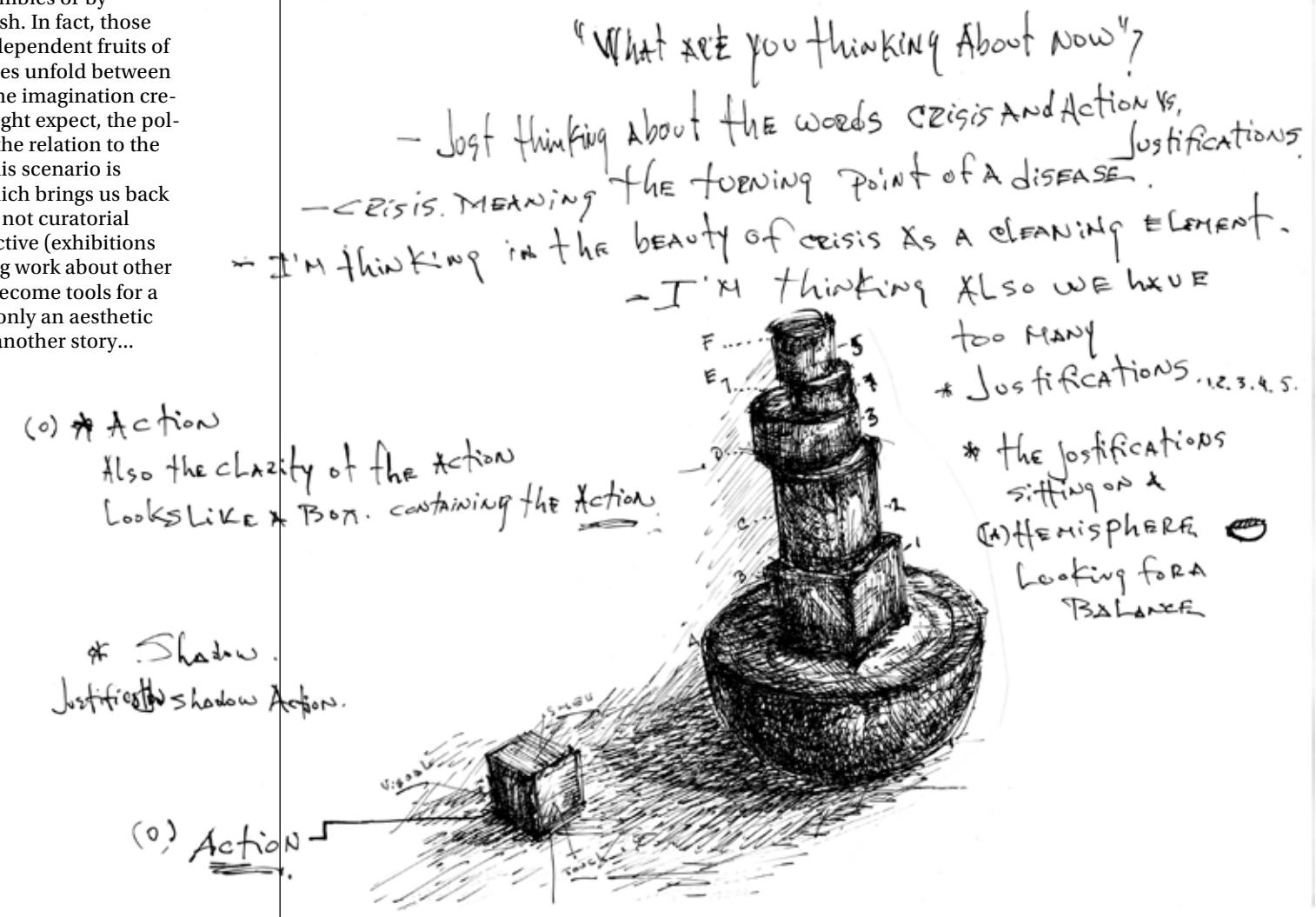
equality?" Most of the guests gathered were there because of what Wolfe called some kind of *nostalgie de la boue*, or a romanticizing of primitive souls, without being totally aware of the political implications of what was at stake. The Black Panthers would be invited to the Park Avenue penthouse and then would go back to their segregated neighborhoods. At the meeting, Don Cox, Field Marshal of the Black Panther Party read their ten-point manifesto, which included a call to set free all black men who were in jail arguing that they had not had fair trials because they had been tried by predominantly middle-class, white juries. It also talks about the programs they would like to implement, including taking their black kids on tours to the white suburbs so they could see how their oppressors live. Details of the party were afterwards published in *The New York Times*, and there was backlash against the Bernsteins, not because they were seen as frivolous supporters of radicals, but because as Jews they were supporting a group who was supporting the Arabs against Israel. Bernstein was also thought to be homosexual, and it's said that under recommendation by his "mentor" Dimitri Mitropoulos, who was conductor of the New York Philharmonic, he had married Felicia to quiet the rumors and in order not to sabotage his opportunity of becoming director of the Boston Symphonic. Bernstein left Felicia in 1973 and went to cohabit with his lover Tom Cothran, who later died of AIDS, but all this is another story.

As Wolfe wrote: "Radical Chic, after all, is only radical in style; in its heart it is part of Society and its traditions. Politics, like Rock, Pop and Camp, has its uses; but to put one's whole status on the line for *nostalgie de la boue* in any of its forms would be unprincipled." As curator Nat Muller noted in her text *Masters of the Anecdotal: "The Curators" Have Little to Say*, which appeared on on her blog *Passing in proximity...*: "Radical chic and elegant slumming is still about producing a legibility of otherness which remains safe and contained."

A few weeks ago, invited by Kit Hammonds as part of his *Publish and be Damned* participation at the Subvision Festival in Hamburg, I produced a special issue of *Pablo* magazine containing the text "The Geopolitics of Pimping" by Suely Rolnik, wherein she discusses the effects of neoliberalism in somatizing culture. Dressed in an African Kaftan I did a reading of the text. Fragments of it include: "One of the problems of the politics of subjectivation that artistic practices face has been the anesthesia of our vulnerability to the other – an anesthesia all the more devastating when the other is represented by the ruling cartography as hierarchically inferior, because of his or her economic, social or racial condition, or on any other basis."

Rolnik continues: "[The] pimping of the creative force is what has been transforming the planet into a gigantic marketplace, expanding at an exponential rate, either by including its inhabitants as hyperactive zombies or by excluding them as human trash. In fact, those two opposing poles are interdependent fruits of the same logic; all our destinies unfold between them. This is the world that the imagination creates in the present. As one might expect, the politics of subjectivation and of the relation to the other that predominates in this scenario is extremely impoverished." Which brings us back to the question of whether or not curatorial practices should be self-reflective (exhibitions about exhibitions, artists doing work about other artists) or if exhibitions can become tools for a future revolution (even if it's only an aesthetic one)? But then again, that is another story...

OSWALDO MACIÁ



Wendelien van Oldenborgh, still from *Après la reprise, la prise,* 2009

WENDELIEN VAN OLDENBORGH

Dialogues, or who is talking?

"Where is the hope in all of this discourse?" asked Jimmy Roberts towards the end of a panel discussion on aesthetic activism during *The Artists* symposium of *Rotterdam Dialogues*, in which thoughts on activism and aesthetics were articulated and bouncing around on not-yet-formulated grounds. What in the term "activism" did anyone on the panel relate to? Activism suggests a fight for political or social change and one of the roles of aesthetics is to study new ways of seeing and perceiving the world.

The "active," and "activation," in which I am interested, are related to the classical notion of Action in the way that Hannah Arendt has revisited it in her 1958 book *The Human Condition.* Action, as one of the classical subdivisions of human experience into Labor, Work and Action, is immediately meant as the political, defined by the fact that it involves, to use the words of Arendt, "the presence of others."

When thoughts are expressed between people in the public sphere, we are in the realm of Action. What I have enjoyed is the act of activating voices, which are maybe not so obvious – either in their combinations or in their visibility – by making a public occasion of this event, setting it up as a film shoot. The exchanges become public on the occasion of filming and are then re-presented through my edits and choices to another audience.

There is a question in this method, which remains at the center of further thought: Who is talking – them, us, myself? Added to this question, there is the idea that maybe I am mainly noticing the already-known voices and am disregarding some rather mute ones, which express themselves through new forms of presence rather than through the vocal articulation of ideas.

Walter Benjamin once quoted Franz Kafka saying in a conversation that yes, there was hope, "plenty of hope, an infinite amount of hope – but not for us." If that "us" is the "us" of the dialogue about aesthetics and activism, it could be that this may ring true still.

NICOLINE VAN HARSKAMP

Free speech does not equal freedom

"Free speech […] does not equal freedom. Free speech is only free, as long as it is not a threat and does not come with the possibility of challenging the system. The most freedom of speech I ever had was in the Security Housing Unit […] in federal prison. I could yell and shout all I wanted, even cuss at the guards, but unless I thought up a particularly creative way to intentionally enrage them, they would leave me in peace. No matter: the walls were rock solid […]."

I use this quote, by the American anarchist Peter Gelderloos in one of ten scripts for a new live production called *Any other business*. The one-day event is structured as an ordinary conference and set in an actual conference center. But every single item on the program is scripted and staged. In three different rooms, thirty-five actors will perform ten meetings over the course of six hours. Some performances will happen simultaneously. Recordings of the day will be used in a film work with the same title.

Central to the plot of each script is the notion of *failure*. All the "speakers" struggle to suppress their urge to act on their convictions rather than express them verbally. The audience of "conference visitors" will witness how every single meeting fails to meet the conference's aim of *Communicative Excellence in Civil Society and Politics.* An activist denounces nonviolent tactics; a debate on public conduct ends in a dog fight; and when an unexpected event shakes up the conference, the self-proclaimed "vanguard of the politically conscious class" is unable to keep its calm or find words for what has happened.

On a panel entitled "Figures of Speech" (part of the *The Artists* series at Witte de With), I talked a bit about this work in progress. Thierry [Geoffroy] and Alex [Bag], the two other artists at the table, also use spoken word in their works, both as a topic and as a strategy. We all had issues with discussing our strategies in the context of a formal debate but we promised each other, about a minute before going on stage, that we would at least try our best.

However, Thierry opened the panel with a speech about its complete pointlessness: "We need immediate action, not empty talk." Alex then stated that people with stage fright make great public speakers and actors because their fear of failure can project an almost physical tension into an audience. She suffered from this condition herself, and while staring down at the table, she did not hear a woman in the audience ask: "Can you tell us some more about that fear of failure?" Alex: "A fear of what?" Woman in the audience: "Failure." Alex: "Hmm?" Woman in the audience: "Failure!" Alex: "Of what?" Entire audience: "Failure!"

I guess I then made things worse, myself, by arguing for inefficient debate as a remedy for political professionalism and for the tolerant-repressive celebration, or re-appropriation, of the term "free speech."

It's difficult to describe how it feels to have an audience shout "Failure!" at you while sitting on a panel. But the experience has at least supported my idea that, when the set rules of public conversation are abandoned, productive chaos can occur. My ambition with *Any other business* is to reach a similar level of disfunctionality and discomfort. One of the scripts has already unsettled a member of the cast, it seems: The actor reading the *Gelderloos* text quit the job last week. He considered the statements he would have to make in public – about "free speech," for example – as too controversial.

SARAH MORRIS

Right now I am thinking about espionage and subversion in post-industrial society, the failure of bureaucracies, and the history and design of the paperclip and its inherent vice.

PIERRE BISMUTH

The Failure of Representation/
The Representation of Failure

I will use the few lines that follow to illustrate one of the points that was raised during the panel discussion "The Power of Representation/ The Representation of Power": The subject of the role of failure in contemporary art. In fact, a little more than four months after the panel discussion, I was in Florence for a small exhibition in an independent artist-run space (BASE / Progetti per l'art), where I returned to a rather old idea that I'd had between 1992 and 1994, and had never carried out. Entitled *Objects That Should Have Changed Your Life*, the work consists of a simple presentation of objects supplied by various persons. What is specific about these objects is that they were once bought with the idea of effecting a profound change in the lifestyles of their owners. At the same time, and for various reasons, they never fulfilled their task and finally remained unused: A collection of DVDs for learning English, a "treadmill" exercise machine, an electric guitar, a psychological guidebook, etc.

Each of these objects thus represents a multiple failure, given that the change never eventuated and the unused objects, each still charged with a mission that was never accomplished, are above all negative portraits of its owners. On the other hand, it would be difficult for these objects, having failed in their functional existence, to return to their status as simple commodities. Given the speed with which consumer goods are renewed, other more recent product will have supplanted them, while at the same time, the objects themselves will not have been outmoded enough to become collectable items.

These "outcast" objects nevertheless have a chance to redeem themselves, and it is art that can save them by recognizing them as works. This operation is relatively simple, since, in this case, the objects have already been raised – accidentally through the conjunction of desire and failure – to a superior status by their purchasers. On the one hand, each object is inscribed with an ethical and symbolic value that exceeds its current function: Not the purchase of blond hair dye in order to change hair color, but rather the change of color as a materialization of emancipation in the process of its realization. On the other hand, the object is relegated to the rank of a uselessness by the simple fact that it has, in effect, never been used. Symbolic, useless, and charged with an ethical mission, in the end these objects already have all the qualities of a work of art – and the exhibition does no more than highlight this condition.

This seems to me to be a good example of the way in which art can be a sphere of ideas, objects, and phenomena that would otherwise have no or little visibility – a kind of negative space in which counter-values can be represented and thus provide a form of resistance – in principle – to the world we are confronted with. Can we not finally consider that the notion of the "power of representation," which so perplexed me, is simply the "possibility of representation" as it is outlined here?

(15 October 2009)

PIERO GOLIA

OLAF NICOLAI

While reading the biography of André Breton written by Mark Polizzoti (*Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* published by Da Capo Press, 1997), there was one passage which made me think about the three-day symposium at Witte de With. Breton writes to a friend:

This is an unbalanced battle. I see several possibilities for defeat: 1. Death (Lautréamont, Jaques Vaché); 2. Involuntary senility: one starts to take oneself seriously (Barrès, Gide, Picasso); 3. Voluntary senility: success as a vegetable retailer (Rimbaud) and intoxication (flush) (Jarry, etc.). But how, my dear friend, will you get away with it? Answer me, for heavens sake, do you see a window too? (I also ask myself.)

That was 1919. Shortly after, Breton, together with Philippe Soupault, published *Les champs magnétiques* [The Magnetic Fields]. No answer but also not a vegetable grocery store.

GABRIEL LESTER

Talking about how all fertile land needs to rest every now and then, so it can continue to flourish in the future. Talking about changing from apples to pears and/or from onions to potatoes. And thinking about how at times what becomes the dominant strategy is a copy of the last predominant strategy in a new wrapping. And how this opens up possibilities for those who lack references or memories.

DIEDRICH DIEDERICHSEN

I am not talking right now, I am writing.

(July 19, 2009)

NEDKO SOLAKOV

Strangely enough, recently, I got kind of bored making art. I'd just put this one on "paper" and I realized that it sounds rather scary. What am I supposed to do in such case? There are not so many things that I can perform on the same level of perfection as telling stories with visual means (I am very modest too). Basically, all other supposedly-man-related-activities (at least by the standards of Bulgarian society) are delegated to my wife Slava. Well, I am still responsible for raising the family budget, but in the time of art market crisis – as we all know – there is not so much work to be done in that direction. On the other hand, maybe I still like to tell stories to other people and to wait for their reaction; the thing is that perhaps the audience shouldn't be necessarily an art one. Why should they not just be people who may – or, preferably, may not – become art consumers. Again, on the other hand, my what-have-I-done-and-for-what-sake behavior has its very simple and logical explanation: I am almost 52 years-old, a wonderful "sample-age" for the blossoming of a classical middle-age crisis syndrome. You know that this crisis on top of the other one, spread in a 107-kilo artistic body could do a lot of things (or stop doing a lot of things).

The good news: Apparently I still have an enormous desire to tell stories in space (to make art so to speak), I feel it in the tips of my fingers right now! It seems that I just needed to put on "paper" the above doubts in order to get rid of them. I feel a lot fresher now, ready for action (and I am hungry too and also I again urgently need to fantasize in my bald head that I am sexually harassing/molesting other women – believe it or not, all of them happen to be relatively beautiful Bulgarian curators, who of course don't give a shit about me as a 107-kilo international artist – and I do love my wife, that's for sure, and I sleep only with her, I swear).

A tiny joke at the end: A little crocodile is asking his father, "Dad, when will I have some money?" "When you become a purse, my dear!" is the old crocodile's answer.

Hopefully the art market crisis will be over soon and I may again become a modest purse forgotten somewhere in a space with doodled up tiny stories in its corners and squatting art consumers reading them and laughing.

(Boriki, Bulgaria, August 13, 2009)

ANDREW BERARDINI

Stop Me If You've Heard This One Before

Lately, I've been working on jokes. Maybe not jokes exactly. Sadly I haven't been slipping on banana peels or standing behind a mic under the unfriendly glare of a spotlight trying out a routine. The jokes that I've been working on are something slightly different. A joke, according to our friends at the Oxford American Dictionary, is a thing that someone says meant to provoke amusement or laughter. Each of these words, "joke," "amusement," and "laughter," can have slightly darker shades of meaning. What I think is a joke is maybe quite different than what others think. I find Samuel Beckett quite funny. I always laugh in the wrong parts of movies.

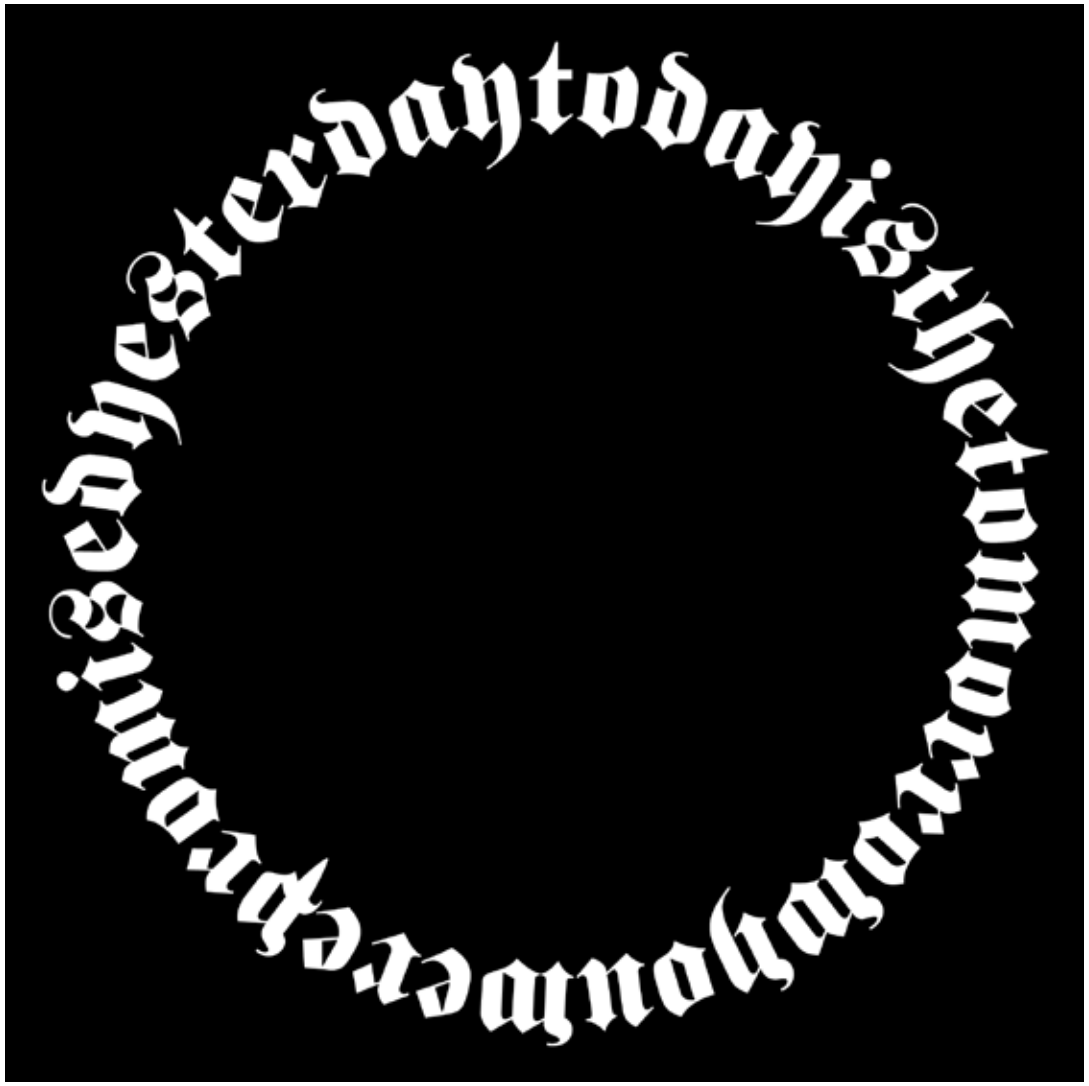
The joke that I've been working on is a trick, a means of making meaning more slippery, the relief of laughter from otherwise weighty tragedies, a way to pull one over on the rest of the world, an avenue to make things happen that would otherwise be impossible. The kind of stories we all like hearing at bars are stories where the unexpected happens: something embarrassing at the time that with distance becomes funny, a ploy, a scheme, a ruse is enacted where the humorless bureaucrats are hoodwinked, something terrible, defeating, and heavy is made light. Not to get platitudinous, but life is this exact thing, mortality is inevitable, misery – the norm, life is the joke on death.

Lately, I've made the transition from critic to being a curator as well. Again according to our friends at the Oxford American, a curator is "a keeper or custodian of a museum or other collection." A custodian is of course another word we have for janitor. So I've lately been a dutiful janitor for contemporary art, another kind of joke maybe.

All of my projects lately have been like jokes. With Martha Rosler's library touring with seriousness through the efforts of e-flux, I decided to show Dave Muller's musical library with an effort to be less serious. I ran into Yoshua Okon and Raymond Pettibon and midwived their collaboration about one of them being a hippie beach bum in a past life. I found an old Bruce Nauman project never realized and pushed it into existence – a good joke on land art written with skywriting. Each one seemed like a trick, something seemingly impossible, usually made with no budget at all. What seemed impossible has been made possible, but achieved only with wily humor in the face of apathy and dejection.

Each of these projects described in a line has innumerable changes of fortune, narrowly avoided defeats, and regular injections of absurdity, which is to say each has its own series of jokes. All of these exhibitions have been serious in their own way, done with serious artists, but seriousness is not exclusive from humor. How can an artist turn banal materials: canvas, paint, stone, photographs, garbage, etc. into art? They can only do it with *legerdemain*, a trick, perhaps a joke.

PAUL O'NEILL



KENDELL GEERS

Excerpts from "The Penis Might Ier Than Thes Word" [1]

[...]

I have long maintained that if you want to destroy something, you must make it into a fashion and that is precisely the function of MTV (or "EMPTY V" as I prefer to call it). Every subversive concept or revolutionary idea from Punk to Ché Guevara gets digested and destroyed into a three-week makeover on MTV, only then to be re-issued as a perfume or t-shirt. And yet you still cannot say, "Fuck"!

We call it a "swear" word or a "curse" word and perhaps therein lies the key to its secret identity. We swear an oath or swear on the Bible in order "to make a solemn declaration, invoking a deity or a sacred person or thing, in confirmation of and witness to the honesty or truth of such a declaration." Similarly, a curse is also "a prayer or an invocation for harm or injury to come upon one" or "an ecclesiastical censure or anathema."

Whilst "Fuck" wins first prize, hands down, on my profane podium, it is not the only four-letter word in the category of curse words. Curiously enough, they all tend to be either sexual in nature, or relate to the excremental or scatological body. Why is it that, even in the atheistic, cynical twenty-first century, it is still considered taboo to use words like "Shit," "Piss," "Cunt," "Dick," "Fart," "Tits" and "Arse" in polite company? Why would they, and especially "Fuck," be so outlawed, almost without exception, well into the golden age of profanity itself?

The key may lie in the nature of language itself. The Old Testament tells that an enormous tower was built in the city of Babylon "with its top in the heaven." This tower, which has fascinated artists and writers ever since, was somehow perceived as a threat to God (or the Gods). So much so, that he/she decided to prevent it from being completed through the "Confusion of Languages." It stands to reason that, whatever this tower was or could have been, it would have enabled us mortals to reach up into the domain of the Gods had it been completed. Why else would he/she or they have felt so threatened by it? At the time of its construction, the peoples of the Earth spoke a divine universal "Adamic" language, often referred to as the "Language of the Birds." Many say that, along with the Biblical story of the floods, the Tower of Babel and the origin of language is a universal understanding and belief, common to virtually every ancient culture. From this myth, which I believe to be true, I conclude that language is, at once, both divine and a curse from God (or the Gods).

[...]

The Catholic Church had to destroy the pagan traditions and temples of the nine holes in order to maintain supremacy over their ideology. This was contrived through either building the foundation of their faith directly upon the pagan temples (literally and iconographically) or, when all else failed, through witch-hunts, public executions, the Inquisition, exorcisms and *auto-da-fé* to name but a few examples. Most fundamentally, they taught us to hate our own bodies, to live in a constant state of guilt towards our physical being. Once the body had successfully been separated from its intrinsicly divine nature it was not difficult for the Church then to insist that the only access we have to the divine was through their bricks and mortar, via their clergy and cloth. As the power of the Church would later wane, this self-loathing impulse would become the foundation of the new "Church-of-Capitalism." In hating everything about our bodies, it would not be difficult to sell us any snake oil, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo or holy water as a short-term solution.

The fact that Fuck (and its profane cousins) remains to this day a "curse" or a "swear" word is testimony to its intrinsic power. As it was once a threat to the Catholic Church, it remains today a threat to the Capitalist Hegemony. The threat comes from the fact that in "Fucking" we touch the divine, we experience the "little death" and pass through the domain of Hermes, Dionysus, Osiris and Christ. Through Fucking we literally create life, a mystery that science still cannot even begin to comprehend. Mircea Eliade describes sexuality as "often the first, and sometimes the only, experience of the Transcendent. For that reason, it is important for rediscovering the sacredness of life, a direct experience of the curious organic unpredictable nature of life."

As Hermes gave us his erection to remind us of his divinity and our ability to cross between worlds, he also gave us the divine

1.— The longer text is as yet unpublished.

curse of language. Being a trickster, he hid keys within language that would unlock the secret passages leading us through the profane towards our natural divinity. Despite being taught that, "sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never harm me," the power of words remains unquestionable.

"The twentieth century linguistic revolution," says Boston University anthropologist Misia Landau, "is the recognition that language is not merely a device for communicating ideas about the world, but rather a tool for bringing the world into existence in the first place. Reality is not simply 'experienced' or 'reflected' in language, but instead is actually produced by language."

The magic of the word "Fuck" lies in its contradictory ability to live in multiple words simultaneously. It is both an extremely positive as well as negative word. If I invited you to "Fuck Me," my proposal would embody an entirely different emotional condition than had I shouted "Fuck You!" Besides its strength as an Anglo-Saxon expletive, "Fuck" is also trans-linguistic, for it retains much of its meaning and explosive potential, without translation, in most European languages and is used to similar effect in French, German, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese to name only a few. For me, it remains unquestionably the most evocative and powerful single word in use around the world today. Whether intended as "curse" or insult, or whether spoken of in relation to sex, the connotation remains something excessive or wild. We tend to "make love" to our husbands or wives, speak of "intercourse" when addressing the doctor, or simply call it "sex" in general. Fuck is something much more brutal or animalistic, something darker and more sinister, something "Closer" to the Nine Inch Nails lyrics: "I want to Fuck you like an animal, I want to fuck you from the inside." Once again, this distinction between functional, physical sex and its divine ritualized darker kin only reaffirms the sacred magical power of the word. I believe there is no god more closely connected to the bestial Fuck than Pan, running through the Arcadian paradise, lusting after nymphs and unsuspecting virgins with his raging erection, the half-man/half-goat, the quintessential nature God. From his name, we not only have the word "Panic" but also the suffix "PAN," which implies ALL THINGS. His own divinity and origin is shrouded in mystery for some myths maintain that he was always there, whilst others suggest that he was the son of trickster Hermes or even Dionysus and a very close friend of Bacchus. Not coincidentally, according to Greek historian Plutarch, Pan is the only God who is, in fact, dead.

[...]

If, in the beginning, there was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God, then the Word must have been charged with everything that God, in his or her infinity, is capable of being and the Word must have been as creative as it was destructive, a Word that stands alone above all other Words, able to invoke love as well as hate, able to command emotion as well as able to physically create life. From my radically subjective human condition, I cannot imagine any word more divine than FUCK and therefore it is in FUCK that I Trust (God)!

(Brussels, 31 December 2009)

JesusFuckingChrist, 2006
spray paint on wood sculpture; 127 x 76 x 23cm
Private Collection; Courtesy Stephen Friedman Gallery, London; Galleria Continua San Gimignano/Beijing/Le Moulin
Photo: Lydie Nesvadba

PELIN TAN

Social Production in Art and The Question of Autonomy

There is a dilemma: How to find a "form" of art that is basically developed via the re-production of social relations, but at the same time is also about finding a practice that is searching for "autonomy." I think the dilemma has several conceptual layers that are interrelated, concerning territory, surplus value, and discursive institutionalism. For *Muhtelif*, the question is: Does art production hold the possibility of sustaining its autonomy, of creating alternative economical structures through present practices such as self-distribution, self-organization, the production of nomadic labor and collectivity? The current status of policies for art in different countries, the relation between state and market, the influences of temporary institutions such as biennials on the circulation and the value of production – *Muhtelif* wants to research all these as well as to question:
– What definitions can be given to the current condition of labor in relation to post-capitalist circulation in thecontext of contemporary art practices?
– Does immaterial labor presents a new phase in the material production of art?
– What is the local spatiality and local reality of immaterial labor within contemporary art practices?
– How can we analyze the self-organized, collaborative types of art projects in the context of their radical potentiality?
– Is it possible that those radical art practices can lead to a division between its labor and capitalist production?

As a form of a social production, a collective publication project such as *Muhtelif* does refer to an undefined "surplus value" in the framework of community economy. What does social production mean here? Is it meant in a discursive context or an economical context? What is the relation between collective art practices and "the existing flows of surplus value?"[1] In trying to construct a local ethics of distribution for social production and in the attempt to build a community economy Gibson-Graham asks: "How might nonproducers of social surplus have a say in how surplus is generated, appropriated, distributed? And, of course, what are the social destinations to which surplus is to be distributed, and those to which it will not?"[2] I refer to Gibson-Graham's claim in an attempt to find the ethical place for the distribution of social surplus value, the values that are not produced in any specific form but reclaimed even by non-producers.[3] How can this help to explain collective places of contemporary art practices that pursue discursive engagements through this ideological background and supposedly free themselves from the institutional structure in order to reclaim the distribution of the social surplus that might help to question ethical positioning in general? Who is creating the statement, the discourse, in which condition? And who is sharing it, appropriating it and distributing it?

[*Muhtelif* is an Istanbul-based contemporary art magazine founded by Ahmet Ogut, Adnan Yıldız and Pelin Tan (Editor: Pelin Tan; Design: Ali Cindoruk; Assistant Editor: Banu Çiçek Tulu: English Proof Editor: Ashkan Sepahvand). What triggered the birth of this publication is a search for possibilities of new resistance in the politics of writing on contemporary art. *Muhtelif* is produced every six months, in Turkish & English, black & white, and distributed for free. The publication is financed by personal budgets; contributions by writers, artists, translators, designers and proof readers are non-budget based, and distributed freely. There has been no institutional network for readers, but the mobility of the editors and the contributors generates a map of traveling for *Muhtelif*. *Muhtelif* does not promote exhibitions or institutions and does not support artistic show-offs and establishments. *Muhtelif* is based on open-ended discussions, research-based analysis and reflexive artist talks.]

1.— In their article, "Psychoanalysis and Marxism: From Capitalist–All To Communist Non-All," Özçelik and Madra define surplus value and its distribution. At the end of their argument they are questioning who and how reclaiming this could become a counter-hegemonic nodal: "For us, a relation to class is enacted whenever there is an effect stemming from the extent to or the form in which surplus-labor is produced, appropriated, and distributed. Hence, there are continuous attempts to institute class relations at sites as diverse as households, universities, neighborhoods, highways, and unions, as well as within transnational corporations. Similarly, class relations are shaped by a variety of discourses (gender, political, legal, religious, ecological, as well as economic) that interrupt and re-channel the existing flows of surplus-labor or attend the production of qualitatively new ones. In turn, relations to class processes sustain certain political identifications and cultural claims at the expense of others, which are restricted from or completely deprived of accessing the flows of surplus labor. They go on to state: "In the absence of a counterhegemonic nodal point, these disparate 'acts of reclaiming' could indeed easily be co-opted by the capitalist-all. We believe that the axiom of communism could serve as a useful counter-hegemonic nodal point that would impart a 'surplus' meaning to each and every act of reclaiming..." Ceren Özselçuk & Yahya M.Madra, "Psychoanalysis and Marxism: From Capitalist–All To Communist Non-All," *Journal for the Analysis of Culture and Society* 10 (2005): 82, 94.
2.— J.K.Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006): 93.
3.— "The social surplus may be used to support those who are currently nonproducing (such as infants and some very old people) as well as helping to build and sustain the material and cultural infrastructure of the social order. It is thus the potential of ethical decisions and political contestation." Ibid.

JENS HOFFMANN

If one is to judge the vitality of a practice on the bases of the intensity and energy of the discourse that surrounds it, curating is, in my opinion, in a very dire state. Rarely are there moments of intellectual exchange on a broader level for a larger group of curators or exhibition makers to share. What we experience mostly are fragmented and overly specialized discourses that look at certain aspects of curating, which only a handful of people are in fact affected by and interested in. One would think that the large range of curatorial programs that have emerged over the last two decades would provide us with a possibility to have these wider conversations with colleagues and fellow practitioners, but that has unfortunately not happened to the degree that one would wish for. *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Curators* provided us with a much needed moment to articulate these thoughts as much as it nurtured the type of debates that our discipline needs to draw from to create its substance and its identity. As a result of this experience and the absence of broader conversations on these issues, a new journal will be launched in January 2010 titled *The Exhibitionist* that will involve several of the participants of the Rotterdam conference on its editorial board to further debate issues around exhibition making and curating, which will be edited by me. The magazine aligns itself closely to the idea of the curator as creator and takes its inspiration from *Cahiers du Cinema*, the famous French film magazine, in which directors wrote for directors about directing. It is my hope that *The Exhibitionist* will provide a larger, more serious and dedicated platform for critical and creative thoughts on exhibition making.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST

Today I would like to talk about the idea of curating as an active process of building memory. *A Brief History of Curating* was part of this wider project of mine, which I call – following what Eric Hobsbawm once said to me – a protest against forgetting. This book is a project to preserve the thinking of some of the great curators who have inspired me, to preserve their voices, because the idea of a "history of curating" is still something that is very much undefined.

More broadly, I am, in a sense, thinking about the idea of curating as a kind of archiving or conservation, not only of objects but also of voices. This is how my practice of interviewing and my practice of curating exhibitions are interlinked, but it is also what challenges me to rethink the idea of exhibitions themselves, as more than simply the curation of objects. The exhibition *Il Tempo del Postino*, which I conceived with Philippe Parreno, was one attempt at this rethinking, where we offered artists time rather than space as the building blocks of a group show.

This process of rethinking is necessary to the practice of curating. Continually to seek a kind of playfulness and to invent new rules of the game must be the aim, and this is something that one finds with great curators like Pontus Hulten, Walter Hopps and Lucy Lippard. With so many shows happening, so many biennales, so many museum exhibitions, the danger is that the show becomes a routine and I've always believed in this idea that each exhibition should be like the first time, like the first show. I did my first show in my own kitchen and I think every show should have that same excitement. The challenge is to do projects that don't easily fit into this roster of extraordinarily limited formats that exist within the art world. One way of approaching this is to have very close dialogues with artists, and also to co-curate with artists, as I have done, for instance, with Parreno in Manchester for *Il Tempo del Postino*, or with Rirkrit Tiravanija and Molly Nesbit for *Utopia Station*, or with Olafur Eliasson for the *Serpentine Gallery Experiment Marathon* and with Cerith Wyn Evans at the Sir John Soane Museum in London.

My interest in curating as the building of an archive is not about saving the past for the sake of the past, but rather I think of Daniel Birnbaum's comments in the postface to *A Brief History of Curating*, where he recalls Erwin Panofsky's thoughts on the future as being constructed from aspects of the past, of an "archaeology of things to come." It is not about faithfully reconstructing or reproducing the past, but using the past to actively shape the future.
I would like, finally, to think of Félix Fénéon, who said that the curator is the one who throws bridges – *jeter des passerelles*.

REIN WOLFS

Thinking about time and changes

In thinking about questions that affect my self-understanding as a curator, as an institutional curator and directing a space, I am thinking about curating in the flow of time. I am asking the questions: Is institutional curating essentially different from freelance curating? Is curating a biennial, which is like creating a statement, similar to profiling an institution over a longer time? Is next-to-each-other something really different from after-each-other? Could an institutional program that unrolls over a longer time be similar to a large thematic group-show?

When it comes to discerning between methods of curating, it is always important to discern first between institutional and freelance curating – not only because of completely different responsibilities, but also because of very different possibilities and necessities of programming. As I am currently responsible for running an institution (Kunsthalle Fridericianum) that has been profiled almost completely by large group shows, which *documentas* basically are, I decided that I am able to make the difference by curating my four-year period in-between two *documentas* as an after-each-other of intense solo-shows, enabling artists a more intense discursive experience with a site, which is not only the mother house of *documenta*, but also the oldest public museum building on the European continent. I try to work on a program, which might be perceived in retrospect as a large group show with very intensely presented artistic solo shows, not only because I believe in the quality of solo presentations, but also because I believe in the discursive dynamics of time in which a program can develop itself.

Time gives way to changes. And time opens up for flexibility. I like to think of exhibitions, which are not the frozen results of thinking processes, but of exhibitions and exhibition programs that change over time and develop by new and different insights. I am interested in working on a chain of exhibitions that could be seen in retrospect as one large exhibition of progressive insight and intense positions and juxtapositions. Time changes everything; time is always about continuity and discontinuity.

EMANUEL LAMBION

Found in Translation...

When I was invited to participate to the panel "Is curating always a collective activity?" my first reaction was one of surprise as I am not *stricto sensu* a member of a collective. Simultaneously, I felt a sort of natural evidence in the topic raised by the panel, in as much as the answer to the question seemed to me quite straightforward: a plain YES. For, in a way, or, to be more precise, in more than one way, I do believe that curating is ALWAYS a form of collective activity.[1]

Progressively translating myself as a curator from an institutional to an associative / collective context, I have now created and operate from what I prefer to call an open curatorial platform, Bn PROJECTS. And indeed, Bn PROJECTS is a structure designed to be used, per project, in a flexible way, with different collaborations and partnerships. This flexibility matches the spirit of the public space projects (real or virtual) that I have been developing over the past years, a series of projects which I now realize mostly revolve, in a direct or indirect, metaphorical way, around ideas of movement and displacement, of shifting codes and norms...[2]

I must like translations, translations understood as the imperceptible movement, of a body, a structure, a work or a concept, which, through the very displacement of its elements, allows to open up new and free spaces and areas of meaning. Translations of concepts, meanings and interpretations within projects, or translation of projects through different contexts.

The story started with *the Bn Project: Venice as the Biennale of the Biennales... B* like biennales, *n* like the multiple parameter of the exponential degree.

The aforementioned project actually consisted of a virtual proposal made for the Venice Biennale. It took the form of a curated manifesto, published in *Janus* #22 (2006) and on a corresponding web site (www.biennaleofthe-biennales.org). This manifesto was a response to the multiplication / proliferation of biennials over the past decades (a common *topos* of the discourse in the concerned art circles), and

1.— Is the curator a multi-task collective in himself/herself? Or rather, should not the kern / nucleus underlying the curatorial activity, the one between the artist and the curator, be seen as the essential (if sometimes dialectical) collective? Are not curatorial collectives (which, in the current aesthetically correct approach, are often apprehended as a sort of democratic and political statement) rather a practical way to create your self-organized institution?
2.— I realize this might be one of the common keys to projects such as the re-appropriation of a vacant postal code, B-1010 in the project be-DIX_TIEN (www.b-1010.be), or the imaginary and emblematic transformation of a parking lot built in 1958 into a park, PARK 58 (www.park58.be)

to the identity crisis of the Venice Biennale as the mother or, rather, the grandmother of all biennials, regularly questioned in its articulation based on national representations.

The virtual imaginary concept / proposal was to imagine it as a *Biennale of the Biennales*, inviting its offspring or, more precisely, the directors of the other biennials, instead of the nation states. The proposal was thus aimed at suggesting a sort of frank, transparent approach with regard to the socio-economic and political elements at stake, which underlie the development of biennial exhibitions, whilst assuring Venice a sort of undisputed position in its role of ancestor of all the biennials.

The project was, of course conceived as and remained a "concept," but there could be more "concrete" fields to translate this transitive reflection, which in those contexts would take on distinctively new meanings and symbolic implications.

I come from and am based in a city of paradoxes, Brussels. Officially bilingual but in reality certainly multi-cultural in many more ways and truly international, Brussels is also a city where you tangibly, physically experience the *post/neo-modern* relativization of the traditional concept of a nation state. Being a relatively "small" capital city, it sort of capitalizes the official titles, being the seat of a region in its own right, the capital of another region (Flanders), the capital of linguistic communities, the capital of a federal state, the main seat of a union of nation states (E.U.) etc.

To these elements, you may add the fact that, although being the third richest urban agglomeration in Europe, right after London and Frankfurt, the city and its various governments or administrations lack financial means, as the most affluent members of its "active population" pay their taxes *extra muros*.

To some extent, all the artistic/architectural/urbanistic/institutional initiatives are affected by that. In the art circles, the legends multiply about the Belgian collectors (Belgium historically boasting the highest concentration of contemporary art collectors), and one knows well the wide international recognition achieved abroad by many a Belgian artist. Although this might be a more recent phenomenon, the attractiveness, the "coolness" of Brussels, the reputation of its art scene, have also been increasingly discussed – the town acting as a sort of magnet for young creative types from all over Europe.

In spite of all this, the city and its inhabitants had to wait for decades, after many aborted attempts, before the first contemporary art centre (Wiels) eventually saw the light of day, thanks to a private initiative. All these factors were and are good and strategic arguments to try to develop a biennial in Brussels. After all, biennials have always preferred slightly "peripheral" centres as opposed to the big *metropole*s. Significantly enough, neither London nor Paris has one. From the very start of their history, in Venice, biennials were deliberately apprehended as a tool to promote or revive economically an urban community through culture.

It was therefore with attention that I followed over the last two years, the development of the first (and, hopefully, not the last) edition of the Brussels Biennial: this was another Brussels story with a long and difficult genesis. [3] Altogether, it was an ambitious and courageous endeavor, which definitely offered some interesting artistic and curatorial proposals. But, regretfully enough, the national and international resonance of the event did not really match its expectations nor its potential.[4]

This edition of the Brussels Biennial possibly suffered from being in a sort of ambiguous position – halfway between, on the one hand, an attempt at integrating (but in a lateral way) the artistic and cultural fabric of the city as well as, quite concretely, its urbanistic structure,[5] and, on the other hand, its international outward-looking ambitions. Given the international character of the Brussels scene, a more "human," "incarnated" connection between these two dimensions of the Brussels Biennial would certainly not have been impossible to achieve. Maybe also, in terms of opening, one wonders whether a truly international dimension would have not been preferable to a slightly too "cross-national" or "euregional" card.

Was this a "missed chance" for Brussels, since the Brussels Biennial vzw does not exist any more as a juridical *persona*? Let us see it instead as a "try-out," opening up all kinds of interesting perspectives for the future in this increasingly multicultural city, which has all the potential to harbor and develop in an innovative way a simultaneously trans-national and biennial event.

This is where one could start to dream of a *Euro Bn Project*, a Brussels Biennial which would operate in close connection with the other European biennials, whilst being embedded and using the full potential of its mixed, integrated, diverse and internationally-oriented art scene. This is also where the role of the existing European Biennial Network could come to the fore.

This European Biennial Network, coordinated by XYZ (Xenia Kalpaktsoglou, Poka-Yio and Augustine Zenakos) from the Athens Biennial exists thanks to the dynamic and joint efforts of Athens, Berlin, Istanbul, Liverpool and Lyons. Venice, Göteberg, Manifesta, Iasi (Periferic) and Tirana have associated themselves to the philosophy of the project, which acts as "a collaborative structure, that aims to promote dialogue, interaction and collaboration between contemporary art biennials in Europe and intends to use the knowledge, experience and wealth of information accumulated by organizers of large-scale periodic art events."[6]

Maybe a EuroBn Project, a "Biennale of the European Biennales" in Brussels remains, as such, too much of a concept. But there is no doubt that Brussels, if there is a second edition, should definitely join the European Biennial Network.

And which better context would there be than the EBN for trying to develop (with and within the European Biennial Network) a collaborative recurrent itinerant project, where a selection of artists from the past editions of the different member biennials would be selectively associated to the forthcoming biennial event and associated with local artists?

Artistic dialogues and encounters literally "Found in Translation"... To be further detailed, the names and the concept are there...

3.— Initially planned for 2007, it was postponed to 2008 to compensate the insufficient funding and was subsequently built up as a European project, federating the joint curatorship of different institutions in Belgium (mainly outside of Brussels) and abroad, in neighboring countries, with the exception of two partnerships *L'appartement 22,* from Rabat, and *Drik* from Dhaka.
4.— There were a variety of reasons for this, but the situation was certainly not helped by material problems such as the erratic opening hours of some of the venues, which, not long after the opening, were partially closed during the week, without a clear communication. Another striking feature of this edition was the relatively limited amount of representatives of the Brussels art scene amidst the selection of artists, and the mostly nominal collaboration with other art institutions, not to mention the almost inexistent connection with organizations / collectives from the cultural scene of Brussels.
5.— Significantly, it used locations situated alongside the *Jonction Nord-Midi,* the historical railway axes which crosses the city centre and is mainly used by the commuters to come and work in the city.

6.— See http://www.europeanbiennialnetwork.org/scope.htm

JUDY FREYA SIBAYAN

In a 2001 conversation amongst members of the Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss (CRUMB) – an organization doing research, networking, and professional development for curators of new media art – there was a general lament of "the paucity of serious critical analysis and little evidence of critical vocabulary around the specific qualities of new media art." But Sara Thompson countered with "These 'societal vocabularies' can be hermetic themselves, and have their own agendas designed to keep media art practice outside the mainstream. After all, I thought activist art is supposed to be challenging the mainstream." New media art criticism needed to be a historiographic practice, a practice that should address the "sociocultural influences that frame the work, the societal milieu surrounding the work [...] to engage with contexts outside art itself."

Seven years later, I heard this same debate at the International Symposium of Electronic Arts (ISEA) where CRUMB members have a critical presence and at the Mini Summit on New Media Arts Policy and Practice organized by the Asia Europe Foundation. Both events were held in Singapore in 2008 two months before *Rotterdam Dialogues*: *The Critics*. I asked one of the key participants in the summit, Awadhendra Sharan of Sarai, an interdisciplinary space for research and practices on media and the city, about what the fuss was all about. He concluded: "My own sense is that the fuss is really about the question of the 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' interlocutors. Till such time as new media art, or any other practice, would restrict its evaluation only to the 'authorised' interlocutors, it will remain subject to such laments, as there is very little possibility of developing other terms of engagement than one which is internal to the art community."

My thinking on how to connect this concern to the question of the development of new audiences and art criticism is that perhaps online publications like *Ctrl+P* are now better venues and are in a better position to help evolve art criticism to accommodate time-based art which uses the Internet, interactivity, social systems, or real-time computing and thereby create new audiences. I therefore took the trouble of talking to a few experts in the

field with the intention of raising this point at the *Rotterdam Dialogues*. In the spirit of continuing the dialogues and to rectify my failure to bring up this issue and to finally honor my promise to those I consulted to raise their concerns at the *Dialogues*, I summarize here my email conversation with Sara Cook co-founder of CRUMB and Awadhendra Sharan. Cook wrote that indeed:

The state of art criticism for new media is still as poor as it was eight years ago. None of the mainstream art magazines consistently cover new media art projects, nor often understand the contexts for them. Many artists would rather be blogged about by Regine Debatty on We Make Money Not Art *than be reviewed in* Art Monthly, *but I would hope that there is room in our culture for new media art to be addressed by both. I know many journalists interested in reviewing new media art shows who struggle enormously to place their pieces into publication in the mainstream art press.*

New media art has always had its own fora for critique and evaluation—the mailing lists that artists exchange info on, the blogs, some zines and its own conferences with academic outputs and publications. This is still the case, and it is rigorous, but it is not as well archived or collected (i.e. universities don't have print subscriptions, online archives get lost). This runs in parallel to the ongoing creation of art history which is supported by the "trade journals" and magazines of the mainstream art world. Recently Christiane Paul reminded me of the years that Jack Burnham was an editor at Artforum *and how much we owe our knowledge of systems-based art from that time to his magazine publishing discussion about it. We don't have that equivalent now.*

I always hope things might change and more well trained art journalists will turn their attention to media art and its social and political contexts. After all, any form of reporting or criticism, whether art or not, takes into account this bigger picture, so I see no reason why new media art criticism shouldn't do that too. In truth, I am weary of science and technology writers being sent to cover the new media art shows simply because they know the tech, but it's their first time getting to understand aesthetics or art history. The same might be the case for design, and the social and political correspondents. Sometimes it feels like every other section of the newspaper and culture at large understands the important things that new media artists are communicating through their work, but not the art section. There are no doubt myriad of reasons for this. Time will tell yet! Written in haste, while waiting for an Artforum *website editor to come visit the exhibition I have curated here at Eyebeam, Untethered, to prove me wrong!*

The fora for critique and evaluation that Cook mentions above is actually what passes for new media art criticism evolved into a form of peer-to-peer evaluation described by Sharan as:

[A] process that can work in all contexts, but is particularly suitable or new media contexts. In most evaluation exercises there is an assumption of an "expert" who certifies the worth of a particular work. This had served the traditional university system well, especially in those disciplines that have developed over several hundred years—from philosophy to law. However, the model breaks down in newer intellectual endeavors where there isn't a similar repository of received knowledge that one must master before moving on. And new media art, in my view, and that of my colleagues, is one such new field. Further, the model breaks down for an even more fundamental reason, in that it is restrictive about who can read something valuable into a particular work and develop it new directions.

Therefore we have decided to develop a model of research where it is possible, indeed desirable, that one does not only present a finished work, but allows one's interlocutors to share the work as it develops (both off-line and on-line). The reader/audience is simultaneously a beneficiary, a co-author and a judge of this work – appreciating the new directions that may be opening up, critically commenting on that which may be improved. What this also allows for is the possibility that persons outside the specialist domain may also participate in the simultaneous development/evaluation of a work, seeking in it possibilities that may be different than the one intended by the researcher/practitioner.

This is not a plea to do away with rigor or even with more conventional modes of specialist learning, but a possible route to opening up research towards more public and collaborative forms, in all its aspects – from learning, to creative interpretations/productions and evaluation, and then back to learning.

DOUG FISHBONE

My work largely centers on strategies of presenting information, and investigates notions of credibility and persuasiveness to examine how information is received and interpreted by audiences.

In my most recent project (*Untitled – Hypno Project*, 2009), I filmed a group of twelve people, all of whom had been hypnotized by a professional stage hypnotist, as they watched a video presentation I made using a range of subliminal images and prompts. Each member of the audience was given specific suggestions while under trance, instructing them to behave in certain ways at different visual and aural cues and triggers. They were then woken, and filmed as they viewed the video.

I was curious to see how the audience would react – even the hypnotist was uncertain as to whether it would be effective - and to gauge their response to various stimuli, especially rapid visual stimuli, after their conscious state had been altered. How malleable might an audience turn out to be and how far could their perceptions be manipulated?

The results were remarkable, and there are some quite surprising moments where people responded without any self-consciousness whatsoever, even to images that were almost imperceptible. The project was then presented on two large screens facing each other – on the one screen, the video narrative which the audience was given to watch, and on the other, the hypnotized audience itself is shown, filmed as they watch and respond. This staging creates an immersive environment that positions any external viewer between the two screens, opening a window onto an alternate zone of consciousness.

I am particularly interested in questions of the relativity of perception and interpretation, and wanted to investigate the possibility that the very same narrative could inhabit multiple dimensions, depending upon who was engaging with it and on what terms. Clearly, an un-hypnotized viewer, watching the same video presentation, would have a radically different interaction with the information.

Can there ever be a fixed notion of truth, or an authoritative way to perceive anything in world in a constant state of flux? Or is reality all simply a function of perspective, what Garcia Marquez might refer to as a "hermeneutical delirium"?

The hypnosis project interrogates how we process visual information and wonders what is in fact seen when the normal process of association and interpretation has been re-wired or interrupted. Or indeed, what in fact is seen at any given point, given the centrality, and variability, of vantage point in any act of perception.

The project was initially inspired by readings into motivational research in advertising and propaganda by writers such as Vance Packard and Edward Bernays. I had been considering the Cold War paranoia that infused much of my childhood growing up in the United States, and that at some point simply no longer seemed to be relevant. It struck me how large the gulf between perception and reality often turns out to be, which led me to consider the role of persuasion and conditioning in creating opinions and managing phobias on a mass level outside our conscious awareness. During my research, I was looking at a form of psychotherapy called EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), which uses visual and audio techniques to stimulate and alter brain function, and which triggered a continued interest in working with the mental process of an audience as a material itself.

I am currently investigating staging the project as a live performance, embedding hypnotized individuals within a wider audience to examine the subjectivity of perception and response within the same actual moment.

DOUG FISHBONE [CONTINUED]

Untitled - Hypno Project (2009)

MARK BOULOS

Philosophy is both a starting point for making a film, and an explanation for it once it's done. But an idea is transformed through its realization; "its realization is also its loss" says Marx. For instance, I went to Nigeria to make a communist documentary, but the guerillas I met there are capitalists. They fight oil corporations, but a fair share of the profits is what they want, and they have no time for such impossible idealism as mine. I left that part out of the final edit. Similarly, I began psychoanalysis out of interest in Lacan, and found my shrink through a sect of his followers. Years passed before my analyst revealed that she is not a believer, but has her own ideas. That day I could barely look at her as I paid her forty pieces of silver, or pounds sterling or whatever.

When I started analysis, two modes dominated my (un)free-associations: either diagnosing myself according to the latest theory I'd read, or recounting my sexual life in detail. Surely I hoped my shrink would be surprised and impressed. She wasn't. Analysis is her job, not mine, and fucking is dumb. Outsmarted, I eventually came to talk about my emotions – the heart of the matter.

Still, my films are the topic of every session. Although I make documentary videos about other people, we talk about my films as though they are mirrors. Last time, her simplest questions were hardest to answer. Why does violence appeal to me? Why revolutions, why miracles? What am I trying to destroy or escape? I demurred, and resorted to habit and reason. I parroted the theories I proffer in studio visits, lectures and panels. Repeated, the words that usually seem bold were farcical. Words failed.

So I relied on analogy, and anecdote. I told her: "My minder in Nigeria is a fearless militant who believes himself bulletproof, but once refused to take me where I wanted to film, as it was simply too dangerous." Still I insisted. Bemused, he wondered: "Mister Mark, why do you like difficult things?" Speechless. The guerilla is a shrink, and vice-versa.

(August 2009)

LUIS JACOB

Shining, 2008
taxidermy swan
view at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto, Canada)

Shining (2008) is a pedestal-bound sculpture originally presented within the clerestory space at the Power Plant, in the exhibition *If We Can't Get It Together: Artists Rethinking the (Mal)Function of Communities* guest-curated by Nina Möntmann. Its natural whiteness mimics the prototypical "white cube" exhibition space, imbuing the object and the space it commands – art's space – with a sense of self-referential dignity and calm self-composure.

A dazzling white swan stranded on an oval pedestal, its visible black feet serving as unsightly reminders of its leaden groundedness. It is said: "no man is an island" – but why not? The sculpture sets itself apart from the lively hubbub of the world to stand here within the luminosity of its apartness. And this is precisely what we expect art to do. If it is to count as "art" at all, an object must

renounce the life-energies from which it arose and posit itself as its own self-sufficient ground. But it must do so deceptively, derivatively, brilliantly – and thus preserve the "unconscious" of the energies that it pretends to renounce.

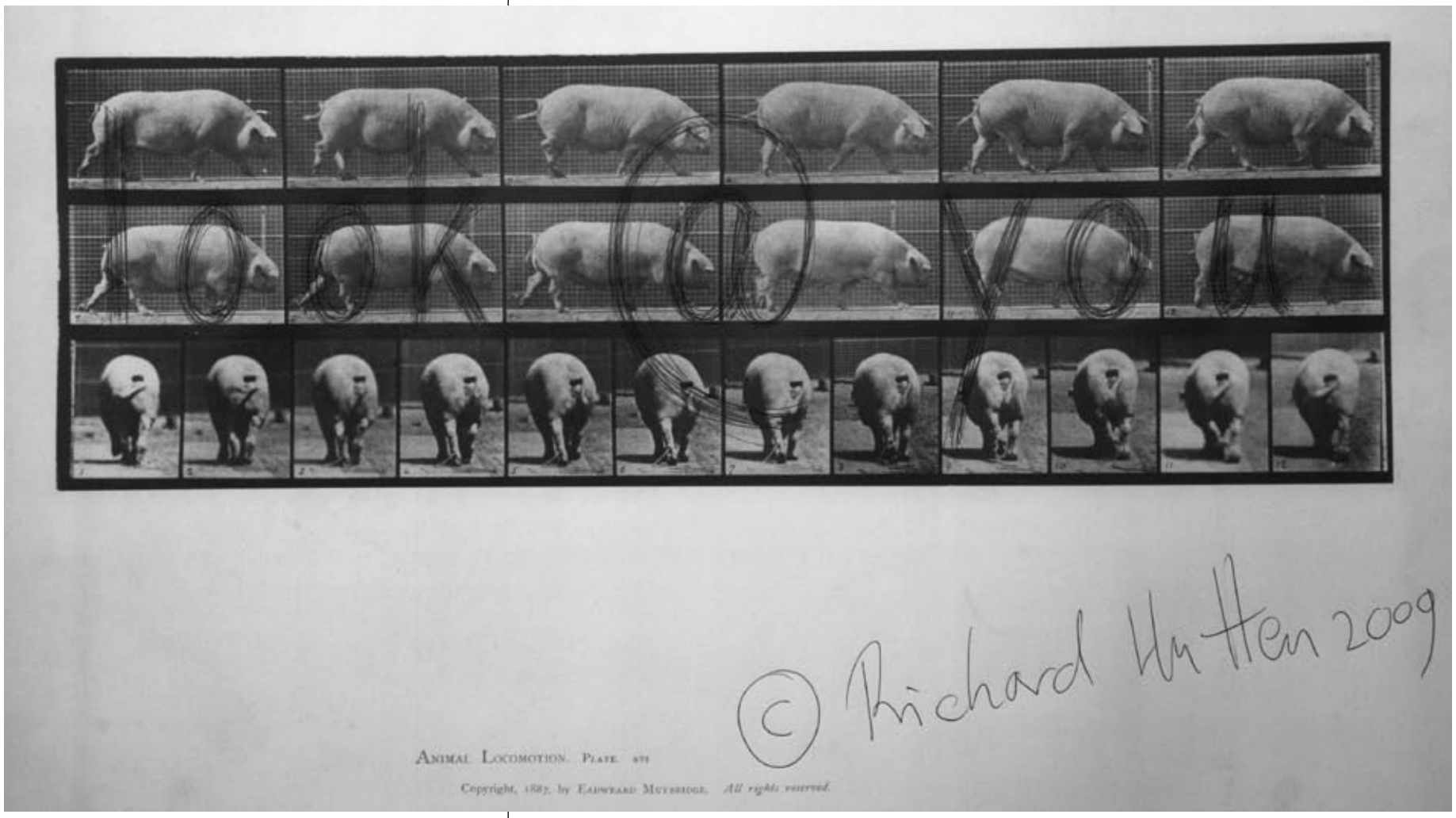
A lone white swan located where, previously, thirty grey pigeons had been. Recurrent visitors to the Power Plant may recall the presence two years earlier – in the exhibition *We Can Do This Now* curated by Gregory Burke and Helena Reckitt – of another sculpture, titled *From Stream to Golden Stream* (2006), also located within the same clerestory space: thirty taxidermy pigeons suspended from the ceiling to compose a flock in mid-flight.

In the movement from flock of pigeons to singular swan, from flight to rest, a transformation will have taken place, and *Shining* now appears in that light as a condensation of what was there before. This transformation is accomplished by the figure of "the recurrent visitor." I am fascinated by the recurrence that pertains to it. Such a visitor is a recurrent one to the extent that he or she is able to bring into the frame what the object of appearance occludes by its obvious presence. He or she is able to look through the deceptive presence of what is there, towards the grounding influence of what is no longer and not yet there, look through the self-sufficiency of the autonomous work of art to the energies from which it emerged and the context that gives it sense, and look through the sovereignty of the artistic "author" to the shared and nameless milieu which each author must gather into itself and refract.

Art is the realm of appearance, and life is what in its animated form (in being lived) cannot appear. Life appears within the space carved out by the work of art, but it appears in a life-like form, brilliant and dazzling to the eyes. Finally, then, a recurrent visitor "recurs" – repeats herself or himself – to the degree that the visitor makes his or her field of experience available to the correspondences of artistic forms: to the mirror-like play between form and form, and the metonymic chains of association between forms and dimensions of the viewer's own life-experience. "Recurrence," then, is simply another word for the radiant quality of attentive aesthetic reception, the necessary "light" that grants presence and white inwardness to the artistic object.

(July 28, 2009)

RICHARD HUTTEN



Albert Einstein wasn't that stupid when he said time equals space. I've decided not to focus on space anymore, only on time.

Eduard Muybridge is one of the starting points for this. I own several original prints from the *Animal Locomotion* series he made in 1887. Since I was about sixteen I'm a big fan of his work and in recent years I started collecting his *Animal Locomotion* series. I took my favorite print, Plate 674, dated 1887, and added a layer to the original work with a Bic® pen.

The result raises ethical questions. Should this be seen simply as a violant action destroying the original, or does the act of adding another layer revitalize the original? Many other questions can be asked upon seeing the work, and time will give the answers.

JAN DE COCK

Repromotion © Jan De Cock

THE SALFORD RESTORATION OFFICE

Collapsed Crane, Little Ireland, Manchester, 2009

Collapsed Crane, Little Ireland, Manchester, 2009

JOSEPHINE MECKSEPER

Manifesto of Non-Affirmation
(excerpt, 2009)

— Affirmation
This has been the biggest misunderstanding. Who said that we actually like what we do? We don't. Not for decades. Our works are meant to repulse, anger and provoke and are an open invitation for vandalism or theft. They are ignition points and triggers for revolt. The inescapable reason for their existence is the anticipation of their own destruction.

—Dysfunctional
Render an exhibition space dysfunctional with misleading signs and an altered façade. Put up Help Wanted signs. Run misleading ads in trade magazines. Publish a fake paper that looks like a tabloid. Invert propaganda. Throw up onto a shiny piece of Plexiglas.

—Instability
There is no coherence, we remain vague in terms of authorship and purpose. Shift in scale, form and content. An open-ended process that suggests everything on display can easily be exchanged. There is no affirmative reassurance in the seemingly benign objects.

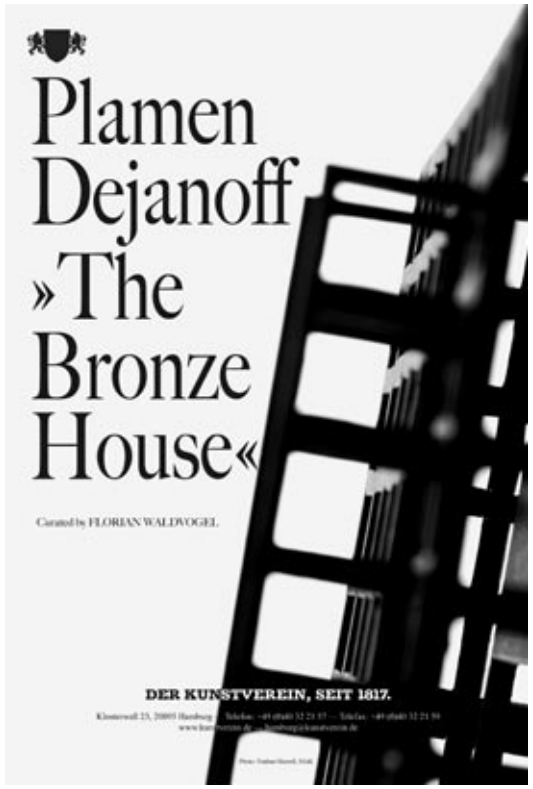
—Chronicles
We welcome an inclusion of reality, an occasion to capture and preserve the present for a viewer in the near or far future. What does it mean to sit under a tree on the windy day that Ted Kennedy died? People are trying to vote in Afghanistan, a man is wearing a grey hat and between the bushes, the tail of an orange cat.

—Recycling Or Reclaiming
Can function as temporary terms until a better one is found. Sounds less pretentious than appropriation and can simultaneously be applied to garbage management and stolen goods.

—Bitter End
By addressing timely subject matters we are looking for cultural and sociological end points as a platform to subvert reality into fiction and vice versa. This goes back to the concepts of the Romanian philosopher E. M. Cioran, whose goal it was to pursue an idea or thought to the "bitter end."

—Celebration
It's OK to stand alone in a corner and be vague to anyone approaching. Whistle a melody that no one knows or cares to listen to. Stare at the ceiling when people are talking and roll your eyes when the topic revolves around art. Keep your hands in the pockets.

PLAMEN DEJANOFF



PETR BYSTROV

I will talk about a project that is about silence, or rather about the priority of silence over sound, any sound actually. It is called *Booth of Silence* and puts forward an idea for the newest urban infrastructure service. Newest in the extreme.

Booth of silence is a cabin where no sound can filter in. In big, noisy towns, it offers several minutes of rest inside a "chapel" where nothing is audible. There, one kind of pushes the "mute" button towards the entire world.

It is no secret how damaging extra sound levels are to us – these cannot even be seen but they are particular to most of crowded places such as cross roads, city squares, public fountains and, of course, train stations.

Motors roaring, people chatting, water falling and whatever else is made out there to overload us with too much noise – all these things are no more and no less than matters to be addressed by a needed infrastructure, which is still to be invented technologically but which should be first understood as an emergence.

Booth of Silence is something we will know well and put in regular use quite soon. This is to be imagined now.

(http://gentlemanner.com/blog/en/production/booth-of-silence/)

DIETER ROELSTRAETE

I have been talking about history A LOT of late – more specifically, about the historiographic turn in art. I initially talked about it in slightly reserved, critical terms, complaining about the excess of history in much (high-quality) contemporary art – and seem to have touched upon a nerve, judging from the amount of writing I have been asked to devote to it in recent months. History – we just can't get enough!

Yet all this relentless reflecting upon "the way of the shovel" is tiring me out – it obscures our thinking about the present (nevermind the future!), and easily produces the kind of melancholy and nostalgia that I am especially wary of. That's why I have been keen to rethink the notion of realism of late: critical realism, photorealism, socialist realism... all kinds, manners and types of realism which I regard as manifestations of a definite desire to reconnect with both reality and the real world – the one that we live in here and now. This is also why I have written critically about the art world's recent love affair with the occult, the paranormal and the spiritual – in short, with the *sur*real – let us rather engage with the *real* real instead. And right now I'm trying to wrap my head around what these terms "mean" – what really constitutes "realism," "reality," and "real."

On a slightly different note (but obviously not entirely disconnected – nothing ever is), I am also talking about animals, sometimes even to animals – mostly to one of you, I should probably add. And about Germany, as always – the year is 2009, after all.

BIK VAN DER POL

We are in the land of plenty now. Plenty of nature, plenty of sheep, plenty of mountains, plenty of lochs, plenty of space, plenty of rain. And we have seen rain in all typologies. Daily. And continuously. Sometimes we are thinking of the land of a lot. A lot of people, a lot of cars, a lot of lots ado, a lot of chit chat, a lot of daily talkies on TV on the same subjects with the same guests but via different channels with different hosts, creating a lot of excitement which is gone and forgotten the next day.

Here, there is the People's Museum, with a collection that shows the story of the people of Glasgow since 1750. In 1977 they had their first immigrant mayor. If I remember well, he was from India. This makes me think of the freshly installed mayor of Rotterdam, Aboutaleb, whose appointment aroused a lot of emotions and excitement. We still have a long way to go in the land of a lot. We are from the land of one-person-democracy. Every voice claims its right to be heard, claims its right to rule, right here, right now. Nu.nl shows the face of the land of a lot. Wikipedia reports that on February 4, 2008, the server had to process the most page views ever on one day, a total of 19.189.517 views. The land of a lot has 17.000.000 inhabitants. I don't know what happened on February 4, 2008. The amount of hits on February 4 was probably only recently surpassed on June 25, 2009, when Michael Jackson's death caused the Internet to slow and to crash Twitter.

What are we doing here? With a lot of people (artists, activists, writers, anarchist publishers, filmmakers, curators and directors and organizers currently connected to institutions) we are talking about the Glasgow art scene, and how a "DIY" self-organizational aspect has been a strategic tool in creating a cultural climate – especially in the nineties – a cultural climate that made other cities look at Glasgow with more than average attention. Or rather, creating an image of a climate that resonates in the world, and of which a residue still remains, in an ambiguous mix of establishment and urgent activism. Self-organization, what it brings to (and takes from) individuals, its huge potential to generate change can also develop its own myth. In transitions from temporary to permanent, necessity, control and autonomy come into question, circling around the most urgent questions; how to produce, maintain and negotiate this autonomy. Or get rid of it.

The history of the art center that invited us is closely intertwined with the Glasgow art scene. The CCA, set up by the Arts Council, started in the building of the former edgy, thought-provoking Third Eye Centre, which collapsed financially in 1991. It has undergone quite some changes: today it is a multi-disciplinary art institution, with film, art, dance, theater and new media performances and presentations, a cafe, and a restaurant.

There is a critical tipping point. Some say art centers like this one lose their edge – when compared to their former successes – when they are forced by the politicians to open up to the general public. Every four or five years, cultural policy in Glasgow changes, and the name of the policy-making authority changes with it, nothing should remind of what should be erased. Each of these regular local cleaning actions results in the disappearance of a few cultural institutions.

Not so different from the land of a lot, despite its mythical status abroad of being a cultural heaven. Gentrification, pressure on institutions under the disguise of democratic claims and public access, the struggle of a local art scene and cultural institutions dealing daily with how to continuously keep up the dynamics and risk, while also trying to survive.

What are we talking about? We are talking about changes, about what makes a difference, about what difference individuals make, if they do. About historic revolutions. We are thinking about what it is that creates an image, what it is that makes a myth. And we are asking ourselves, and the others we are talking with, what should, can be done. Stop thinking, go beyond talking, embark on action?

A few times a week, we pass Faslane Peace Camp. This camp has been continuously occupied since 1982 when protesters first arrived to dispute England's testing of the Trident nuclear missile on the British naval base, northwest of Glasgow, which is where we are. We are located next door to, people tell us, 150 nuclear warheads. Sometimes we see a submarine slowly passing by. The peace camp consists of a small strip of land along the roadside, an undefined collection of circa fifteen shabby mobile homes, caravans and sheds, quite sad-looking, especially in this rain, doors open, buckets, pots, pans, plastic sheets, painted slogans, chimneys, a wooden gate painted in

diverse colors, and once in a while you see someone. The naval base across the road looks like a war zone, also quite sad, actually: protected against anyone unauthorized or suspect coming in, lots of barbed wire, high fences, signs warning to keep away, CCTV, and lots of police around. Never seen so many police cars as here, on this peninsula, where we are.

Nothing seems to happen there. Both facilities (the army and the opponents) are visible, performing their presence through the image of being there. And by both being there, sitting at both side of the road, they show what is at stake, already for twenty-seven years. Faslane Naval Base is not only an issue of peace campers, it is also a local issue and it is also an issue in Scottish politics. Many, including politicians, oppose the nuclear base. Regular rallies outside Faslane usually involve large numbers of protesters being arrested for non-violent civil disobedience. Information is gathered through meticulous observations. Volunteers, activists, local citizens, and others are watching movements at, to and from the base, just as the army and the police are watching movements of passers-by. Nothing seems to happen there, but this being there means that one cannot stay unaware, not knowing. This is why the peace camp has to be there, it has to be visible. It is a display of protest, and it can – and will – be activated any time, when necessary. It keeps us all aware.

And we? What are we thinking about? What are we doing? Are we doing anything? We are hovering. We are observing the observers, piling up questions on the role of information, what distribution of information may or may not set off in the public realm, and if action can and should clearly and demonstratively be taken, or maybe already is taking place when nothing seems to happen. Or is, sometimes, doing nothing, just observing, more than enough, and, indeed the most violent thing to do? We are talking of the land of a lot, and of what Žižek (in *Violence*) states: "the threat today is not passivity, but pseudo-activity, the urge to 'be active,' to 'participate,' to mask the nothingness of what goes on. People intervene all the time, 'do something.'" Or maybe we should stop talking. Maybe it is just the rain.

ULRIKE OTTINGER

Rotterdam Dialogues/Kindergarten in the Taiga.
Context: Taiga. Tsagaan Nuur (Mongolia). © Ulrike Ottinger 1991.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT NOW?

THE CRITICS
9 – 11 OCT 2008

THURSDAY 9 OCT: EXPECTATIONS

1:30 P.M.
Welcome by Zoë Gray, Nicolaus Schafhausen & Ariadne Urlus

1:40 P.M.
WHAT WILL HAPPEN HERE?

JAN VERWOERT
Jan Verwoert, the day's host, will give an overview of the coming three days, exploring his own expectations of the discussions that will take place. Introducing the speakers of the day, he will look at the different types of expectation in operation: the expectations of artists towards critics, and vice versa; the expectations we have as readers; and the expectations that today's critics might have of the generations that will follow them. Given the extensive discussion of the "crisis in art criticism" that has already taken place, this emphasis on expectation is a way to move the debate on and avoid reiterating woeful tales about the predicament of criticism, whilst remaining realistic about the challenges that the practice faces.

2:00 P.M.
WHAT DO WE WANT FROM CRITICS?

MATTHEW COLLINGS
Matthew Collings will begin proceedings by asking what we want from critics. Seeking to break open what he considers the "boring professionalized system" in which most critics now seem to work (imitating the moves that the critic knows the system will reward), Collings offers a provocative challenge to this narrow vision of what he believes should be a ruthlessly truth-seeking but also creative, imaginative and free process.

3:15 P.M.
DOESEDITORIAL AUTHORITY STILL EXIST?

TIM GRIFFIN & EDGAR SCHMITZ
In an era that has seen a rapid proliferation of open-source systems such as Wikipedia, in which notions of authority and expertise are no longer held by a select handful of gatekeepers, what is the role of a magazine such as *Artforum International*? Can such magazines still create the orthodoxies of art history – and do they want to? If not, who are the arbiters of taste today? These are some of the questions that Tim Griffin and Edgar Schmitz will explore in their discussion, examining how changes in the means of communication have altered the conditions under which critics operate, as the art world moves closer to the culture industry and its systems of distribution increasingly mirror that of big business.

4:30 P.M.
CAN CRITICISM BE TAUGHT?

ANDREW BERARDINI, EDO DIJKSTERHUIS, MELISSA GRONDLUND WITH MARGRIET SCHAVEMAKER AS MODERATOR
In a recent essay, art historian Johanna Burton described art criticism as a "wild" enterprise, saying as an aside that "there is no proper training and it is not a proper profession." Nevertheless, in recent years there have been a growing number of courses teaching art criticism in both universities and art academies. This panel brings together a range of people engaged with the training or encouragement of the next generation of critics, who take a critical approach to their own practice. Given the shrinking of arts coverage in the daily press in most Western contexts, what – and who – is the future of art criticism? Or is art criticism simply an obsolete endeavor, a residue from bourgeois society and its public sphere?

FRIDAY 10 OCT: POSITIONS

1:30 P.M.
WHAT HAPPENS TODAY?

INGRID COMMANDEUR
Ingrid Commandeur, the day's host, introduces the speakers and topics of the second day of the symposium. The various sessions aim to explore the art critic's position in relation to academia and art history, to the audience(s), to the market, to artists and to art.

1:45 P.M.
SUPER ART FOR THE SUPER CRITIC?

ACHILLE BONITO OLIVA
Who is the Clement Greenberg of today? Has such a position become obsolete? Or are there new super critics in the making? Former Art Basel director Samuel Keller declared a few years ago "Nobody fears art critics any more, which is a real danger sign for the profession". In his lecture *Super Art for the Super Critic (also in the third millennium?),* Achille Bonito Oliva will address the demise of the super critic and the shifts in art that have accompanied it. He will refer to his 1978 book *Super Art,* (Giancarlo Politi editions, Milan), combined with a generous dose of self-reflection and personal insight. Language: Italian with consecutive translation into English.

3:00 P.M.
WHAT KIND OF VALUE IS JUDGED BY THE JUDGEMENT OF VALUE?

DIEDRICH DIEDERICHSEN & ISABELLE GRAW
"There is no value per se; value is, as Marx relentlessly demonstrated, relational and thus to be re-negotiated permanently", states Isabelle Graw. "That is why it is so highly susceptible to those atmospheric and conjunctural changes that can be initiated by a critic." Both Diedrich Diederichsen and Isabelle Graw are pub-lishing books this fall in which the value of art is examined, but which reveal very different conceptions about art as commodity, respectively titled *On (Surplus) Value in Art and Der große Preis: Art between the Market* and *Celebrity Culture*. These publications will act as case studies in a discussion about broader trends in contemporary art writing.

4:15 P.M.
DOES THE MARKET CONTROL CRITICISM?

EVA KARCHER, MICHAŁ WOLIŃSKI WITH PELIN TAN AS MODERATOR [ERIC TRONCY UNABLE TO ATTEND]
In a recent article for *The Guardian,* Adrian Searle lamented (with tongue firmly inserted in cheek): "Never has the art market been stronger. Never has money been so powerful. Never have so many artists got so rich, and never has there been such alarming stuff on sale. Never have critics felt so out of the loop." This panel explores the thorny relationship between the critic and the art market, touching upon subjects such as the shrinking space given to art criticism across most media, the link between advertising and editorial, and whether building a critical community necessarily implies building a market.

5:30 P.M.
HOW DO CRITICS WORK?

JENNIFER ALLEN & DOMINIC EICHLER
This dialogue can be considered as a form of peer critique, between two "rival" critics who have – by coincidence – written about many of the same artists at around the same time, predominantly for two different magazines. Shifting the discussion behind the scenes, from the reception or impact of criticism to its production, this discussion looks at the writing process, from the encounter with an artist or art- work to the completion of a text. Using as examples their texts on Nairy Baghramian, Peter Piller and Danh Vo, and comparing the forms of the monographic/catalogue essay with the exhibition review, Jennifer Allen and Dominic Eichler will reveal the private side of criticism, the moment before it is published and becomes a social artefact.

SATURDAY 11 OCT: CONTEXTS

1:30 P.M.

WHAT HAPPENS TODAY?

ZOË GRAY & ARIADNE URLUS [RICHARD DYER UNABLE TO ATTEND]
Richard Dyer, the day's host, will introduce the speakers and topics of the final day of the symposium. "Contexts" is perhaps the broadest of the three themes. It examines criticism in relation to other disciplines, as a possible model for knowledge production. It explores the shifting conditions for criticism, the diverse formats that criticism adopts, and how these affect its audiences.

1:45 P.M.

CAN CRITICISM BE A PRODUCTIVE FORCE FOR SPECULATIVE THINKING?

SVEN LÜTTICKEN, SINA NAJAFI & DIETER ROELSTRAETE
What is produced by art criticism? For Pablo Lafuente, "the work made by the artist is not exactly the same work written about by the critic – the critic makes the work appear other than it is, producing a new work". This dialogue explores art criticism as a creative rather than purely reflective force, bringing together three speakers whose practice includes writing, curating and teaching. The discussion will also examine the contemporary status of writing (beyond simply critique and criticism) and the shifting role of the writer in relation to other interlocutors in the art world, for example in the context of the ascendancy of the curator in the 90s and the gallerist in the 00s.

3:00 P.M.

WHAT CAN DIY CRITICISM OFFER?

MARTIJN BOVEN, RICHARD STREITMATTER-TRAN, NICK STILLMAN WITH JORDAN STROM AS MODERATOR
"Blogging is enabling a great critique of a greater range of work", says Gillian Nicol, editor of *Interface,* an online platform that allows users to post their own reviews. Online critic Rachel Lois Clapham agrees, adding: "You don't have to be rich, and you don't have to study contemporary art theory, and you don't have to be an art historian to publish your own work. It is a liberating thing." But beyond "liberation", what does self-published art criticism offer, to the critics, to the artists and to the readers? This panel brings together a range of speakers, from the editor of an online magazine, an independent artist with his own arts blog, and two editors who work with more formally traditional media which grew out of a grass-roots approach to publishing.

4:15 P.M.

WHAT CONDITIONS ARE NECESSARY FOR NEW TYPES OF CRITICISM TO EMERGE?

CHANTAL PONTBRIAND & DIRK PULTAU (GEORG SCHÖLLHAMMER UNABLE TO ATTEND)
What moves someone to found a magazine? What conditions need to come together for a new publication to emerge? What is the life expectancy of a publication? And can a publication change format en-tirely and yet maintain its original ethos and goals? These are some of the questions that will be put to the founders of *springerin* and *Parachute,* by the critical voice of *De Witte Raaf,* exploring the decisions of what is in- and excluded in contemporary cultural discourse (and why), from the point of view of these very different magazines.

6:15 P.M.

ARE THERE NEW AUDIENCES FOR ART CRITICISM?

MARK RAPPOLT, JUDY FREYA SIBAYAN, HO TZU NYEN WITH KOEN KLEIJN AS MODERATOR [NIKLAS MAAK UNABLE TO ATTEND]
This panel explores the influence of new media on both the audience for art criticism and on criticism itself. Are there new audiences emerging in reaction to new forms of art criticism? *Is* it a new form of art criticism or simply an alternative means of distribution, ie. what changes when a magazine or daily newspaper launches an online version? How are traditional media dealing with the threats and opportunities of new technologies? By using the means of mass communication, could art criticism ever reach a mass audience?

7:15 P.M.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

ZOË GRAY, NICOLAUS SCHAFHAUSEN & ARIADNE URLUS
A summing up of the three days of *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics.*

8:30 P.M.

OFF THE PAGE

SPECIAL EVENT: PERFORMANCE PROGRAM & PARTY
As the concluding event to Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics, Witte de With has commissioned DE PLAYER to create a performance program and party that takes the notion of criticism off the page and firmly onto the stage. DE PLAYER is a nomadic sound gallery and performance venue with a strong preference for the experimental, on the edge of performance, music and the visual arts, offering a mixture of refined artistic programming with hard boiled partying.

DE PLAYER's team has approached the evening-long program as if it was a work of art in itself. Every element of the program is therefore deliberate and meaningful, whether it is the lights going out and turning back on – everything is part of the script for the evening. It is a spatial, physical and psychological happening; a reflection of the state of mind of DE PLAYER.

PROGRAM OF LIVE ACTS AND PERFORMATIVE FILMS
— MOHA! (NO/DE) is an autarchic installational and abstract music project, intensely physical, rushing between the boundaries of improve and composition.
— COLONEL BASTARD & his bionic commando (BE) gears the machines of the music in-dustry towards dirty pop creating space for bionic action.
— Guido Rainier van Troost (NL) presents work that is a collection of experiments, execut-ed with the precision of physics and result-ing in videos with tantalizing titles such as *preparations for listening* and the impossibilities of balance. Especially for *OFF THE PAGE,* he will create an experiment whose residues will be visible in the club.
— Johanna Went (US), vicious multi-headed goddess of vengeance, and the even fiercer Romuald Karmakar (DE) act as true representatives of Actionism this evening.
— We cherish the memory of dandy, loner, conceptual artist and actionist Stephan Bloth (DE) and dedicate a lecture to him. He and his so-called "boy group" performed artistic actions and often crashed various decadent upper class parties during the 70s and were considered "an early gay punk band, but then without instruments."

EDUCATION

MASTERCLASS
On Monday 13 October, from 2 – 5 p.m., Tim Griffin (editor-in-chief of *Artforum International*) will give a masterclass for students and young professionals, exploring the notion of editorial authority. He will speak from his experience of editing one of the most prestigious art magazines in the Western world, answering questions about what being an editor entails and what it takes to run a contemporary art magazine.

WORKSHOP
Parallel to the symposium, Witte de With Education has organized a workshop run by Melissa Gronlund (associate editor of *Afterall*) for a small group of students. Examining different modes of art criticism, and the differences between criticism and the production of critical discourse, the workshop will explore the contemporary relevance of criticism, and the critic's role in the art world. Over the course of 4 days, a small group of students will explore the ins and outs of writing a review. The outcome of the workshop will be an insert into the final *Rotterdam Dialogues* publication, whose exact form will be decided during the workshop.

THE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE
Utrecht University, MA Art History: Cathelijne Dapiran, Nikkie Herberigs
Piet Zwart Institute Rotterdam, MA Fine Art: Esperanza Rosales, Marnie Slater
Amsterdam University, MA Media & Culture: Laurie Cluitmans, Shailoh Phillips, Arnisa Zeqo, ArtEZ Art Academy Arnhem, BA Fine Art: Stefanie van Diermen, Annemieke Olthuis,Linda Lenssen. Co-ordinated by Belinda Hak

COLOPHON

CONCEIVED BY
Zoë Gray, Nicolaus Schafhausen, Ariadne Urlus

EDUCATION PROGRAM
Belinda Hak

LOGISTICS AND TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT
Paul van Gennip

ORGANISATIONAL ASSISTANCE
Angelique Barendregt, Gerda Brust, Anna Schöning

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GRAPHIC DESIGN
Kummer & Herrman, Utrecht

PHOTOGRAPHS
Kirsten de Graaf

AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT
AB Geluidstechniek

TRANSLATION
(From Italian to English)
Barbara Summa, Business Interpreters

INSTALLATION TEAM
Gé Beckman, John Colenbrander, Carlo van Driel, Line Kramer, Hans Tutert, Ruben van der Velde

HOSPITALITY
Bieke Versloot, Sammie Oostrum, Giulia Tiddens, Annemarie Timmermans, Hedwig Homoet

WITH THANKS TO
Hestia Bavelaar, Barry van Druten, DSPS/DE PLAYER (Annemiek Engbers, Peter Fengler, Reinaart Vanhoe, Mariëlle Verdijk), Bob Geldermans, William Hunt, Judy Radul, Lia Voeten, to the rest of the Witte de With team (Martijn van Dijk, Nathalie Hartjes, Eva Huttenlauch, Renske Janssen, Oliver Martinez Kandt, Erwin Nederhoff, Monika Szewczyk, Erik Visser, Florian Waldvogel, Marielle Wichards, Esra Yalciner).

AND AN EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR GUESTS.

SUPPORTED BY

Witte de With is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Culture and the City of Rotterdam.

THE CURATORS
5 – 7 MAR 2009

THURSDAY 5 MAR: EXPECTATIONS

1:30 P.M.
Welcome by Zoë Gray, Nicolaus Schafhausen & Ariadne Urlus

1:45 P.M.
THE IMPLICATED – A MODEL FOR THE CURATORIAL?

IRIT ROGOFF
What language do we have at our disposal to engage with the complex operations of exhibition making, viewing and responding? As part of a long term research and writing project on "participation," Irit Rogoff rethinks the vocabulary available to us. While 'curating' deals with the mechanisms of staging exhibitions and their discursive sphere in or out of the remit established by the museum or exhibition space, 'the curatorial' explores all that takes place on the stage that is set – (un)intentionally – by the curator and that is viewed as an event of knowledge. The role of the audience in this inquiry is cast as that of "the implicated," enfolded on all sides in Subjectivity, in the experience of the lived multiplicity of positionings.

3:00 P.M.
WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CURATOR?

SABINE BREITWIESER, BRIGITTE VAN DER SANDE & REIN WOLFS WITH RENSKE JANSSEN AS MODERATOR
Bringing together three curators with very different backgrounds, this panel explores certain expectations of the curatorial role. Seen at times as a tastemaker, the curator is expected to share their insider knowledge of who's hot and who's not. When working with collections, they can be assigned the role of canon-writer, inscribing a particular practice into art history. But towards whom – or what – should a curator feel responsibility? To the audience, to the artist or to the work?

4:30 P.M.
WHO BENEFITS FROM CURATORIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS?

MAI ABU ELDAHAB, ZORAN ERIC & RAIMUNDAS MALAŠAUSKAS WITH SOPHIE VON OLFERS AS MODERATOR
What is actually taught on curatorial courses? How does this knowledge function? Exploring the ever-increasing professionalization of the curator – through the recent proliferation of such courses – this panel asks whether this type of education narrows access to the profession, or in fact has a democratizing effect. Is the curatorial profession monopolized by a standardized curator emerging from this institutional mould?

5:30 P.M.
DOES THE EXHIBITION HAVE A FUTURE?

DIANA BALDON, BARNABY DRABBLE & PAUL O'NEILL (BRUCE FERGUSON UNABLE TO ATTEND)
What functions of the exhibition, as we perceive it today, are likely to endure? Looking at the past, can we see an evolution in the exhibition as a form, and are we witnessing a format in its relative infancy or one approaching the end of its useful life? We need to ask if the "white cube" will remain a perennial feature of the exhibition landscape and consider what new forms of exhibition the changes in art and its audiences are capable of engendering. Considering the diversity of art experiences the term "exhibition" currently denotes, should we turn the question around to ask: Does the future have an exhibition?

FRIDAY 6 MAR: POSITIONS

6:45 P.M.
WHEN IS A BIENNIAL A SUCCESS?

BART DE BAERE, CAROLYN CHRISTOV-BAKARGIEV & HOU HANRU WITH ADAM BUDAK AS MODERATOR
Aside from visitor numbers, press coverage, city branding/gentrification, national aggrandizement or art world buzz, how would a curator measure the success of a biennale? Can such large-scale, often spectacular art projects – sometimes with a cast of hundreds – provide individual fulfillment for their participants? Can a biennale be judged using the same critical criteria applied to any other exhibition? Or do the political forces at play change the whole process of exhibition making and hence of exhibition viewing?

7:45 P.M.
TALK & DRINK

Following the fixed program, the day ends with an informal session in which the guests of the day will be available for individual conversations over a glass of wine.

1:40 P.M.
HAS THE RISE OF THE INDEPENDENT CURATOR AFFECTED ART PRACTICE?

SETH SIEGELAUB & KITTY SCOTT
Seth Siegelaub was part of the first generation of independent curators, who emerged in the 1960s. Working closely with a small group of artists, he was instrumental in developing their careers and shaping how their work was seen, while broadening the scope of curating beyond its traditional field. In this interview, he looks at the legacy and impact of this generation of independent curators from a certain distance, having decided to abandon the role of exhibition maker some twenty years ago.

2:45 P.M.
CAN WE JUXTAPOSE ACADEMIC AND INTUITIVE THINKING IN THE PRACTICE OF CURATING?

UTE META BAUER & ADAM SZYMCZYK WITH JUAN GAITÁN AS MODERATOR
Positing two apparently opposite curatorial modes of thinking, this dialogue begins by comparing the role of the curator in the academic field and in the contemporary art world. Is one a space for reflection and the other the location of curatorial action? Does a period working in academia alter a curator's practice, the structure or methodology of their exhibitions? This dialogue explores curating as a forensic tool for understanding and for seeking truths.

4:15 P.M.

IS THE CURATOR PER DEFINITION A POLITICAL ANIMAL?

NICOLAS BOURRIAUD, ENRICO LUNGHI & BEATRIX RUF WITH PAUL O'NEILL AS MODERATOR
As Aristotle noted, all human beings are by nature political animals, with an instinct to group together and organize themselves. Jacques Rancière defines the politics of art as the endless recasting of what is perceptible, understandable and therefore artistically conceivable. Taking these two ideas of the cultural-political as a point of departure, this panel asks what constitutes the curatorial position in relation to the individual and to the group. It explores examples of opposition, intervention, participation, action or emancipation within the panelists' practices.

5:30 P.M.

IS CURATING ALWAYS A COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY?

XENIA KALPAKTSOGLOU, EMMANUEL LAMBION, SABINA SABOLOVIC (WHW) & IVET CURLIN (WHW) WITH SASKIA VAN STEIN AS MODERATOR
Whilst the artist collective is now a well established construct, and collaboration is seen as a usual part of artistic practice, curating is still often considered either as the work of a lone protagonist, or as the invisible machinations of a faceless institution. Nevertheless, one could argue that all curatorial activity is based upon collaborative production. This panel includes curators who have chosen to operate under a collective name. Setting practical considerations aside, the discussion explores the impulse behind and discursive aspects of such an approach, questioning the differences between team work, collaboration and collectivity.

6:45 P.M.

RADICAL-CHIC CURATING: CURATORIAL PRACTICE VS. CURATORIAL FASHION?

JENS HOFFMAN, PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA, STEFAN KALMÁR WITH KITTY SCOTT AS MODERATOR
Why is it that similar ideas, exhibitions and artists pop up in different places around the world at more or less the same time? Is there such a thing as curatorial fashion, or is it simply a manifestation of the zeitgeist? How influential is the seeking of curatorial recognition from one's peers and predecessors? Within the international networks that comprise the contemporary art world, how does one curatorial practice influence an other?

7:45 P.M.

IS THERE A CURATORIAL GENERATION GAP?

HANS ULRICH OBRIST & PHILIPPE PIROTTE
On the occasion of the recent publication of Hans Ulrich Obrist's book of interviews *A Brief History of Curating*, this interview brings together curators of two generations. They will examine their own positions in relation to the era of curators included in Obrist's book, which maps the development of the curatorial field from early independent curating in the 1960s and 1970s and the experimental institutional programs developed in Europe and in the USA at this time, through to *Documenta* and the development of biennales.

SATURDAY 7 MAR: CONTEXTS

1:30 P.M.
Welcome by Zoë Gray, Nicolaus Schafhausen & Ariadne Urlus

1:40 P.M.

IS CURATING NARCISSISTIC?

JAN HOET & ANN DEMEESTER
Ann Demeester describes mentor Jan Hoet as her own personal curatorial program. Having worked closely together in the past, they now come together to ask themselves what sort of curators they are today. Whilst Hoet tends to distance himself from the position of curator as author, and place the artist in a central role as the prime creative agent, the question remains whether an exhibition is nonetheless a portrait of its curator.

2:45 P.M.

CAN THE SAME EXHIBITION HAPPEN EVERY-WHERE?

GERARDO MOSQUERA & MANRAY HSU WITH JAMILA ADELI AS MODERATOR
This question raises the notion of global art in relation to a local audience, the cartography of traveling exhibitions, the translatability of art and the role of the curator within this translation process. Can art travel? Does the curator need to travel too? What role does the renewed local, national, and international audience play in the perception of art? How does 'glocalisation' perform in the experience of traveling exhibitions?

4:00 P.M.

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS AN EMBEDDED CURATOR?

DIDEM ÖZBEK & OSMAN BOZKURT (PIST), LESLEY YOUNG & JAMES HUTCHINSON (THE SALFORD RESTORATION OFFICE) WITH VANESSA JOAN MÜLLER AS MODERATOR (ANKE BANGMA UNABLE TO ATTEND)
In contrast to the hyper-internationality of some curators – which has led to the label 'airport curator' – others choose to immerse themselves in a specific territory or local context, and work extensively within this framework. Does this 'embedded curating' open up possibilities that might not find a place in other models of curating, for example the sharing of knowledge and expertise, and the provision of a service to others?

5:00 P.M.

CAN AN EXHIBITION CHANGE AN INSTITUTION?

ANDREA VILIANI, IWONA BLAZWICK & LORENZO BENEDETTI WITH LIVÍA PÁLDI AS MODERATOR
How do we define the role of an exhibition – is it a medium, a result, a process, or a catalyst? How does it function as one moment in an ongoing institutional program or history? Does a curatorial master plan exist to pave the way to change? What would be the consequences of an 'impact' exhibition? This panel investigates the influences upon curatorial vision, and conversely, its effect upon established organizations or ways of thinking.

6:15 P.M.

THE AUDIENCE ASKS THE QUESTIONS

Opening up the debate to give you the opportunity to set the agenda, this penultimate session of the symposium is structured rather differently, divided into smaller groups, each centered around one or two speakers. You are free to move between discussions, or to engage in a more intense dialogue.

7:45 P.M.

TALK & DRINK

The symposium ends with an informal session in which the guests of the day will be available for individual conversations over a glass of wine.

EDUCATION

MASTERCLASS
On Sunday 8 March, from 2 – 5 p.m., a curatorial masterclass will be given for young professionals and postgraduate students by Jan Hoet. Originally from Leuven (BE), he was founding director of SMAK in Ghent from 1975–2001, and director of MARTa Herford in Herford, Germany, from 2001 until his recent retirement. In 1992 he was artistic director of *documenta IX,* Kassel, and in 2001 of *Sonsbeek,* Arnhem. For his masterclass, Hoet will speak from his own practice and extensive experience, putting key questions to the participants for them to resolve together during the course of the afternoon.

WORKSHOP
From Wednesday 4 to Saturday 7 March, Raimundas Malašauskas will give a workshop in curating for a group of students. Malašauskas was curator at CAC Vilnius from 1995 to 2006, and currently curates at Artists Space, New York. Weaving in and out of the symposium and elaborating upon some of the questions it raises in a practical, hands-on manner, Malašauskas will give these students an insight into the day to day issues faced by contemporary art curators.

THE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE
MA History of Art Leiden University: Athena Exarchou, Roos van der Lint; MA Visual Arts, Media & Architecture, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: Elise Noyez; MA Art History University of Amsterdam: Hendrik Folkerts, Rieke Vos, MA Fine Arts, Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam: Isa Andreu, Jay Tan;MA Museum curator Vrije Universiteit /University of Amsterdam: Roosmarij Deenik; MA Art History University Utrecht: Timea Lelik; MFA Critical Studies Program, Malmo Art Academy: Jens Maier-Rothe, Sarah Rifky; MA Cultural Theory, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna: Nina Stuhldreher. Co-ordinated by Belinda Hak.

COLOPHON

CONCEIVED BY
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PROJECT ASSISTANT
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INTERIOR DESIGN
Katinka van Gorkum, Weronika Zielinska

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Kummer & Herrman, Utrecht

PHOTOGRAPHS
Kirsten de Graaf

PUBLICATIONS
Monika Szewczyk

AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT
AB Geluidstechniek

INSTALLATION TEAM
Gé Beckman, Carlo van Driel, Line Kramer, Hans Tutert, Ruben van der Velde

HOSPITALITY
Bieke Versloot, Sammie Oostrum, Kira Potowski, Annemarie Timmermans, Lise van Zaalen

WITH THANKS
to the rest of the Witte de With team (Katayoun Arian, Eva Huttenlauch, Maria Luisa Palma, Erwin Nederhoff, Erik Visser, Marielle Wichards).

AND AN EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR GUESTS.

SUPPORTED BY

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PRESS PARTNER

DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER ONAFHANKELIJK WEEKBLAD SEDERT 1877

THE ARTISTS
16 – 18 APR 2009

THURSDAY 16 APR: EXPECTATIONS

1:30 P.M.
Welcome by Nicolaus Schafhausen & Ariadne Urlus

1:45 P.M.
THIS IS NOT A MASTER-PIECE

MARTHA ROSLER
Martha Rosler will discuss the genesis and execution of some of her projects conceived in specific contra-distinction to the notion of "masterpiece production." Many of Rosler's ideas about art were formed during the period of revolt against modernist demands – both market driven and romantic – for artistic isolation and depoliticization. She will consider the relationship of her work to questions of power, authority and gender and will in this context also present some works that have depended on collective or participatory processes.

2:45 P.M.
THE BURDEN OF HISTORY

YAEL BARTANA & DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS WITH TIM LEE AS MODERATOR
The so-called "end of history" is perhaps best understood as the beginning of *histories* plural or the growing awareness of the subjective nature of what constitutes the past, which in turn shapes the present and future. History is increasingly understood as the product of multiple interpretations by several groups or individuals, which further infuses related notions of collective memory and cultural identity with a permanent state of negotiation and flux. Within this epistemological transformation, the figure of the "artist as historian" suddenly looms larger than ever. How can this be negotiated in the most productive way? Is it possible to escape the burden of history? Or is bearing this burden the most interesting position for an artist to take?

4:00 P.M.
HOW CAN ART BE POLITICAL IN A FREE MARKET SYSTEM?

MARK BOULOS, JOTA CASTRO, JOSEPHINE MECKSEPER
Artists are increasingly implicated in the global art market, which has expanded enormously over the past decade, incorporating ever more initiatives, institutes and professionals. With very few exceptions, the artist is automatically part of the market and needs to find some level of success in it, in order to make a living out of art. If in the 1960s and 1970s certain artistic positions were predicated on evading or challenging the free market system, today most artists depart from the conceit that everything they make, however immaterial, can be bought and sold. Is this the end of a "political position" – as a space to imagine radically alternative social structures – or is this implicated position the ground for a new notion of politics?

5:00 P.M.
WHAT ABOUT OUR AUDIENCE?

JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK, GABRIEL KURI, MATTHIEU LAURETTE, OSWALDO MACIÁ (BANU CENNETOĞLU UNABLE TO ATTEND)
The debate over "activated" viewers – whether they can indeed be activated and to what extent an artist can control this process at the point of production – gained ground in the 1960s when Michael Fried declared that the tragic flaw of Minimalism was its theatricality – the need for the viewer to "complete" the work. More recently, the cybernetic vocabulary of "interactivity" is deployed both to praise and to damn works. How is the presence of visitors, readers or beholders in front of a work considered at the point of production? How does their behaviour change that work in the eyes of the artist? Do artists avoid the conception of an audience and produce solely for themselves or do they project an imagined community?

6:15 P.M.
THE SAVAGE MIRROR

KENDELL GEERS, GABRIEL LESTER & KLAUS WEBER WITH MONIKA SZEWCZYK AS MODERATOR
In reflecting upon the culture they see around them, certain artists have chosen to hold up what may be called a "savage mirror," casting back a view considered wild, abject, carnivalesque, dark, intuitive, or otherwise disruptive of the given culture. But the issue is not solely one of provocation as what appears savage to some may be the personal experience of others. Without drawing naïve binary oppositions between the savage and the civilized, how can we consider a dimension in cultural practice that escapes such rationalisation?

7:15 P.M.
THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION / THE REPRESENTATION OF POWER

PIERRE BISMUTH & SARAH MORRIS WITH PIERO GOLIA AS MODERATOR (SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN UNABLE TO ATTEND)
How can an artist reveal the workings of power when – as Michel Foucault emphasized – power is that which always elides representation? It is not so much that the emperor has no clothes, but that there is no one single emperor to be found. If the forces that determine our lives are molecular and clandestine, how does representation function in relation to this elusive concept? Is there a way to show how power works? Is it perhaps the unrepresentability of power that requires better representation? Or are the representations artists create themselves capable of subverting existing power networks and forging new ones?

8:15 P.M.
TALK & DRINK

FRIDAY 17 APR: POSITIONS

11:00 – 11:15 A.M.

CRITICAL RUN, THIERRY GEOFFROY

EXTRA EVENT
Critical Run is a sweating debating format for criticism. The concept was developed by artist Thierry Geoffroy and the purpose is to train the awareness muscle by discussing a topic while running. *Critical Run* has taken place in New York, London, Istanbul, Athens, Paris, Siberia, Copenhagen, Moscow, Napels and The Hague. For *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Artists* Thierry Geoffroy will organize a *Critical Run* starting at the front door of Witte de With. The exact topic is announced on the first day of the symposium.

1:45 P.M.

BETWEEN REALITY AND FICTION

GUILLAUME BIJL
In his lecture *Between Reality and Fiction* Guillaume Bijl will reflect upon his work, giving special attention to the relation between public space and public reception. Bijl is one of the most prominent Belgian artists of his generation in the international scene. In his work, he explores the boundaries between art and (social) reality by creating familiar environments – a shoe shop or a driving school – on a 1:1 scale within the space of an art gallery or a museum. By taking these realities out of their original context, thereby losing their social function, they become still lives of reality. In this way, he confronts contemporary western society with itself and its formatted environments, making visible the settings of our times.

2:45 P.M.

PERSONA

DANAI ANESIADOU, SPARTACUS CHETWYND, LILI RENAUD-DEWAR & JIMMY ROBERT WITH DOUG FISHBONE AS MODERATOR
What is the role of performance in forging new notions of the subject? If certain strains of performance art were squarely opposed to the fictions of theatre, others rely on the (often elaborate) invention of a persona and a stage for him/her to act. What are the tools artists use in such creations and toward what ends? And what is the difference between the person and the persona "displayed" in such a setting? Do artists work with autobiographic elements to reveal their character and individuality or do they use these elements to forge fictional selves, even to overcome the very notion of the self?

4:00 P.M.

TRUTH SEEKERS

SIMON DENNY, LUIS JACOB, GABRIEL KURI & SARAH MORRIS (GOSHKA MACUGA UNABLE TO ATTEND)
Half ironic, half serious, Bruce Nauman's now infamous dictum "The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths" continues to haunt art production. What are the truths that art and artists can reveal that scientists or priests cannot? What kind of bodies of knowledge can be realized as art works and how do these compare to existing archives and repositories of truth? Can one be a true artist without revealing or wanting to reveal some kind of truth, even if it is the truth of fiction or, most problematically today, the truth of beauty?

5:00 P.M.

WHEN SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE CONFRONTS POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

BIK VAN DER POL, HENRIK PLENGE JAKOBSEN, SUPERFLEX
Very often in recent years, artists with an interest in urban planning, architecture and design have been commissioned by public and corporate organizations to intervene directly in the built environment. The idea is that the results will produce certain political effects – they will illuminate social dynamics if not solve social problems or make things better, building or rejuvenating communities and neighborhoods. Accepting such commissions raises the question of social and political ends. How can the ends of the commissioning bodies be read and reconciled, met or subverted? The multiple protagonists or constituents who have an interest in these commissions raise the stakes in the political game that the artist enters. How can this field be navigated without a compromise of vision? Are there advantages to being an artist in such a political process? And what are the political convictions that surface?

6:15 P.M.

TOTAL VISIBILITY

WILLEM DE ROOIJ & JEFF WALL
The title comes from a proposition regarding Jeff Wall's cibachrome transparencies which he has produced since the late 1970s: that these evenly lit and carefully composed images, with their allegorical references to the long history of picture making as world making within both religious and secular contexts in the West, forces the question of the picture showing us everything. They set in motion the dialectic of visibility and invisibility which binds politics and aesthetics. Jeff Wall will speak to Willem de Rooij, who, also within his collaboration with Jeroen de Rijke from 1994 until 2006, produced a highly reflective and elliptical body of work, from 16- and 35-mm films, through photographs, objects and installations, which methodically stress the artificiality of depiction, further raising the question of visibility as a construct.

7:15 P.M.

STORYTELLERS

RUNA ISLAM, NEDKO SOLAKOV, BARBARA VISSER
Artists have an important role in redefining and questioning existing narrative strategies. But in an age where the eclectic has become an important way of pooling information (internet/media) and utopian ideas are in general seen as part of a historical ideology, is storytelling still a valuable format for exchanging information and re-presenting the complex reality of modern society? What kind of (narrative) strategies or aesthetic methodologies do artists use to present their story to the public? How do they choose what story to tell and why do they believe these stories should be told (again)? How transparent is the line between the fictional and the documentary in their work?

8:15 P.M.

TALK & DRINK

SATURDAY 18 APR: CONTEXTS

1:45 P.M.

WHAT IS NEW IN THE OLD OR OLD IN THE NEW?

ULRIKE OTTINGER
Ulrike Ottinger has been a unique and provocative voice in German art and cinema since her debut in the early 70s. Over the past 40 years, she has directed more than 20 films, including feature-length fictions and experimental documentaries. She has also worked as a theatre director and ethnographer, and exhibited her photographs in numerous international venues. In her documentary work cinematography always has the upper hand, if only because there is no set construction to fall back on. On the basis of some of her scrap- and work books and other visual material, Ottinger will give us an inside view of her working process opening up a "complete universe" for the audience, starting from the question "What is new in the old or old in the new?"

2:45 P.M.

RECASTING THE NETWORK

CARSTEN HÖLLER, JUDY RADUL & ANTON VIDOKLE (LIAM GILLICK UNABLE TO ATTEND)
The ubiquity of the Internet ensures a mobility of information and the proliferation of discursive activity in the twenty first century. Increasingly this free-flow of ideas relies on a maze of social and digital networks that continually transform our sense of interconnectedness to the world around us. The question of the network as a social dynamic and its potential aesthetic dimensions is not new (and the multiple activities of e-flux provide a contemporary example). Beginning in the 1960s and 70s with Fluxus' Eternal Network of mail art, the rhizomatic tactics of the Situationists, as well as happenings and social sculpture, networks have posed questions of agency. This questioning of agency underpins Nicolas Bourriaud's conception of relational aesthetics as a foregrounding of social relations over the contemplation of works of art. Does art have a tendancy to display relations and agencies that networks veil? How do artists conceive of, create and navigate networks? What is their potential in our digital age?

4:00 P.M.

ROMANTIC ECONOMY

PLAMEN DEJANOFF, RAINER GANAHL & JORDAN WOLFSON
In a more romantic (or maybe mystifying) approach towards art, the artist's motives and interests avoid economic considerations. Trading and selling (the artwork) is left to galleries and other partners. If commercial succes is no longer as suspect as it used to be, the self-presentation of the artist as devoid of monetary interests is still preserved by the alchemy of the art-dealer, freeing the creator from its grips. Yet what happens, when the economic system itself becomes the subject of the artistic process? Or when the artist's approach resembles that of an enterprise? On the flip side, is there a way to mobilise a parallel, romantic economy, that complicates the workings of the monetary one, even destabilizes its systems of value?

5:00 P.M.

AESTHETIC ACTIVISM

AES+F, PETR BYSTROV, WENDELIEN VAN OLDENBORGH & PIOTR UKLAŃSKI WITH MONIKA SZEWCZYK AS MODERATOR (EYAL WEIZMAN UNABLE TO ATTEND)
The idea that art is about "making things" and politics is "acting in the world" is quickly countered by the notion that art is concerned with a search for truth, whereas politics tries to avoid it. As the global political spectrum swings to the right, what is the political role of artists? Beyond personal activism, can art itself evoke activist agency? What does it mean to produce an aesthetic outcome and how does art function in rethinking political systems? How does art reveal social and political inconsistencies? Is it legitimate to use art as a political tool? Is all art inherently political? And how does this influence the way artists work today?

6:15 P.M.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

ALEX BAG, THIERRY GEOFFROY, NICOLINE VAN HARSKAMP WITH TANJA ELSTGEEST AS MODERATOR
Speech is a form of mediated and performed text, whose meaning is produced by the speaker, audience and context. Speech and performance are closely related in their abilities to produce political and mediated messages. How can the speech act forge an intersection between artistic practice and political practice? Is speech still a valid outlet in a media-filled world saturated with one-liners and catchy images? What rhetorical forms prove most effective in this context?

7:15 P.M.

SETTING THE STAGE

JAN DE COCK, RICHARD HUTTEN, OLAF NICOLAI & AN TE LIU
At least since the Russian Constructivists, methods used in architecture and design as well as scenography have permeated the conception of art making. What design and building/crafting/manufacturing strategies are most interesting for contemporary artists in setting the stage of an exhibition? And what are the ways in which architectural conceptions of space inflect how the exhibition space is demarcated? How are the actors of such stages conceived or what role does the public play in the occupation and manipulation of space? Do these strategies inform institutional and architectural critique, or is it more a question of artists guiding renovation and reconstruction efforts? Is there room to envision ideal spaces and cities in the post-utopian imagination?

8:15 P.M.

TALK & DRINK

10:00 P.M.

FINAL ACT

EXTRA EVENT
Rotterdam based club *Attent* is hosting this closing event of *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Artists*. For one night the top floor of Witte de With will be transformed from a center for contemporary art to a toxic mix of club, exhibition, stage, catwalk and bar; all tweaked to perfection for the optimal social experience. The program is comprised of performance acts, video screenings, live gigs, *Attent* mode and Charlois protest fashion, white Russians and black Finns, supa Dj's, cold food and warm Sake and of course the *Attent* emotion

PROGRAM
8:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.: video screenings
8:15 – 10:00 p.m.: Vj bitsy (B-movies and you-tube shit), Canada
8:45 – 9:00 p.m.: Abner preis Storyteller, Usa
8:00 – 10:00 p.m.: Dj Sigrun & Dj firestarter (easy listening & tacky stuff), Iceland/Germany
9:00 – 9:20 p.m.: the beast from the East (man with Ukulele), The Netherlands
9:45 – 10:00 p.m.: performance Nina Boas (Charlois), The Netherlands
10:00 – 10:15 p.m.: performance Thierry Geoffroy (protest fashion), Denmark
10:15 – 10:30 p.m.: Onemannation (electric sound-noise), Singapore
10:15 – 10:45 p.m.: Dj Bitsy (trashy stuff), Canada
10:45 – 11:00 p.m.: performance Spartacus Chetwynd United Kingdom
11:00 – 11:20 p.m.: live gig Lucho (man+woman+guitar+really bigdrum), The Netherlands; DJ Dagmar (trash), Iceland
11:20 – 11:50 p.m. Dj disco disco (70's disco), Virgin Islands
11:50 p.m. – 0:05 a.m.: performance Danai Anesiadou Belgium
0:05 – 0:20 a.m.: live gig Erotic beach Horrors (electric horror), The Netherlands/Finland
0:20 – 0:40 a.m.: performance Doug Fishbone, USA
0:20 – 1:00 a.m.: Dj Gordon Ramsay (Persian disco), Albania

cold food and warm Sake bar, White Russian & Black Finns bar, club Attent bar (original version), Attent Mode and Charlois Fashion, surprise events ...

EDUCATION

MASTERCLASS
On Sunday April 19, from 2 – 5 p.m, Ulrike Ottinger will give a Masterclass for young artists, professionals and postgraduate students. Ulrike Ottinger has been a unique and provocative voice in German art and cinema since her debut in the early 70s. Over the past 40 years, she has directed more than 20 films, including feature-length fictions and experimental documentaries. She has also worked as a theatre director and ethnographer: her photographs have been exhibited in numerous venues, and she has published several books. For her masterclass, Ottinger will speak from the perspective of her own artistic practise and extensive experience. She will show (fragments of) her films, photo's and scrapbooks, putting key questions to the participants to be resolved together during the course of the afternoon.

WORKSHOP
From Wednesday 15 April to Saturday 18 April, Vancouver-based artist Judy Radul will give a hands-on workshop on "the artist's talk," taking the symposium program as a point of departure for an in depth look at this phenomenon. As the belief that artists can fully comprehend and describe the meaning of their own work is being thoroughly critiqued, what does it mean for artists to talk about their work nowadays? The artist's talk has become a staple of the western contemporary art world and Radul takes this opportunity to ask how artist's talks really function. Is it a re-anchoring of an authorial subject? A supplement to mask the silence or impenetrability of the art object itself? How does the artist's talk function for the museum, the market and the art academy? How does the rise of the artist's talk relate to the so-called "dematerialization" of the art object? This workshop will unmask the artist's talk in order to consider ways in which the artist's presentation can function as a platform. The workshop will involve close readings and observations as well as group work in order to stage a new engagement between artist, ego, object and audience. Subsequently, participants will have the rare opportunity to contribute to the symposium publication as one of the outcomes of the workshop sessions. Judy Radul's practice involves the consideration of the forms and conditions of video, language and performance. Her work has recently focused on video installation but also includes photography, live actions and audio. Her critical writing has been widely published.

THE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE STUDENTS FROM
De Ateliers, Amsterdam; MA Fine Arts, Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU); MA Fine Arts, Dutch Art Institute (DAI), Enschede; Post-Academic Institute for Research and Production, Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht; HISK, Ghent, Belgium. Co-ordinated by Belinda Hak.

COLOPHON

ROTTERDAM DIALOGUES: THE ARTISTS IS CONCEIVED BY
Tanja Elstgeest, Zoë Gray, Miriam Kathrein, Nicolaus Schafhausen, Monika Szewczyk, Ariadne Urlus

EDUCATION PROGRAM
Belinda Hak

LOGISTICS AND TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT
Paul van Gennip, Ties ten Bosch

PROJECT ASSISTANCE
Angelique Barendregt, Renée Freriks

ORGANISATIONAL ASSISTANCE
Gerda Brust, Anna Schöning, Lise van Zaalen

HOSPITALITY
Angela Johnston, Bieke Versloot, Lise van Zaalen, Sammie Oostrum, Julia Homoet, Hessel de Ronde, Gino van Weenen, Franklin Lopes

INTERIOR DESIGN
Katinka van Gorkum, Weronika Zielinska

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Kummer & Herrman, Utrecht

PHOTOGRAPHS
Kirsten de Graaf

PUBLICATIONS
Monika Szewczyk

AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT AND ASSISTANCE
AB Geluidstechniek, Ruben van de Velde

INSTALLATION
Gé Beckman, Line Kramer

CLUB ATTENT@WITTE DE WITH
John Colenbrander, Rikke Korswagen

WITH THANKS
to the rest of the Witte de With team [especially Juan A. Gaitán, Eva Huttenlauch, Renske Janssen, Erwin Nederhoff, Anne-Claire Schmitz, Eric Visser]

AND AN EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR GUESTS

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PRESS PARTNER

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THE CRITICS

Jennifer Allen (n.d. Canada) lives and works in Berlin. Allen graduated with a PhD from the University of Montreal in 1998; during her studies (in 1996) she went to Berlin with a DAAD scholarship and taught cultural studies at the University of Humboldt. In 1999, she joined Harald Fricke as a Berlin correspondent for *Artforum International* (New York) and chronicled the city's emergence as an art capital. Her articles and reviews have also appeared in numerous catalogues and international journals, including *Afterall* (London), *Les Temps Modernes* (Paris), *De Witte Raaf* (Brussels) and *Parkett* (Zurich/New York). She writes a regular column for *frieze* (London), *MOUSSE* (Milan) and the website *Openspace* (Moscow). She is also a regular contributor to numerous German-language journals, such as *Lettre International, Zitty* and *Monopol* (all Berlin). In 2009, she was awarded the annual ADKV-ART COLOGNE Prize for Art Criticism. Following a recent residency at *Artexte* (Montréal), she is currently at work on a book titled after the late Quebecois art critic René Payant (1949-1987).
SEE PAGE 49

Andrew Berardini (1982, United States) lives and works in Los Angeles. He is a writer and art critic for *Los Angeles CityBeat* and the editor of *Check-In Architecture*. He has written articles and essays for publications such as *Afterall* (London), *Artforum International* (New York), *ArtReview* (London), *Fillip* (Vancouver), *frieze* (London), *La Stampa* (Turin), *MOUSSE* (Milan), for which he is also Los Angeles editor. Berardini graduated with an MFA from the School of Critical Studies at the California Institute of the Arts in 2006 and has since held positions as Assistant Editor of *Semiotext(e)* and Adjunct Assistant Curator at the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, California. He has recently curated original projects with Dave Muller, Bruce Nauman, and a collaboration between Raymond Pettibon & Yoshua Okon.
SEE PAGE 9

Achille Bonito Oliva (1939, Italy) lives and works in Rome. He is the author of several seminal publications on art of all ages – from the Mannerists through the modern to the present – including *La transavanguardia italiana* (Politi, 1980), *Transavanguardia internazionale* (Politi, 1982), *Minori maniere: dal Cinquecento alla transavanguardia* (Feltrinelli, 1984), *Antipatia: L'arte Contemporanea* (Feltrinelli, 1987), *Superarte* (Politi, 1988) and more recently *L'arte moderna 1770-1970. L'arte oltre il duemila,* co-authored with Giulio Carlo Argan (Sansoni, 2002), *I fuochi dello sguardo. Musei che reclamano attenzione* (Gangemi, 2004), *A.B.O La Repubblica delle Arti* (Skira, 2005) and *L'arte e le sue voci : L'arte è un «dimenticare a memoria»* (Allemandi, 2006). He also collaborates with newspapers such as *La Repubblica* and *Il Giornale dell'Arte* (Rome). He has curated numerous thematic and interdisciplinary exhibitions, both in Italy and abroad. In 1980, Oliva (with Harald Szemann) introduced the Aperto section of the 39th Venice Biennale, which he went on to direct in 1993, for its 45th edition. He is a cultural adviser for the province Campania and the chairman of the scientific commission of MADRe (Museum of Contemporary Art Donnaregina of Naples). Oliva has been awarded several prizes for art criticism, by *Flash Art International* (1982) and the Valentino d'Oro (1991). He became a Companion of the Order of Arts and Literature of the French Republic in 1992 and obtained the Italian Republic's Gold Medal for Art and Culture in 2004. He is a professor of History of Contemporary Art in the faculty of architecture at La Sapienza University.
SEE PAGE 13

Martijn Boven (1980, The Netherlands) lives and works in Groningen. He is the editor-in-chief of the web journal *8WEEKLY* and is part of the editorial team of *De tweede ronde,* a Dutch literary magazine. Boven also translates English and German literary texts into Dutch, and has translated (among others) works by William Faulkner, William Carlos Williams and Robert Coover. He studied literature sciences and philosophy at the University of Groningen where he currently teaches art history and art theory, Rome.
SEE PAGE 42

Matthew Collings (1955, England) lives and works in London. He is the former editor of the British magazine *Artscribe (International)* and was the art critic on BBC2's *The Late Show*. He has written several books on art including*: Blimey!: From Bohemia to Britpop : The London Artworld from Francis Bacon to Damien Hirst* (21 Publishing,1997), *This Is Modern Art* (Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1999) and *This Is Civilisation* (Weidenfield & Nicholson, 2008). He has also written and presented several successful TV series including *This Is Modern Art* (Channel 4, 1999), which won many awards including a BAFTA; and *This Is Civilisation,* (Channel 4, 2007). In 2007 he co-curated *L'Artiste, Le Modele, et La Peinture* on Picasso's late style for the Helly Nahmad Gallery with Emma Biggs, which premiered at the Basel Art Fair. His paintings are exhibited regularly at The Fine Art Society in London.
SEE PAGE 3

Ingrid Commandeur (1970, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. She is an editor of the contemporary art magazine *Metropolis M* (Amsterdam). From 2003 until 2005 she researched the institutional context of upcoming contemporary art scenes in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo. She has written essays on many topical subjects for *Metropolis M* including: "Art and censorship after 9/11," "Organized Magnanimity: The New Art Patron," "Art Criticism," 'Art and the notion of community," "Expanding Academy," "Fake Identities," "Art and Politics," "Performativity in the arts," "Indian Contemporary Art" and "Money, Market, Patronage." Commandeur is a member of AICA (Association Internationale des Critiques d'art) and a committee member of the Foundation for Arts, Architecture and Design in The Netherlands.
SEE PAGE 12

Diedrich Diederichsen (1957, Germany) lives in Berlin and works in Berlin and Vienna. His cultural criticism has been widely published in magazines such as *Artforum International* (New York), and *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), as well as *Texte zur Kunst, Theater heute* and *Jungle World* (all Berlin). He was editor of the legendary German music magazines *Sounds* (1979–1983) and *Spex* (1985–1990) as well as the books *Yo! Hermeneutics: Schwarze Kulturkritik. Pop/Medien/Feminismus* (ID-Archiv,1993); *Loving the Alien: Science Fiction, Diaspora, Multikultur* (ID-Archiv,1998); and *Golden Years: Dokumente und Materialien zur queeren subkultur 1959–1974* (Camera Austria, 2004). His own books include *Musikzimmer: Avantgarde und Alltag. Mit großer Diskographie* (2005), *Personas en loop: Ensayos sobre la cultura pop* (2005), *Argument Son – De Britney Spears à Helmut Lachenmann : critique électro-acoustique de la société et autres essais sur la musique* (Les presses du réel, 2007) and most recently, in 2008, *Eigenblutdoping. Kunstlerromantik und Selbstverwertung: Selbstverwertung, Kunstlerromantik, Partizipation* (KiepenheuerSWitsch) as well as *On (Surplus) Value in Art* (Witte de With Publishers/Sternberg Press). He is currently Professor of Theory, Practice and Communication of Contemporary Art at the Akademie der Bildenden Kunste (Academy of Fine Arts) in Vienna.
SEE PAGE 24

Edo Dijksterhuis (1971, The Netherlands) lives in Utrecht and works in Amsterdam. He was the Senior Art Editor at the Dutch daily newspaper *Het Financieele Dagblad* where he wrote regularly about the visual arts, design, film and music. He has also published articles in *NRC Handelsblad, Items, Filmkrant, Carp, Luister, Jazz Nu* and *Knack* (all published in The Netherlands). He is often asked to take part in juries, including the bi-annual Prize for Young Dutch Art Criticism. Since 2009, he has been the Director of the Art Amsterdam art fair.
SEE PAGE 10

Richard Dyer (n.d., England) lives and works in London. He is a news editor and correspondent for *Contemporary* magazine, assistant editor at *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture* and art editor at *Wasafiri,* an international contemporary writing magazine (all London). He is a widely published art critic, reviewer, poet, author of fiction and artist. Apart from the publications he edits, his art criticism can be found in *ArtReview, Flash Art, frieze, The Independent, The Guardian* (all London) and *Art Press* (Paris) among many other magazines and catalogues. His poetry and fiction have been published in *Contemporary, Ambit* (both London), *Die Aussenseite des Elementes* (Berlin) and *La crónica latina* (Berkeley, Calif.). His first poetry collection titled *A Western Journey* was published by Arlen House in 2006.
UNABLE TO ATTEND

Dominic Eichler (1966, Australia) lives and works in Berlin. He is an art critic, artist, musician and freelance curator and is a contributing editor for *frieze* magazine (London). His reviews, essays and feature articles have been published in numerous international art publications, books and catalogues. In 2005, he was awarded the German Kunstverein Association's prize for art criticism. He has curated numerous group exhibitions such as *Door Slamming Festival* at MD72 (Berlin, 2007) and *Devotee: The Will to Belong to the Recent Past* at Cabinet Gallery (London, 2007) and, most recently, *Into the Closet* at the Carlton Hotel Gallery (Melbourne, 2008). As a musician he is a co-founder of the band *Dominique,* whose third album "More Love Now" was released in 2008.
SEE PAGE 49

Isabelle Graw (1968, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She a founding editor of *Texte zur Kunst* (Berlin) and co-founded the Institut für Kunstkritik (Institute for Art Criticism) with Daniel Birnbaum, which organized the conferences and subsequent publications *Under Pressure: Pictures, Subjects and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (Sternberg Press, 2008) and *Canvases and Careers Today: Criticism and Its Markets* (Sternberg Press, 2009). She has written countless critical essays for magazines such as *Artforum International* (New York) and *Parkett* (Zurich/New York); as well as numerous catalogues and readers, including *Adorno: The Possibility of the Impossible, Vol. 2* (Suhrkamp, 2003), *Institutional Critique and After* (JRP|Ringier, 2006) and *Flashback: Revisiting The Art of the Eighties* (Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006). Her own publications include *Die bessere Hälfte: Kunstlerinnen des 20. und 21.Jahrhundert* (Dumont, 2003) and *Der große Preis. Kunst zwischen Markt und Celebrity Kultur* (Dumont, 2008), translated into English as *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture* in 2009 and published by Sternberg Press. She is a professor of art theory and art history at the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Städelschule) in Frankfurt.
SEE PAGE 23

Tim Griffin (1970, United States) lives and works in New York. He is the editor-in-chief of *Artforum International*. He has written essays on artists such Paul Chan, Mary Heilmann, Philippe Parreno, Yvonne Rainer, Allen Ruppersberg, Collier Schorr, Haim Steinbach and Kelley Walker among others. At *Artforum,* he has put together numerous special issues exploring themes such as "Art and Its Markets," "May 68," "Art and Politics" and "The Legacy of Land Art." His writing has also been featured in exhibition catalogues such as *Under Pressure: Pictures, Subjects and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (Sternberg Press, 2008) and *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty* (Prestel Verlag, 2009). He is the author of *Peter Halley: Contamination* (Alberico Cetti Serbelloni, 2002).
SEE PAGE 5

Melissa Gronlund (1978, United States) lives and works in London. She is managing editor of *Afterall* journal and the One Work book series (London). She was previously the special projects editor for *ArtReview* and publications editor for *frieze* (both London). Her articles have appeared regularly in *Afterall, Art Monthly, frieze* (all London) and *Dot Dot Dot* (New York) among other international journals on art and culture. She has written for numerous catalogues including *If you destroy the image you destroy the thing itself* (Bergen Kunsthall, 2008), *Eric Bainbridge* (Middlesbrough Institute of Contemporary Art, 2008) and *Contemporary Commonwealth* (National Gallery of Australia, 2006). She is a visiting tutor at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at Oxford University. SEE PAGE 54

Eva Karcher (1960, Germany) lives and works in Munich. She is a journalist specializing in art, a curator, and an art consultant. She was the founder of *ARTinvestor* and the quarterly magazine for art and fashion *Sleek* (Berlin). Karcher contributes regularly to the German editions of *Vogue* and *Elle*, and to *Die Zeit* (Berlin), *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin) and *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich) as well as the art and design periodicals *Monopol* (Berlin) and *Five to Nine, A PDF Magazine* (online). She has written several books on Otto Dix, including *Eros und Tod im Werk von Otto Dix: Studien zur Geschichte des Korpers in den zwanziger Jahren* (Lit, 1984) and *Otto Dix, 1891-1969: His life and works* (Benedikt Taschen, 1988) as well as catalogue essays and translations (English and French), mainly for Prestel Verlag. She was also editor for *Ambiente* (online), *Forbes* (Munich), *Gruner + Jahr Verlag* (Hamburg) and *Pan* (Offenburg). She studied art history, history and philosophy in Munich and Berlin. SEE PAGE 16

Koen Kleijn (1963, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. He is a freelance journalist, filmmaker and art historian. From 2007-2008 he was the deputy editor-in-chief and culture editor at *De Groene Amsterdammer*, the Netherlands' oldest weekly magazine. He has co-authored a number of books on the history of architecture in The Netherlands, the architectural history of Amsterdam and the history of the Amsterdam harbor. He was also the chief editor of documentaries at IdtV, The Netherlands' second largest independent producer, and has directed seven documentaries for NPS Television on 19th- and 20th-century classical music. He is currently working on a book on Soestdijk Palace and cultural entrepreneurs in Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 32

Sven Lütticken (1971, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. His writing appears regularly in magazines such as *Afterimage* (New York), *Artforum International* (New York), *Camera Austria* (Graz), *De Witte Raaf* (Brussels), *New Left Review* (London), *Oxford Art Journal* (Oxford) and *Texte zur Kunst* (Berlin), among many others. He is the author of *Secret Publicity: Essays on Contemporary Art* (NAi Publishers, 2006) and *Idols of the Market: Modern Iconoclasm and the Fundamentalist Spectacle* (Sternberg Press, 2009). He has co-curated several exhibitions including *Life in a Glass House* (Stedelijk Museum, 2003), *Life, Once More: Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary art* (Witte de With, 2005) and *The Art of Iconoclasm* (BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, 2008). In 2004, Lütticken was the winner of the Fonds BKVB (Fund for Fine Art, Design and Architecture) Prize for Art Criticism. He currently teaches art history at the Free University in Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 38

Niklas Maak (1972, Germany) lives and works in Berlin and Frankfurt. He was the architecture editor at *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich) from 1998-2001 and was a visiting professor for architectural theory at the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Städelschule) in Frankfurt. He studied art history, architecture and philosophy at Hamburg University and l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris. His PhD on Le Corbusier, Paul Valéry and theories of the ambiguous object was published in 1998 and another book on Le Corbusier has just been published: *Der Architekt am Strand. Le Corbusier oder das Geheimnis der Seeschnecke* (Hanser Belletristik, 2010). He is currently the co-head of the art department at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.
UNABLE TO ATTEND

Sina Najafi (1965, Iran) lives and works in New York. He is the founding editor-in-chief of *Cabinet* magazine and the director of the non-profit cultural organization Immaterial Incorporated. He has co-authored numerous books including *Roger Andersson: Letters From Mayhem* (Cabinet, 2006) and *The Book of Stamps* (Cabinet, 2008), and co-edited *Presidential Doodles: Two Centuries of Scribbles, Scratches, Squiggles, and Scrawls from the Oval Office* (Cabinet, 2006) and *Ilf and Petrov's American Road Trip: The 1935 Travelogue of Two Soviet Writers* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2006). He has curated several exhibitions such as *Philosophical Toys* (Apex Art, 2005), *The Museum of Projective Personality Testing* (Manifesta 7, Trento, 2008), *Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's "Fake Estates"* (White Columns and Queens Museum of Art, 2005) and the traveling exhibition *The Paper Sculpture Show* (2003 – 2007). Najafi has degrees in Comparative Literature from Princeton, Columbia and New York Universities and he has taught at Cooper Union, Yale and Rhode Island School of Design. He is currently the Mellon Fellow at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. SEE PAGE 39

Ho Tzu Nyen (1976, Singapore) lives and works in Singapore. He is an artist, filmmaker and writer and is the Singapore editor for *Art Asia Pacific* (New York). His writing has been published in international journals such as *Broadsheet* (Australia), *MESH* (Australia), *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (UK/Taiwan), *FOCAS* (Singapore) and *Singapore Architects* (Singapore). His projects and films have been shown in numerous International exhibitions including the 26th Bienal de São Paulo (2004), the 3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (2005), the 1st Singapore Biennale (2006), Thermocline of Art – New Asian Waves (ZKM in Germany 2007), the 53rd and 54th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (2007, 2008,) the 30th Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival (2008) and 34th Seattle International Film Festival (2008). His most recent work is his first feature film *HERE* (2009). SEE PAGE 35

Chantal Pontbriand (n.d., Canada) lives in Montreal and Paris. Until 2007, she was the editor of *PARACHUTE* (Montreal), which she founded in 1975. She has curated many international contemporary art events including some twenty exhibitions, fifteen international festivals and twelve international conferences. From 1982 to 2003, she was also president and director of *FIND* (Festival International de Nouvelle Danse) in Montreal, which she founded. She has also edited and published numerous readers such as *Performance: Text(e)s & Documents* (Parachute, 1981), *Communauté et Gestes* (Parachute, 2000), *Dance: Distinct Language and Cross-cultural Influences* (2001). A collection of her essays written between 1978 and 1998, *Fragments critiques*, was published by Éditions Jacqueline Chambon in 1998. In 2004, La Lettre volée in Brussels published *Essais choisis 1975-2000*, a selection of some of the most important texts published by the journal. Pennsylvania State University Press and Tate Publishing will collaborate on an English version and a Spanish edition is being prepared by Centro de Documentación y Estudios Avanzados de Arte Contemporáneo (CENDEAC) in Murcia. She is also preparing a second anthology of her own essays from 2000 to 2008. SEE PAGE 47

Dirk Pultau (1964, Antwerp) lives in Ghent. He is the editor-in-chief of *De Witte Raaf* (Brussels) and he has written extensively on Belgian art events for the Dutch daily newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* (Amsterdam). His contributions to *De Witte Raaf* include articles on the visual arts, arts education and curricula as well as museum collections in Flanders and Brussels. He has written essays on Gunther Förg, On Kawara, Paul Klee and Arnold Schönberg and also on the crossovers between music and visual art in the historical avant-garde. He is currently working on an alternative history of the arts in Belgium since the seventies with Koen Brams. SEE PAGE 48

Mark Rappolt (1975, England) lives and works in London. He is the editor of *ArtReview* (London). He has written numerous articles on art and architecture for various magazines and newspapers. He was previously the senior editor of *Contemporary* magazine and editor of *AA Files*, the journal of the Architectural Association in London (both London). He is also a contributing editor to *Tate* magazine and the deputy editor of *Modern Painters* (London/New York). Rappolt has authored *Lucy Williams: Beneath a Wollen Sky* (Timothy Taylor Gallery, 2007) and *Martin Kobe: Behind True Symmetry* (White Cube, 2007) and co-edited, with Robert Violette, *Gehry Draws* (The MIT Press, 2004) and, with Greg Lynn, *Greg Lynn Form* (Rizzoli, 2008). SEE PAGE 33

Dieter Roelstraete (1972, Belgium) lives and works in Berlin and Antwerp. He is curator at the Antwerp museum of contemporary art (MuHKA), where his projects include *Emotion Pictures* (2005), *Intertidal: Vancouver Art and Artists* (2005) as well as *The Order of Things* (2008). He also co-curated Honoré d'O: *"The Quest"* in the Belgian pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005 and *Academy: Learning from Art* (MuHKA, 2006). He is an editor of *Afterall* (London) and *F.R. David* (Amsterdam) as well as a contributing editor to *A Prior* magazine (Ghent). He has published extensively on contemporary art and related philosophical issues in catalogues and journals. He is a tutor at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam and De Appel Curatorial Program in Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 37

Margriet Schavemaker (1971, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. She is one of the founding editors of *Simulacrum*, the art historical journal of the University of Amsterdam. She has published in various magazines such as *F.R. David, Jong Holland* and *Simulacrum* (all Netherlands). She has also organized several conferences including *Paragone and Beyond, Past and Present Thinking on the Relationship Between the Arts* (University of Utrecht, 2001), *Art and the City* (University of Amsterdam, 2006), *Right about Now: Art and Theory Since the 1990s* (Stedelijk Museum, 2006) as well as the lecture series *Now is the Time: Art and Theory in the 21st Century* (Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, 2008) – the latter two with books co-published by Valiz (Amsterdam). She is assistant professor at the Media and Culture department of the University of Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 9

Edgar Schmitz (1968, Germany) lives and works in London. He is an artist and a writer, with regular contributions to *Kunstforum International* and *Texte zur Kunst* (both Berlin). He has recently contributed essays to publications on the works of Sarah Morris, Phil Collins and Brian Jungen (all 2006). His recent exhibitions include *London Movies* (Bozar, Brussels 2009), *Liam Gillick: Edgar Schmitz* (ICA, London 2006) and *Academy* (Vanabbemuseum, Eindhoven 2006). Schmitz is the co-director of *A Conversation in Many Parts*, an international discursive platform for art at the Serpentine Gallery (London) as well as a consultant at the Sotheby's Institute (London) and a lecturer on Critical Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London. SEE PAGE 5

Georg Schöllhammer (1958, Austria) lives and works in Vienna. He is a co-founder and editor-in-chief of the magazine *Springerin – Hefte fur Gegenwartskunst* (Vienna). He was editor-in-chief of publications for *documenta 12* and head of *documenta 12* magazines (2007). He has also curated numerous exhibitions including the 5th Gyumri International Biennial of Contemporary Art (Gyumri, 2008) and *Kontakt* (Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation, Vienna and Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade 2006). Upcoming projects include Manifesta 8, which he will co-curate with the team of tranzit.org (Murcia, 2010) and the catalogue raisonné and retrospective on KwieKulik (the Polish artist duo Przemysław Kwiek and Zofia Kulik), which he will organize from his base as a leader of the research group *Parallel Modernities – Architecture at the Margins of the Soviet Empire* (based in Istanbul and Vienna) for the BWA, Wrocław and the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw. He is a visiting Professor of Theory of Contemporary Art at the Kunstuniversität Linz. UNABLE TO ATTEND

Simon Sheikh (1965, Denmark) lives and works in Berlin and Copenhagen. His articles have appeared in international journals such as *Afterall* (London), *AnArchitecture* (Vienna), *Springerin* (Vienna) and *Texte zur Kunst* (Berlin). His recent publications include the anthologies *We Are All Normal: And We Want Our Freedom,* co-edited with Katya Sander (Black Dog Publishing, 2000), *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* (NIFCA Publications, 2000), *Filter City Cluster Praxis: Knut Asdam* (Irish Museum of Modern Art & Rev Ed, 2003) and most recently co-authored *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique* (MayFly, 2009). He was a member of the project group *GLOBE* (1993–2000) and editor of the magazine *jeblikket* (1996-2000, Copenhagen). His has curated numerous exhibitions including *Circa Berlin,* with Elisabeth Delin Hansen (Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, 2005), *Capital (It Fails Us Now)* (UKS, Oslo, 2005 and Kunstihoone, Tallinn, 2006). He was director of Overgaden Institute for Contemporary Art in Copenhagen (1999–2002) and Curator at NIFCA, the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Helsinki (2003–2004). He is an Assistant Professor of Art Theory and a Coordinator of the Critical Studies Program in Malmö Art Academy in Sweden. SEE PAGE 11

Judy Freya Sibayan (1953, Philippines) lives and works in Manila. In 2006 she co-founded and is now editor of *Ctrl+P,* an online journal of contemporary art. She is the curator of the Museum of Mental Objects, a "performance art museum" in which her body is the museum itself. She has performed and exhibited internationally, including at the Vienna Secession (2004), the Hayward Gallery (London), P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and MoMA (both New York), The Farm (San Francisco), Sternersenmuseet (Oslo), The Photographers' Gallery (London), Artspace Sydney, The Kiasma Contemporary Art Center (Helsinki), The Mori Art Museum (Tokyo), Nikolaj Contemporary Art Center (Copenhagen), Fukuoka Art Museum (Fukuoka), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Copenhagen) and the CAPC, Musee d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux (Bordeaux). She has participated in the 3rd Asian Art Biennale (Bangladesh,1986) and the Gwangju Biennale (2002). She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at De La Salle University in Manila. SEE PAGE 34

Nick Stillman (1979, United States) lives and works in New York. He is the managing editor of *BOMB* magazine (New York). His articles have appeared in *Artforum.com, The Brooklyn Rail* and *The Village Voice* (all New York), *Flash Art International* (Milan) and *Moscow Art Magazine* (Moscow); and he has written essays for *Dan McCarthy: Drawing 2007* (Hassla Books, 2007) and *Katherine Bernhardt: The Magnificent Excess of Snoop Dogg* (PictureBox, 2008) among other catalogue publications. He is also an editor at *NYFA Current* (New York Foundation for the Arts). From 2006 to 2007, he was a curatorial advisor at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (New York). SEE PAGE 45

Richard Streitmatter-Tran (1972, Vietnam) lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City. He is an artist and writer, working as an arts correspondent for the Madrid-based magazine *Art.Es* and Ho Chi Minh City editor for *Contemporary* magazine (London). His solo and collaborative work has been shown in international exhibitions such as the 1st and 2nd Singapore Biennale (2006 and 2008), the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007), *Thermocline of Art: New Asian Waves* (ZKM Karlsruhe, 2007) and the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2004). In 2000 he established the E-DENTITY group in Boston. He is also a founding member of *Mogas Station,* an international collective of artists and architects who created *Aart* (Ho Chi Minh City), the first artist-initiated contemporary art magazine in English and Vietnamese. He is a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City campus of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and an academic advisor for MOCA China. In 2009-2010, he co-curates the 6th Asia Pacific Triennale at the Queensland Art Gallery. SEE PAGE 43

Jordan Strom (1972, Canada) lives and works in Vancouver. He is a founding-editor of the *Fillip Review of Contemporary Art* (Vancouver). A graduate of the Masters Degree in Critical Curating at the University of British Columbia, he has curated projects throughout the city of Vancouver, including at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Centre A, Republic Gallery, Belkin Satellite, University of British Columbia and Xeno Gallery/Dadabase. His writing has appeared in exhibition catalogues and brochures including *Interior of Design* (Republic Gallery, 2008), *Jeff Ladouceur* (Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008), *Pop Prints* (Vancouver Art Gallery, 2009) *Cao Fei, Jayce Salloum, Seripop* (Presentation House, Vancouver, 2006). He has given a number of public talks on the history of art criticism in Vancouver including "Art Magazine Publishing on the West Coast," "A Short History of Post-War Art Criticism in Vancouver," and "Editing Art Criticism Today" and has taught courses at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver. SEE PAGE 46

Pelin Tan (1974, Turkey) lives and works in Istanbul. She is a co-editor of the Istanbul-based magazine *Muhtelif*. She has written for many international art journals including *Bidoun* (New York), *Metropolis M* (The Netherlands), *Springerin* (Vienna) and *Derive* (Vienna). Tan has also edited a variety of books and projects including *Public Turn in Contemporary Art* (Bilgi University, 2007), the architectural project *Innocent Act* (10th Istanbul Biennale, 2007) and a special issue of the *Re-Thinking Marxism* journal (New York, 2010). She has co-curated a number of exhibitions including *Tracer* (Witte de With/Tent, Rotterdam 2004), *Dwelling as a Negotiation* (Istanbul, 2006), *Lost in Translation* (9th Istanbul Biennale, 2005) and *Questioning Alternative Practices* (Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul, 2006). She is an IASPIS resident and guest professor at Nurnberg University's architecture postgraduate program. SEE PAGE 17

Éric Troncy (1965, France) lives and works in Dijon. He is the co-director of Le Consortium, Le centre d'art contemporain in Dijon and the editor-in-chief, with Stéphanie Moisdon, and creative director of *Frog*, an international art magazine based in Dijon. Troncy has curated a number of exhibitions including *Dramatically Different* (Le Magasin, Grenoble,1996), *Weather Everything* (Galerie fur Zeitgenossische Kunst, Leipzig, 1997) and *Coollustre* (Collection Lambert, Avignon, 2003). His publications include *Pierre et Gilles: Sailors & Sea* (Taschen, 2005), *Mark Handforth* (JRP|Ringier, 2005), *Coollustre, trois expositions d'Eric Troncy* (Les presses du réel. 2003), *Infinite Justice* (Les Editions du Réel, 2002), and *Le colonel Moutarde dans la bibliotheque avec le chandelier: Textes, 1988 – 1998* (Les presses du réel,1998). UNABLE TO ATTEND

Jan Verwoert (1972, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. He is a contributing editor to *frieze* magazine (London) and also writes regularly about contemporary art for *Afterall* (London), *Metropolis M* (The Netherlands), *Springerin* (Vienna) and artists' catalogues. He is author of *Bas Jan Ader: In Search of the Miraculous* (Afterall One Work Series, 2006) and recently co-curated *Yes, No & Other Options* for the contemporary art festival *Art Sheffield* (2008). He has been a guest professor of Contemporary Art and Theory at the Academy of Umeå, Sweden, and at the Royal College of Art, London. He is a tutor and seminar leader for the Masters of Arts program at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. SEE PAGE 4

Michał Woliński (1976, Poland) lives and works in Warsaw. He is the founding editor of *Piktogram: Talking Pictures* magazine. Previously, he was the editor-in-chief *of Fluid* magazine (2002-2005) and *FUTU* magazine (2006). He has curated many exhibitions and film programs including *Relax, just do it!* (Former Police Station, Cieszyn, 2004), *Image/Text – Film Program* (Metropolitan, Warsaw, 2005; Barbara Wien Galerie, Berlin, 2006; Tate Modern, London, 2006), *Hidden Treasure* (Novotel Hotel, Warsaw, 2005), *Down with the Pimps of Art!* (Financial Centre, Warsaw, 2006; Berlin, 2006; Tbilisi, 2007), *Exquistes Corpses – Polish Assembling Films* (with Lukasz Ronduda at Chłodna 25, Warsaw, 2007), *Cinematic Projection – Film/Performance,* (Kino.Lab cinema, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 2007) and most recently a show about punk in Poland entitled *I Could Live in Africa* (Ursula Blickle Stiftung, Kraichtal-Unteröwisheim, 2009 and, with Nicolaus Schafhausen and Anne-Claire Schmitz, at the Witte de With Center for Contmporary Art, Rotterdam, 2010). Woliński studied at the History of Art Institute, Warsaw University. SEE PAGE 18

THE CURATORS

Jamila Adeli (1979, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She is a freelance curator and art historian. She was formerly the artistic director of BodhiBerlin, the Berlin-based satellite for BodhiArt, an international gallery primarily focused on Contemporary Indian Art. She has curated a number of exhibitions including *Emerging Discourse* (BodhiNew York, 2008), *Jitish Kallat* (BodhiSingapore, 2008) and *Everywhere is War (and rumours of war)* (BodhiMumbai, 2008). She worked at the House of World Cultures in Berlin, in the department of Exhibition, Fine Art and New Media, where she organized the exhibition and conference *Re-Imagining Asia: A Thousand Years of Separation* (2008). Adeli studied Art History, Film Studies and English Philology at the Freie Universität in Berlin. SEE PAGE 117

Diana Baldon (1974, Italy) lives and works in Vienna. She is a curator and writer, currently completing her PhD in Philosophy on the topic of tracing the political in European post-conceptual art after the year 2000. She received a Masters in Creative Curating at Goldsmiths College, University of London in 2002. Since then, she has co-curated numerous international exhibitions, including *A Question of Evidence* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, 2009-2010), the 2nd Athens Biennale entitled *Heaven* (2009) and *Left Pop* at the 2nd Moscow Biennale (2007). Between 2007 and 2008 she was curator-in-residence at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Her critical writing appears in journals such as *Artforum International* (New York) and *Afterall* (London), as well as artists' catalogues and the critical readers *Men in Black: Handbook of Curatorial Practice* (Revolver Books, 2004) and *Land, Art: A Cultural Ecology Handbook* (Royal Society of Arts, 2006). Since 2005, she has also lectured internationally has been a visiting tutor in the Postgraduate Program in Curating MAS, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK) and the MA Department of Architecture, Royal College of Art, London. SEE PAGE 75

Anke Bangma (1969, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. She is a cultural theorist, independent curator and editor. Her recent curatorial projects include *Experience, Memory, Re-enactment* (with Florian Wyst at Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, 2004), *Body Language and Embodied Meaning* (Piet Zwart Institute and TENT, Rotterdam, 2005) and *Performing Evidence* (Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, 2009). She has published a number of books including *Looking, Encountering, Staging* (Piet Zwart Institute, 2005), *Experience, Memory, Reenactment* (Piet Zwart Institute, 2005), *Resonant Bodies, Voices, Memories* (Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, 2008) and *Katarina Zdjelar: But if you take my voice, what will be left to me?* (TENT, Rotterdam 2009). She was the Course Director of the MA in Fine Arts program at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam from 1998 to 2007. She currently teaches at the National Academy of the Arts in Bergen, Norway.
UNABLE TO ATTEND

Bart De Baere (1960, Belgium) lives and works in Antwerp. He is the director of Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (MuHKA) and was formerly curator of Ghent Museum of Contemporary Art (now S.M.A.K.). He has (co) curated numerous exhibitions including *documenta IX* (1992), *This is the Show and the Show is Many Things* (2004), *All under Heaven: China Now* (2004), *Angels of History: Moscow Conceptualism and its Influences* (2005), *Gay Fabre: Jan Fabre* (2006) and *Jubilee: 2007-1987-1967 MuHKA: A snapshot of the collection* (2007) among others. Until 2008 he was the Chairman of the Flemish Museum Commission and Flemish Council for Culture. He co-founded the Time Festival in Ghent and the art center Wiels in Brussels. His published writing includes essays such as "The Integrated Museum," (*Stopping the Press*,1998) and "Potentiality and Public Space: Archives as a Metaphor and Example for a Political Culture," (*Interarchive*, 2002) as well as many artists' texts and catalogue essays.
SEE PAGE 80

Ute Meta Bauer (1958, Germany) lives and works in Berlin and Boston. She was the Artistic Director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart from 1990-1994 and co-curated *documenta XI* with Okwui Enwezor (Kassel, 2002). Her many curatorial projects include *Architectures of Discourse* (Barcelona, 2001) and *First Story – Women Building / New Narratives for the 21st Century* (Porto, 2001). She was the founding director of the Norwegian Office for Contemporary Art in Oslo (2002-2005) and was the Artistic Director of the third Berlin Biennial (2004). She was the director of SITAC VI: Symposio International sobre Teoria de Arte Contemporaneo (Mexico City, 2008). Between 1996 and 2006, she was professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She is currently an associate professor and director of the Visual Arts Program in the School of Architecture and Planning at MIT.
SEE PAGE 92

Lorenzo Benedetti (1972, Italy) lives and works in Middelburg (The Netherlands), where he is the director of De Vleeshal Art Centre. He has curated numerous exhibitions including *Eurasia, Geographic Cross-over in Art* (Mart, Italy, 2008), *Cabinet of Imagination* (Netwerk, Aalst, 2008) and *Der eigene Weg, Perspektiven Belgischen Kunst* (Kuppersmuhle, Duisburg, 2008). From 2002 to 2006, he was the director of Volume! in Rome. He was the founder and curator of the Sound Art Museum in Rome in 2004 and curator at the MARTa Herford Museum, in Herford from 2006 to 2008. He is guest curator at the Fondazione Pastificio Cerere in Rome and La Kunsthalle in Mulhouse, France.
SEE PAGE 133

Iwona Blazwick OBE (1955, England) lives and works in London. She is the director of the Whitechapel Gallery in London. She has curated exhibitions of Katharina Fritsch, Art and Language, Willie Doherty, Peter Halley, Damien Hirst, Jenny Holzer, Ilya Kabakov, Barbara Kruger, Meret Oppenheim, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Gerhard Richter, Rosemarie Trockel and Lawrence Weiner, among others. She was the series editor of *Documents of Contemporary Art* (2006) and she has written on many contemporary artists for catalogues and monographs, in addition to writing for journals such as *Art Monthly* and *frieze* (both London). She was a co-editor and contributor to the *Tate Modern Handbook* (2001) and *Century City* (2000). She was awarded an honorary MA by the London Metropolitan University and an honorary doctorate by the University of Plymouth. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Art. SEE PAGE 134

Nicolas Bourriaud (1965, France) lives and works in London and Paris. He is the Gulbenkian curator of contemporary art at Tate Britain in London. He co-founded the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, where he was co-director from 1999-2006. He has curated numerous exhibitions such as the 2nd Moscow Biennial (2007), *Estratos*, (Murcia, 2007) and the 4th Tate Triennial (London, 2009). He founded the contemporary art magazine *Documents sur l'art* (Paris) where he was director from 1992–2000. He has published a number of seminal texts including *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), *Postproduction* (2001) and *Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (2002). His most recent publication is *Radikant* (2009).
SEE PAGE 100

Sabine Breitwieser (1962, Austria) lives and works in Vienna. She is the Secretary of CIMAM: the international committee of ICOM for museums and collections of modern art. She was curator and founding director of the Generali Foundation in Vienna from 1988-2007. She has edited a wide range of publications including *Ausstellungen Generali Foundation,1989-2007* (2008), *Art After Conceptual Art* (Volume one, 2006), *Gustav Metzger: History History* (2005), *Allan Sekula: Performance under Working Conditions* (2003), *Adrian Piper: seit 1965. Metakunst und Kunstkritik* (2002), *Hans Haacke: Mia san mia* (2001), *Martha Rosler: Positionen in der Lebenswelt.* (1999), *Mary Kelly: Rereading Post-Partum Document* (1999), *Gordon Matta-Clark: Reorganizing Structure by Drawing through it* (1997), *White Cube/Black Box* (1996) and *Dan Graham: Video/ Architecture/Performance* (1995). She recently curated the exhibition *Modernologies* at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2009). SEE PAGE 62

Adam Budak (1966, Poland) lives and works in Graz and Krakow. He is a curator for contemporary art at the Kunsthaus Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum. He has worked with acclaimed artists such as John Baldessari, Pedro Cabrita Reis, Cerith Wyn Evans and Monika Sosnowska, and has curated a number of international exhibitions including *Architectures: Metastructures of Humanity, Morphic Strategies of Exposure* (Polish Pavilion of the 9th International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, 2004), *Protections* (Kunsthaus Graz, 2006) and *This Is Not an Exhibition* and *Volksgarten. Politics of Belonging* (Kunsthaus Graz, 2007). Most recently, he co-established the postgraduate studies program in curatorial practice and theory at the Art History Institute of Jagiellonian University in Krakow. He studied theater at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and history and philosophy of art and architecture at the Central European University in Prague. SEE PAGE 78

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (1957, United States) lives and works in Rome, Turin and New York. She is currently the Chief Curator at the Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art in Turin and was the artistic director for the 16th Biennale of Sydney (2008). From 1999 to 2001 she was Senior Curator of exhibitions at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York and she is the artistic director of *documenta XIII* (2012). She has published numerous texts on contemporary art; notably the first monographs on William Kentridge (1998) and Janet Cardiff (2001). SEE PAGE 82

Pablo Leon de la Barra (1972, Mexico) lives in London. He has curated or co-curated numerous exhibitions, among them: *To Be Political it Has to Look Nice* (apexart, New York, 2003); PR04 Biennale (Puerto Rico, 2004); *George and Dragon* (ICA, London, 2005); *Glory Hole* (Architecture Foundation, London, 2006); *Sueño de Casa Propia,* with Maria Ines Rodriguez (Centre de Art Contemporaine, Geneve, Casa Encendida, Madrid, Casa del Lago, Mexico City, and VIMCORSA, Cordoba between 2007-2008); *This Is Not America* (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2009); and *El Noa Noa* (Bogota, Colombia, 2009). From 2202 to 2005, he was co-director of 24-7 an artists' curatorial collective in London and, from 2005 to 2008, curator of Blow de la Barra Gallery in London. He is also editor of *Pablo Internacional Magazine*, co-curator of White Cubicle Toilet Gallery, blogger of the Centre for the Aesthetic Revolution and participant of the Cooperativa Internacional Tropical - an artist's cooperative which exists everywhere and nowhere at the same time. With Beatriz Lopez, he is elaborating Cheverismo, "a new art movement for the new decade," introduced in 2008.
SEE PAGE 109

Ann Demeester (1975, Belgium) lives and works in Amsterdam. She is the director of de Appel Arts Centre and head of de Appel Curatorial Programme in Amsterdam. She is on the editorial board of *A-Prior* (Ghent) and *F.R. David* (Amsterdam). She has written essays on Michael Borremans, Jennifer Tee, Salla Tykka and Nicolas Floc'h and worked with artists such as Luc Tuymans, Raoul De Keyser, Rui Chafes, Royden Rabinowitch, Rob Birza, Joe Scanlan and Bjarne Melgaard. From 2003 to 2006, she was the director of W139, a production and presentation platform for contemporary art in Amsterdam. She was an assistant curator at Museum for Contemporary Art in Ghent (SMAK) in 1999. She was co-curator of the Baltic Triennial in Vilnius (2009). SEE PAGE 114

Barnaby Drabble (1971, England) lives and works in Zurich. He has curated projects such as *I almost feel like doing it again...* (Zurich, 2004), *The Family* (Florida, 2003), *TM Guerrilla* (Swiss National Exhibition, 2002), *Ein Zwei-tes Leben* (Bern, 2007) and *Nothing to Declare* (Lake Constance, 2008). Between 1999 and 2002, he was curator of contemporary art at the National Maritime Museum in London. He frequently works collaboratively, most notably since 1998 with Dorothee Richter, producing projects under the title *Curating Degree Zero*. He is co-director of the Postgraduate Program in Curating at the School of Art and Design in Zurich and is currently conducting his PhD titled "What is Critical Curating?" at the Edinburgh College of Art. As a critic and writer he is a regular contributor to various art publications such as *Art Monthly* (London) and *Metropolis M* (Amsterdam). SEE PAGE 74

Mai Abu ElDahab (1977, Egypt) lives in Brussels and works in Antwerp, where she has been the director of the non-profit art space Objectif Exhibitions since Fall 2007. There, she has organized solo exhibitions and commissioned new productions by Guy Ben-Ner (IS), Mariana Castillo Deball (MX), Sancho Silva (PT), Michael Smith (USA), Chris Evans (UK), Kirsten Pieroth (DE), and Michael Stevenson (NZ), among others. In 2009, she co-curated *A Fantasy for Allan Kaprow* with Philippe Pirotte at the Contemporary Image Collective in her native Cairo. She is a regular guest lecturer at the Higher Institute of Fine Arts (HISK) in Ghent and a member of the editorial board of *A Prior* Magazine. SEE PAGE 71

Zoran Eric (1968, Serbia) lives and works in Belgrade. He is the curator of the Centre for Visual Culture at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade. He is currently president of AICA (International Association of Art Critics) in Serbia. From 2001 to 2005 he ran a program of curatorial workshops titled *Professional Standards in Curatorial Practice* in Belgrade. His numerous curatorial projects include *ID Troubles* (Halle fuer Kunst, Lueneburg, 2004), *NURTUREart* (New York, 2005), *COR-CORAN* (Amsterdam and Belgrade, 2007), *Differentiated Neighbourhoods of New Belgrade* (Center for Visual Culture at the Museum of Contemporary art, Belgrade, 2006–2008) and *Soft Manipulation* (Casino Luxembourg, 2009). His essays have been published in many international art journals including *Artefact* (Sydney), *Umelec* (Prague), *Manifesta Journal* (Amsterdam), *Praesens* (Budapest), *Third Text* (London), *A Prior* (Ghent) and the nomadic magazine *Gazet'art*. He has a doctorate degree from the Bauhaus University in Weimar. SEE PAGE 69

Bruce W. Ferguson (n.d., Canada) lives and works in Phoenix. He is the director of F.A.R. (Future Arts Research) at the Arizona State University in Phoenix. He has curated more than 35 exhibitions for institutions such as the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen, the Barbican Art Gallery in London, the Winnipeg and Vancouver Art Galleries in Canada and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. He has also organized exhibitions in the international biennials of São Paulo, Sydney, Venice and Istanbul. His writing is frequently published in international art journals like *ArtPress* (Paris), *Border Crossings* (Winnepeg) and *Parachute* (Montreal), *Canadian Art* (Toronto), *Artforum International, Art in America, Flash Art International, Bomb Magazine* (all New York). He received a Getty Senior Research Fellowship grant, which resulted in the publication of a seminal anthology of essays on the theories of exhibitions *Thinking About Exhibitions* (1996). UNABLE TO ATTEND

Juan A. Gaitán (1973, Canada) lives and works in Rotterdam. He is a curator at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. His current projects include the exhibitions making up Acts I, II, IV, V and VI of the multi-part program at Witte de With centered around the leitmotif of Morality (2009-2010). Prior to moving to Rotterdam, while a resident of Vancouver, he curated *Exponential Future* at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (2008) and Western Front (2008) He is a PhD candidate in art history at the University of British Columbia and holds a fine arts degree from Emily Carr College of Art & Design and a masters degree in Art History (UBC). His research areas are the Americas in the post-War period, religious monuments in the early Middle Ages and contemporary art. SEE PAGE 83

Hou Hanru (1963, China) lives and works in San Francisco. He is the Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs and the Chair of Exhibition and Museum Studies at the San Francisco Art Institute. He has curated numerous exhibitions including *Cities On The Move* (traveling, 1997 - 2000), Shanghai Biennial (2000), Gwangju Biennial (2002), Venice Biennale (French Pavilion, 1999; Z.O.U. – Zone Of Urgency, 2003; Chinese Pavilion, 2007), *Nuit Blanche* (Paris, 2004), the 2nd *Guangzhou Triennial* (2005), the 2nd Tirana Biennial (2005), the 10th Istanbul Biennial (2007), *Global Multitude* and *Trans(ciant)City* (both Luxembourg, 2007) and *EV+A 2008* (Ireland, 2008). He has been a consultant for many international institutions including the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Kumamoto Museum of Contemporary Art (Kumamoto, Japan) and De Appel (Amsterdam). He has also taught and lectured at various educational institutions including the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. A selection of his writings and interviews entitled *Hou Hanru: On The Mid-Ground* was published in 2002 by Timezone 8. SEE PAGE 81

Jan Hoet (1936, Belgium) lives in Ghent. Over the course of his prolific career, he has worked in the field of art in numerous cities, including Montreal, Lisbon, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Madrid, Paris, Venice, Barcelona, Bonn, Berlin, Amsterdam, Mexico City, and many more. He was the founding director and curator of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Ghent, which was re-named Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.). He was artistic director of the MARTa Herford Museum in Germany from 2001 until his recent retirement. He regularly works as a guest curator for other international art centers. In 1992, he curated *documenta IX* in Kassel. He has co-written a number of books including *Positions In Art (Reihe Cantz)* (1995), *Flemish and Dutch Painting: From Van Gogh, Ensor, Magritte, Mondrian to Contemporary Artists* (1997*), Bjarne Melgaard: Black Low* (2003) and *Your Own Soul: Ingrid Mwangi* (2003). For his contribution to the art world, he received the knighthood in Belgium. SEE PAGE 115

Jens Hoffmann (1974, Costa Rica) lives and works in San Francisco. He is the Director of the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco where he also directs the Capp Street Project artists-in-residency program. From 2003 to 2007, he was Director of Exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. He has curated over 30 exhibitions internationally since the late 1990s. Most recently he was co-curator of the 2nd *San Juan Triennial* (Puerto Rico, 2009) and is currently co-curating the *People's Biennial*, to be held in 2010 at five US museums. In 2009 Hoffmann founded *The Exhibitionist: A Journal for Exhibition Making*. He is the curator (with Adriano Pedrosa) of the 12th Istanbul Biennial in 2011. He is a faculty member of the Creative Curating program at Goldsmiths College, University of London and a guest professor at the Visual Arts department of the Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan. SEE PAGE 108

Manray Hsu (1958, Taiwan) lives in Taipei and Berlin and works as an independent curator and art critic. In 2000, he was a co-curator of the Teipei Biennial, *The Sky is the Limit*. In 2001, he served on the international jury of the 49th Venice Biennale. Later, he began to shuttle between Taipei and Europe, curating exhibitions and writing art criticism. His major curatorial projects include: Ja*m Sessions: Rigo 84-23* (Centro das Artes Casa das Mudas, Portugal, 2006), the Liverpool Biennial (2006) and *Naked Life* (Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, 2006). SEE PAGE 117

Renske Janssen (1975, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. She is a curator at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. She co-curated *For Real* (2000), *Display* (2001) and *Life in a Glass House* (2002) at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. At Witte de With she has curated the solo exhibitions *Mathias Poledna* (2006), *Tris Vonna-Michell* (2007) and *Ian Wallace* (2008). Most recently, she curated *Aesthetics as a way of Survival* with Germaine Kruip (Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Dusseldorf, 2009). She has a Masters in Contemporary Art Theory and Dutch Art Policy from the University of Utrecht. SEE PAGE 61

Stefan Kalmár (1970, Germany) lives and works in New York, where he is director of Artists Space. Formerly, he was director and curator at Kunstverein München (2004-2008) and simultaneously Ludlow 38, the downtown satellite for contemporary art of the Goethe-Institut New York. Between 2000 and 2004, he directed the Institute of Visual Culture in Cambridge and, between 1997 and 2000, the Cubitt Gallery in London. SEE PAGE 110

Xenia Kalpaktsoglou (1974, Greece) is the co-founder and co-director of the Athens Biennale. From 2006 to 2008, she was the director of the DESTE Foundation Centre for Contemporary Art in Athens. In 2005, in collaboration with artist Poka-Yio and curator/art-critic Augustine Zenakos (as the curatorial team XYZ), she co-founded the Athens Biennale Non-Profit Organization. With XYZ she co-curated the 1st and 2nd Athens Biennales: *Destroy Athens* (2007) and *Heaven* (2009). Her other curatorial projects include *So Much So Great* (Larissa Contemporary Art Center, Thessaly, 2004) and *Version IV: 935m2* (former military barracks Kodra, Thessaloniki, 2005). She has curated or nominated Greek artists for participation in international exhibitions such as the 1st Prague Biennial (2003), *Photonic Moment* (Ljubljana, 2007), *Mediterranean Dialogues* (Saint Tropez, 2006 & 2007), the 9th Lyon Biennial (2007) and the 10th Istanbul Biennial (2007). She is a regular contributor to catalogues and has participated in various project-based publications such as *Old News* (Minnesota) and *Charley* (Dijon). SEE PAGE 103

Emmanuel Lambion (1968, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels. He was the head of exhibitions at Botanique where he curated projects including *Landscape/Belgian Focus, Pierre et Gilles, Assenze / Presenze: a new generation of italian artists* and *The Ordonez-Falcon Collection*. In 2002, he joined the curatorial platform Komplot. His projects, such as *PIETRO*, in Beaumont, Puy-de-Dôme, France (2007), *B-1010/be-DIX-TIEN*, and *Park58* often revolve around an idea of mobility and the shifting of concepts, norms and categories. In 2008 he founded BN PROJECTS, whose eponymous project is currently under development. SEE PAGE 106

Enrico Lunghi (1962, Luxembourg) lives and works in Luxembourg City. He is the president of IKT (International Association of Curators) and the director of MUDAM in Luxembourg. He has been the Commissioner for Luxembourg at the Venice Biennial three times beginning with Bert Theis' *Potemkin Lock* (1995) followed by Simone Decker's *Chewing and Folding Projects* (1999) and Jill Mercedes' *Endless Lust* (2007). He was the coordinator for *Manifesta 2* (1998) and the artistic director of Casino Luxembourg – Forum d'Art Contemporain from its foundation in 1996 until 2008. Since 1996, he has organized numerous exhibitions at Casino Luxembourg, including *Gare de l'Est* (with Hou Hanru, 1998), *Jim Shaw* (1999), *Jacques Charlier* (1999), *Sam Samore* (2000), *Stanley Brouwn* (2001), *Sous les ponts, le long de la* (2001), *Sylvie Blocher: Living Pictures and Other Human Voices* (2002), *Nedko Solakov* (2005) and *Su-Mei Tse* (2006). He studied Art History at Université Marc Bloch (USH) in Strasbourg. SEE PAGE 98

Raimundas Malašauskas (1963, Lithuania) lives and works in New York. He is a curator at Artists Space in New York and a founding member of John Fare Estate. From 2004-2006 he co-produced CAC TV (also known as "Every program is a pilot, every program is the final episode") and co-wrote the libretto of *Cellador,* the opera in Paris (2007). From 1995-2006 he was a curator at CAC Vilnius. He has conducted interviews with George Maciunas, Seth Siegelaub, Rammelzee, Darius Miksys, and Tino Sehgal, among many others, and he has written about Missy Eliot, leisure, and time machines. Between 2007 and 2008, he was a visiting curator at the Graduate Program in Curatorial Practice at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. SEE PAGE 70

Gerardo Mosquera (1945, Cuba) lives and works in Havana. He is adjunct curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and advisor at the Rijksakademie van Beeldenden Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 1984 he co-founded the Havana Biennial, which he directed for its first three editions, and he has curated many international exhibitions including *Border Jam* (Montevideo, 2007), *Transpacific* (Santiago, 2007), Liverpool Biennial (with Manray Hsu, 2006), *Cordially Invited* (Utrecht, 2004), *Panorama of Brazilian Art* (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Vigo, 2003), *MultipleCity* (Panama, 2003), *Perverting Minimalism* (Madrid, 2000) and *Cildo Meireles* (New York, 1999). He has written numerous texts on contemporary art and art theory for journals such as *Third Text* (London), *Kunstforum* (Cologne) and *Art Nexus* (Bogota). His book publications include *Beyond the Fantastic* (1995), *Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture* (2005), and *Copying Eden: Recent Art from Chile* (2007). SEE PAGE 116

Vanessa Joan Müller (1968, Germany) has been the director of the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf since September 2006. Müller graduated from the Ruhr-Universität in Bochum with a degree in art history and film studies. From 2000 to 2005 she worked as a curator at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/Main, and in late 2005 became academic director of the project *European Kunsthalle* in Cologne, which explores different models for a potential art institution. In September 2006 she was also appointed director of the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf. She has curated exhibitions such as *non-places* (Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2002), *New Heimat* (Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2001) and *Adorno. The possibility of the impossible* (co-curated with Nicolaus Schafhausen, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2004) and devised a programme of lectures and events entitled *Under Construction* for the European Kunsthalle, also with Nicolaus Schafhausen. SEE PAGE 126

Hans Ulrich Obrist (1968, Switzerland) lives and works in London. He is the director of International Projects and co-director of Exhibitions and Programmes at the Serpentine gallery in London. From 2000 to 2006, he was the curator of contemporary art at the Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. He was a curator at Museum in Progress in Vienna from 1993 to 2000. Since 1991, he has curated and co-curated over 200 exhibitions internationally including the Yokohama Triennale (2008), *Indian Highway* (Serpentine Gallery, 2008), *do it* and *Take Me, I'm Yours* (both Serpentine Gallery, 1995), *Cities on the Move* (traveling, 1997-2000), *Live/Life* (1996), *Nuit Blanche* (2007), the 1st Berlin Biennale (1998), Manifesta 1 (Rotterdam, 1996), *Uncertain States of America* (2006), 1st and 2nd Moscow Triennale (2005, 2008), 2nd Guangzhou Triennale (2005), *China Power Station* (2006-2008) and 9th Lyon Biennale (2007) and *Il Tempo del Postino* (with Phillippe Parreno, Manchester International Festival, 2007). He is the author of *The Interview Project* an ongoing, expansive endeavor to interview the major cultural figures that have defined the 20th and 21st centuries. In 2009 he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). SEE PAGE 113

Sophie von Olfers (1979, Germany) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main, where she is an assistant curator at the Museum für Moderne Kunst. From 2006 to 2008, she was assistant curator at Witte de With in Rotterdam, where she worked on the exhibitions *Don Quijote* (2006), *Jesper Just* (2007) and *Liam Gillick: Three perspectives and a short Scenario* (2008). In 2007, she was the coordinator for the German Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale. Prior to her position at Witte de With, she worked with the London-based Artist Placement Group to curate an archival exhibition and conference on the group's history and legacy (Tate Britain, 2004). She completed her MA in Creative Curating at Goldsmiths College, University of London. SEE PAGE 68

Paul O'Neill (1970, England) lives and works in Bristol. He is a curator, artist and writer who is currently GWR Research Fellow in Commissioning Contemporary Art with Situations at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where he is leading the international research project *Locating the Producers*. He has written extensively on curatorial practice past and present, its histories and its experimental forms. He is commissioning editor of the curatorial anthologies *Curating Subjects* (Amsterdam & London, de Appel and Open Editions, 2007) and *Curating and the Educational Turn*, co-edited with Mick Wilson (Amsterdam & London, de Appel and Open Editions, 2010). He has also authored a book on the development of curatorial discourse, *The Culture of Curating, Curating Culture(s)* (forthcoming from The MIT Press). O'Neill has curated or co-curated over fifty group exhibition projects including *Coalesce: Happenstance* (Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, 2009), D.B (Four Gallery, Dublin, 2008), *Tape Runs Out* (Text and Work Gallery, Bournemouth, 2007), *General Idea: Selected Retrospective* (Project, Dublin, 2006), *Mingle-Mangled* (Cork Caucus, Cork, 2005); *La La Land* (Project, Dublin, 2005); *Tonight* (Studio Voltaire, London, 2004); *Private Views* (London Print Studio, 2002); *Passports* (Zacheta, Warsaw, 1998), and many solo exhibition projects including those with artists Pavel Büchler, Phil Collins, and Billy Childish. He was the founder and artistic director of MultiplesX from 1997-2006. He was also curator at London Print Studio Gallery from 2001 until 2003. He is an associate lecturer at curatorial training programs including Goldsmiths College (London), and de Appel (Amsterdam). He is Reviews Editor for *Art & the Public Sphere*, and on the editorial board of *The Exhibitionist*. His writing has been published in many books, catalogues, journals, magazines, with regular contributions to *Art Monthly*. SEE PAGE 76

Lívia Páldi (1967, Hungary) lives and works in Budapest. She is the chief curator of the Mucsarnok Kunsthalle in Budapest. She was the co-founder and the co-director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in *Dunaújváros* from 1997 to 2000. She has curated numerous exhibitions including *The Producers and Mircea Cantor: Future Gifts* (2008), *!REVOLUTION?* (2007), *Deimantas Narkevicius: History Continued* (2007), *Dreamlands burn – Nordic Art Show* (2006) all Mucsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest; *Second Present* (Traf Gallery, Budapest, 2005) and *Who if not we...?* (Ludwig Museum Budapest – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, 2004). Between 2002 and 2005, she worked as contributing editor of *East Art Map* magazine and book, by the artist collaborative IRWIN, in Ljubljana. She studied English Literature and Language and Art History at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest an completed the de Appel Curatorial Training Programme in Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 136

Philippe Pirotte (1972, Belgium) lives and works in Bern. He is the director of Kunsthalle Bern. He has organized exhibitions with many emerging and established artists such as Carla Arocha, Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, Jutta Koether, Marine Hugonnier, Stefan Bruggemann, Knut Asdam, Corey McCorkle, Pavel Buchler, Yutaka Sone, Gerwald Rockenschaub and Allan Kaprow. His curatorial projects include *Involved* (Shanghart Gallery, Shanghai, 2008) *IDYL – as to answer that picture* (Middelheim Museum, Antwerp, 2005) and *Beyond Desire* (Fashion Museum Antwerp, 2005). In 1999, he co-founded the Antwerp art center Objectif Exhibitions. His writings have appeared in *Afterall* (London), *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Ithica) and *A Prior* (Ghent) as well as many exhibition catalogues. In 2008 he was tutor for the curatorial training program at Le Magasin – National Centre for Contemporary Art in Grenoble. He is currently a senior advisor at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 112

Didem Ozbek and Osman Bozkurt (both 1970, Turkey) live and work in Istanbul. They founded PiST/// Interdisciplinary Project Space, an independet, non-profit artist-run space in Istanbul which they co-direct and where they have co-curated numerous projects including the *Reserved '06* exhibition series, *PiST/// 7-24* window display exhibitions and the PiST/// PARK and PiST/// stand at the 2008 Frieze Art Fair. Ozbek has also developed conceptual projects for PiST/// such as *Artist Information, Turkish Pavilion, Tea Stand* and *White Sugar Cube Book*. Since 2007, PiST/// has published *LiST*, a bimonthly publication of Istanbul's contemporary art listings, which Bozkurt and Ozbek co-edit. Osman Bozkurt has exhibited at Tate Modern (London), Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center (Istanbul), Villa Manin Centro d'Arte Contemporanea (Udine) and Palais des Beaux-Arts (Lille). He studied photography at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul. Didem Ozbek has exhibited at Akbank Sanat (Istanbul), Umetnostna Galerija (Maribor) and International Design Center (Nagoya). She studied communication design at Central St. Martins College of Art & Design, London. SEE PAGES 127, 128

Irit Rogoff (n.d., Israel) lives and works in London. In 2002 she founded the department of Visual Culture at Goldsmiths College, London University, where she is currently a Professor. She has curated a number of exhibitions including *De-Regulation* with the work of Kutlug Ataman (Antwerp, Berlin, 2005-2008), *ACADEMY* (2006) and *Summit–on Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture* (Berlin, 2007). She has published a vast number of articles and books including *Museum Culture* (1997), *Terra Infirma – Geography's Visual Culture* (2001), *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y* (2006), *Unbounded – Limits Possibilities* (2008) and the forthcoming *Looking Away–Participating Singularities, Ontological Communities* (2010). SEE PAGE 57

Beatrix Ruf (1960, Germany) lives and works in Zürich. She is director and curator of the Kunsthalle Zürich. She was the Director of the Kunsthaus Glarus and curator at the Kunstmuseum of the Canton of Thurgau from 1994 to 1998. Since 1995 she has been Curator of the Ringier collection. She has organized exhibitions, written essays and published catalogues on artists such as Jenny Holzer, Marina Abramovic, Peter Land, Liam Gillick, Urs Fischer, Emmanuelle Antille, Angela Bulloch, Ugo Rondinone, Richard Prince, Keith Tyson, Elmgreen & Dragset, Monica Bonvicini, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno, Rodney Graham, Isa Genzken, Doug Aitken, Wilhelm Sasnal, de Rijke / de Rooij, Rebecca Warren, Carol Bove, Oliver Payne & Nick Relph, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Sean Landers and many others. She co-curated the *Yokohama Triennial* in 2008 and was the curator of the *Tate Triennial* at Tate Britain (London, 2006). SEE PAGE 97

Brigitte van der Sande (1957, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. She is an independent curator, advisor, editor and writer. Her exhibition *Soft Target. War as a daily, first hand reality* (Basis Actuele Kunst, Utrecht, 2005) was the first result of extensive research into the representation of war in art. She is currently working on *Amsterdam at War* an exercise in imagining the effect of war on Amsterdam in the year 2030. She has previously worked as a freelance editor and project co-ordinator and has curated exhibitions on contemporary art, design, architecture and cultural heritage. She has worked with a number of institutions including Galerie Chantal Crousel (Paris), de Appel Foundation (Amsterdam), VPRO Television (Hilversum), Netherlands Architecture Institute (Rotterdam) and Fort Asperen Foundation (Asperen). She studied History of Modern and Contemporary Art, Philosophy of Culture & Aesthetics and Copyright & Media Law at the University of Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 63

Seth Siegelaub (1941, United States) lives and works in Amsterdam. He is an art dealer, curator, author and researcher. Between 1968 and 1971, he organized more than twenty art exhibitions, books, catalogues and projects throughout the United States, Canada and Europe including the group shows with publications, *The Xerox Book* (1968) and *January 5-31, 1969* – all of which continue to serve as key frames for the historical understanding of conceptualism. In 1971 he published "The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement," which has been translated into many languages. He is the founder of the Egress Foundation in Amsterdam where he is currently researching contemporary art, textile history as well as time and causality. SEE PAGE 88

Kitty Scott (1963, Canada) lives and works in Banff, Alberta. She is the Director of Visual Arts and the Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre for the Arts, where she also oversees operations for the Banff International Curatorial Institute. She was formerly the Chief Curator at the Serpentine Gallery in London and Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. As an independent curator, she has organized numerous exhibitions including *Bankside Browser* (Tate Modern, London, 1999) and *Universal Pictures* (Canadian Pavilion, Melbourne International Biennial, 1999). She was the Canadian coordinator for the 7th Istanbul Biennial (2001) and co-organized the inaugural SITE Santa Fe biennial (1997). She has lectured and written extensively on contemporary art. More recently she has published texts on Paul Chan, Peter Doig, Brian Jungen and Daniel Richter. She is visiting professor at the California College of the Arts, San Francisco, and adjunct professor at York University in Toronto, the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and the University of Ottawa. SEE PAGE 87

Saskia van Stein (1969, The Netherlands) lives in Amsterdam and works in Rotterdam. She is a curator at the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) in Rotterdam. She has curated over thirty exhibitions including *Archiphoenix* in the Dutch Pavilion at the 11th International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia (2008). She recently founded NEST: a solo exhibition space at the NAi. She is actively engaged in debates on art, architecture and design in the Netherlands and currently teaches at the Design Academy in Eindhoven. SEE PAGE 123

Adam Szymczyk (1970, Poland) lives and works in Basel. He is the director of the Kunsthalle Basel. He was a curator at the Foksal Gallery Foundation in Warsaw since its inception in 1997 until 2003. Over the past ten years he has worked on exhibitions and publications with contemporary artists including Pawel Althamer, Douglas Gordon, Susan Hiller, Job Koelewijn, Edward Krasiński, Claudia and Julia Mueller, Gregor Schneider, Piotr Uklański and Krzysztof Wodiczko. He has curated numerous group exhibitions including *Roundabout* (CCA Warsaw, 1998), *Amateur* (Kunstmuseum Goeteborg, 2000), *Painters Competition* (Galeria Bielska BWA, Bielsko-Biala, 2001) and *Hidden In a Daylight* (Hotel pod Brunatnym Jeleniem, Cieszyn, 2003). He studied art history at Warsaw University with an MA thesis on the dematerialization of the art object. SEE PAGE 93

Andrea Viliani (1973, Italy) lives and works in Trento, where he is director of Fondazione Galleria Civica di Trento. Formerly, he was curator at MAMbo-Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna. He has curated shows of Nico Dockx (with Building Transmissions), Ryan Gander, Jay Chung & Q Takeki Maeda, Markus Schinwald, Adam Chodzko, Bojan Sarcevic, Guyton Walker, Natascha Sadr-Haghighian, Trisha Donnelly, Seth Price, Ibon Aranberri, Christopher Williams, Jeroen de Rijke & Willem de Rooij and Sarah Morris. From 2002-2005 he was assistant curator at the Castello di Rivoli-Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin. He also is a regular contributor to *Frog* (Paris), *MOUSSE* (Milan) and *Flash Art* (Milan). SEE PAGE 135

Rein Wolfs (1960, the Netherlands) lives and works in Kassel. He is the Artistic Director of the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel. From 2002 until 2007 he was the Director of Exhibitions of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. In 2003 he curated *We are the World* in the Dutch pavilion at the Venice Bienniale. From 1996 until 2001, he was the first director of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Zurich, where he established the magazine *Material* in 1999. Among his most important exhibitions were shows with Douglas Gordon, Maurizio Cattelan, Angela Bulloch and Cady Noland (all Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich), Bas Jan Ader, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Urs Fischer and Erik van Lieshout (all Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam) and Christoph Büchel, Pawel Althamer, Meschac Gaba, Klara Lidén, Latifa Echakhch, Daniel Knorr, Cyprien Gaillard and Navid Nuur among others (all Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel). He is a member of several international committees and publishes regularly. SEE PAGE 65

The Salford Restoration Office is a curatorial practice that develops projects with cultural institutions in Manchester and addresses questions of artistic context and cultural policy. It was established in 2007 and is currently directed by James Hutchinson and Lesley Young. The Salford Restoration Office worked with Dan Shipsides to make *Radical Architecture* for Castlefield Gallery, and developed *The Whitworth Cabinet* with The Whitworth Art Gallery. In addition to the activities made in partnership with institutions, they have also worked with artists active in the region on projects such as *Centrifuge* (with Imogen Stidworthy, Dirk Fleischmann and Manchester Metropolitan University) and a series of reading groups called *Reading Capital* (thirteen sessions dedicated to reading Karl Marx's *Capital*.) They are currently developing projects with Jeremy Deller (for Cornerhouse and the Manchester International Festival), Katya Sander (for The Research Institute of Cosmopolitain Culture and The University of Manchester) and Artur Żmijewski (for Cornerhouse and A-Foundation). SEE PAGES 129, 130

What, How & for Whom (WHW) is a non-profit organization for visual culture and a curators' collective based in Zagreb, Croatia. Formed in 1999, WHW's current members are curators Ivet Curlin, Ana Devic, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolovic and designer and publicist Dejan Kršic. Since May 2003, WHW has been directing the program of Gallery Nova, a city-owned gallery in Zagreb. WHW has curated many international exhibitions including the 11th Istanbul Biennial, *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* (2009), *Broadcasting project* (Technical Museum, Zagreb, 2002), *Looking Awry* (Apexart, New York, 2003), *Repetition: Pride and Prejudice* (Gallery Nova, Zagreb, 2003), *Side-effects* (Salon of Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, 2004), *Collective Creativity* (Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, 2005), *Normalization* (Gallery Nova, Zagreb, 2006), *Here and Now Real, Not Yet Concrete* (Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, 2006), *Ground Lost* (Forum Stadtpark, Graz & Gallery Nova, Zagreb, 2007), *All Dressed Up With Nowhere to Go* (Gallery TranzitDisplay, Prague, 2007) and *Vojin Bakic* (Gallery Nova & Grazer Kunstverein, 2008). WHW has also published several books. SEE PAGES 104, 105

THE ARTISTS

AES+F (Tatiana Arzamasova 1955, Lev Evzovich 1958, Evgeny Svyatsky, 1957 and Vladimir Fridkes 1956, all Russia) live and work in Moscow. They have been working as a collective since 1987 and collaborating with fashion photographer Vladimir Fridkes since 1995. Using photography, video, installation and mixed media, their work often uses monumental architectural spaces and mythologies as starting points for narrative and allegory. AES+F have exhibited internationally, often receiving media attention by touching upon heated taboos, ranging from Princess Diana's death to provocative figurative depictions of the prophet Mohammed and other obsessions of worldwide media. Their work has been exhibited at the Havana Biennial (2009), The Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art (2009), *Angels and Demons* a commission for *Europe XXL* (Lille, 2009); and at *Aesthetics of Violence*, Haifa Museum of Art (2009). Arzamasova and Evzovich graduated from the Moscow Architectural Institute and Svyatsky from the Moscow University of Printing. SEE PAGE 251

Danai Anesiadou (1973, Germany) lives and works in Brussels. "I was born in Germany, raised in Greece and Belgium, and live in Brussels. When people ask me what I do, I play with my fingers instead of saying I'm a performance artist. Then I usually add: I also make videos, installations, black box dance-theatre and would like to act in a film some day. I don't believe in separating life and work therefore I frequently collaborate with talented friends and family members. Some say that I'm married to a sense for the theatre of autobiographical confession and that I tend to offer the audience an insight into the neurotic mess of my stage character's family history and private life. I agree about that on some level but do believe that some things are best kept sacredly SECRET. I say, when one has to write one's biography oneself then let it be written in the first person singular." SEE PAGE 196

Sven Augustijnen (1970, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels. He works in the disciplines of film, video and photography, often testing the truth-making possibilities of these media. His work has been exhibited at many international venues and exhibitions such as *documenta XII magazines* (Kassel, 2007), MuHKA (Antwerp), Jan Mot (Brussels), Museum fur Gegenwartskunst (Siegen), Centre d'Art Contemporain (Freibourg), Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven), Argosfestival (Brussels), Museo Nacional Centro e Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid), Apexart (New York) and most recently in *Verité Exposée* (Ernst Museum, Budapest, 2009) and *Stutter* (Tate Modern, London, 2009). UNABLE TO ATTEND

Alex Bag (1969, United States) lives and works in New York. Her work combines performance, video, acting, drawing and installation with an acerbic wit in the exploration of the ills and alienations endemic to late capitalist society. She has been featured in recent international exhibitions such as *Playback* (l'ARC/Musee d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2007), *Beneath the Underdog* and *Fit to Print* (Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2006, 2007), *Panoramica* (Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City, 2006) and the 9th *Baltic Triennale* (Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, 2005). In 2010 Hatje Cantz will publish the first monograph on her work. She received a BFA from Cooper Union in 1991. SEE PAGE 255

Yael Bartana (1970, Israel) lives and works in Tel Aviv and Amsterdam. Through photography, film, video, sound and installation, her work investigates socio-political constructions of territory and nationalism, often depicting everyday life in relation to actions of the state and the constant presence of war and insecurity. She has exhibited internationally, including solo exhibitions at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (New York, 2009), Foksal Gallery (Warsaw, 2008), Center for Contemporary Art (Tel Aviv, 2008), The Power Plant (Toronto, 2007), Annet Gelink Gallery (Amsterdam, 2007), Kunstverein Hamburg (2006), Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, 2006), Museum St. Gallen (Switzerland, 2005), Sommer Contemporary Art (Tel Aviv, 2004) and MIT List Visual Arts Center (Massachusetts, 2004). She studied at The Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem (BFA) and at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. SEE PAGE 160

Bik Van der Pol (founded in 1995, The Netherlands, by Liesbeth Bik and Jos Van der Pol) live and work in Rotterdam. Bik Van der Pol's research-based practice creates platforms for various kinds of communicative activities in order to explore the potential of art to produce and transmit knowledge. Their international projects and exhibitions include *One Day Sculpture* (Auckland, 2009), *U-Turn* (Copenhagen, 2008), *I've got something in my eye* (Marie Louise Hessel Museum/CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 2008), *Be(com)ing Dutch* (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2008), *Plug In* (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2009), *For Reasons of State* (ISP Whitney, New York, 2008), *Utopia Transfer* (Kiscelli Museum, Budapest, 2008), Istanbul Biennial (2007) and *Models For Tomorrow* (European Kunsthalle, Cologne, 2007). They have published a number of books including the ongoing series *Past Imperfect* (2005, 2007), *Catching Some Air* (2002), *With Love From The Kitchen* (2005), *Fly Me To The Moon* (2006) and *The Lost Moment* (2007). SEE PAGE 207

Guillaume Bijl (1946, Belgium) lives and works in Antwerp. Following his 1979 manifesto calling for the abolition of art centers (and their replacement with 'socially useful institutions') Bijl's installations have included a billiards room, a casino, a laundromat, a center for professional training, a psychiatric hospital, a fallout shelter, a show of fictitious American artists, a conference for a new political party and a rural Belgian model house. He divides his work (and its subjects of sexuality, TV, traffic, fashion and various aspects of public and private everyday life) into four categories: "transformation installations," "situation installations," "compositions trouvées" and "sorrys." He has exhibited internationally, most recently at Coma Gallery (Berlin, 2009), S.M.A.K. (Ghent, 2008), Christchurch Biennial (2008) and the Busan Biennial (2006). His work is represented in many public collections around the world. SEE PAGE 190

Pierre Bismuth (1963, France) lives and works in Brussels. Known for his deft dismantling of cultural products and the wry and humorous shifts and "misuses" to which he subjects his material, his work constitutes a creative intervention into familiar codes, habits and objects, which often conflates the artwork and its representation. He has recently exhibited at the British Film Institute in London, Team Gallery in New York, Kunsthalle Bern, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art and the Kadist Art Foundation in Paris. In 2005 he won an Oscar for co-authoring with Michel Gondry the screenplay for *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. SEE PAGE 183

Mark Boulos (1975, United States) lives and works in Amsterdam. His videos and films investigate the relationship between ideas, ideology and materiality in the process of globalization. He recently exhibited in the 2008 Sydney Biennial and had his first solo show at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. He has participated in numerous international group exhibitions including at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LA), the Norwich Gallery (Norwich), Bloomberg Space, the Barbican Gallery and the Institute of Contemporary Art (all London). He has received awards from Film London, Arts Council England, the British Documentary Film Fund and the U.S. Fulbright Center. In 2007, he had an artist's residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. He holds an MA from the National Film and Television School in England and a BA from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. SEE PAGE 166

Petr Bystrov (1980, Russia) lives and works in Moscow. He works as an individual artist, performer, spokesman, independent curator and teacher. Incorporating slogans, posters, graffiti and performance, his work raises the depersonalized protest of street art to the level of political discourse, often highlighting the critical sore points of social consciousness. From 1999 until 2005, Bystrov was a member of the Radek Community: a group of Moscow-based artists, authors and cultural activists. From 2005 to 2006, he was the editor of *Stone Milk* magazine (Moscow) and visiting professor at the New Academy of Fine Arts in Milan. He has had a number of international exhibitions including *Territory Festival* (Fabrika art center, Moscow, 2008), the 10th *Istanbul Biennial* (2007), *On Geekdom* (Benaki Museum, Athens, 2007), *People's Choice* (Art Isola Center, Milan, 2006), *Radek Invasion* (Associazione Prometeo, Lucca, 2005), *Tomy ty ver* (Dudas for contemporary art, Bratislava, 2004), *ArtKljazma Festival* (2003) and *Manifesta 4* (Frankfurt am Main, 2002). SEE PAGE 247

Jota Castro (1965, Peru) lives and works in Brussels. His work encompasses photography, sculpture, video and installation. With a background in law and political science, his work covers a wide range of references and propagates a political activism fused with sarcasm and humor. He is a consulting editor for *Janus* magazine (Brussels) and *Nolens Volens* (Madrid). His work has been shown extensively around the world including in the Venice, Tirana, Prague and Gwangju biennials. His recent solo exhibitions include *Sleep tight* (Elaine Levy Project, Brussels, 2008), *Enjoy your travel* (Gallery Umberto Di Marino, Napoli, 2007), *No More No Less* (Gallery Oliva Arauna, Madrid, 2006) and *Taking part* (Stedelijk Museum 's Hertogenbosch, 2005). He won the Gwangju Biennial prize in 2004. He currently teaches at the European University of Madrid. SEE PAGE 164

Banu Cennetoğlu (1970, Turkey) lives and works in Istanbul. Using photography, installation and printed matter, her work deals with the visual interpretation, possibilities and uncertainties of documentation in politically, socially and economically charged situations. She runs the space BAS in Istanbul, where artists' books and publications are collected, displayed and produced. She has exhibited in numerous international exhibitions including the 5th Berlin Biennial (2008), the 10th Istanbul Biennial (2009), the 1st Athens Biennial (2007), *Brave New Worlds* (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2007), *Wherever We Go* (San Francisco Art Institute, 2009) and the 53rd Venice Biennale (Turkish Pavilion, 2009). UNABLE TO ATTEND

Spartacus Chetwynd (1973, England) lives and works in London and Amsterdam. She is known for her surreal performances, which meld references from art history and pop culture, from Giotto's frescoes and works by Hieronymus Bosch, to heavy metal musicians and Michael Jackson. In addition to her performances, she has produced a series of small canvases titled *Bat Opera*. Recent exhibitions of her work include *Hermitos Children* (Tate Triennial, 2009), *Help! I'm Trapped in a Mezuzah Factory!* (Le Consortium, Dijon, 2008) and *The Snail Race (*Massimo De Carlo, Milan, 2008). She graduated from the Royal College of Art in London with an MA in painting. SEE PAGE 192

Jan De Cock (1976, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels. His work aims to generate a renewed awareness of the significance of architectural space using intricate, modular structures made from inexpensive materials such as chipboard, plywood and wood-effect linoleum. He has exhibited internationally including the solo exhibitions *Denkmal 11* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2008), *Modern is changing fig. 4* (Stella Lohaus Gallery, Antwerp, 2008), *Denkmal 1* (Artbrussels, 2007), *Denkmal 53* (Tate Modern, London, 2005) and *Denkmal 5-12-3* (Minatoku, Tokyo 2005). He also publishes his own artist books, which he considers to be an extension of his practice as exhibitions on paper.
SEE PAGE 259

Plamen Dejanoff (1970, Bulgaria) lives and works in Vienna. His sculptures and installations emphasize the role of the artist in today's market-driven, consumerist society through an exploration of the dynamics of corporations and processes of production and consumption. He has had recent solo exhibitions at MNAC National Museum of Contemporary Art (Bucharest, 2009), Galerie Meyer Kainer (Vienna, 2009), Gallery Nicola von Senger (Zurich, 2008), MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art (Shanghai, 2008) and Swarovski Contemporary Art Project (Berlin, 2008). He studied at the Academy of Fine Art in Sofia, the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna, MAK Center For Art & Architecture in Los Angeles, Monbusho Musashino Art University in Tokyo and IASPIS in Stockholm. SEE PAGE 240

Simon Denny (1982, New Zealand) lives and works in Auckland and Frankfurt am Main. His work underlines relationships within communities of things, producing clumsy sculptural installations that float between a cartoonlike conceptualism and a more careful look at materiality. Combining sloppy gesture and below-par workmanship with a hypersensitive attention to surface and common formats of visual experience, he turns painting, video and photography into a flat, equivalent field. His most recent exhibitions include *Quodlibet* (Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne, 2009), *Seven Drunken Videos* (Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, 2009), T293 (Naples, 2009), *Show Me Don't Tell Me* (Brussels Biennial, 2008), 79a Brick Lane (London, 2008), Ursula Blickle Stiftung (Frankfurt am Main, 2008) and the Sydney Biennial (2008). Denny finished his BFA at the Elam School Of Fine Arts, University Of Auckland in 2004. He is currently studying at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. SEE PAGE 201

Doug Fishbone (1969, United States) lives and works in London. He first received attention for his project *30,000 Bananas* – a huge mountain of bananas installed in the middle of London's Trafalgar Square – in 2004. His video and performance work is heavily influenced by the rhythms of stand-up comedy and examines some of the more unseemly aspects of contemporary life in an amusing and disarming way. His international exhibitions include the *British Art Show 6* (2005-2006), *Stand By/Doug Fishbone: The Idea Store* (Gimpel Fils, London, 2006), *Laughing in a Foreign Language* (Hayward Gallery, London, 2008) and the Busan Biennial (2008). His newest video, which premiered at Rokeby (London, 2009), involved hypnotizing an entire audience and manipulating their behavior with post-hypnotic suggestions. He has had recent performances at the Southbank Centre, the Royal Academy of Arts (both in London) and the Khoj Live festival in New Delhi (2008). He earned an MA at Goldsmiths College in 2003 and was awarded the Beck's Futures Prize for Student Film and Video in 2004. SEE PAGE 195

Rainer Ganahl (1961, Austria) lives and works in New York. His work deals with educational, political, ecological and linguistic issues and often takes the form of libraries, seminars and lectures, studies and dialogs. His best-known work, *S/L (Seminars/Lectures)*, is an ongoing series of photographs, begun in 1995, of well-known cultural critics addressing audiences. The photographs, taken in university classrooms and lecture halls, show not only the lecturer but also the listeners and students in the audience. In a similar way, he documented his own process of learning an "exotic" language into an art project. In his *Imported-Reading Seminars* held from 1995 onward, group-studies of theoretical works from specific countries were documented on video. Although his numerous approaches are framed by the historical conventions of education, subsumed within these various structures are the conditions for an autonomous, critical pedagogy. He was selected as one of three Austrian representatives to the Venice Biennale in 1999 and most recently had a solo exhibition at MAK in Vienna (2009). He studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and at the Kunstakademie Dusseldorf (with Nam June Paik).
SEE PAGE 242

Kendell Geers ("May 1968," South Africa) lives and works in Brussels. He has made a name for himself by blowing up museum walls and burning down public monuments. His controversial works include framing his semen, pissing in Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* and hiring a professional dominatrix to tease and torture curator Jan Hoet. His work explores the boundaries of art and what is permissible, provoking and arousing intense feelings of desire, danger, seduction and repulsion. He has exhibited widely including the retrospective *Irrespectiv* (Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, 2008; Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, 2008; S.M.A.K, Ghent, 2007; BALTIC, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2007), *PostPunkPaganPop* (Gallery de Pury & Luxembourg, Zurich, 2009) and *Kannibale* (Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, 2007). SEE PAGE 175

Thierry Geoffroy (1961, France) lives and works in Copenhagen. His format-art is created to be "actualized" in multiple locations, each time adding new knowledge to the format. His method is inspired by the television program wherein art institutions wanting to use an art format must purchase a license and agree to use the original title, the architectural concept and the methods. His best-known format is *Emergency Room*, which has toured internationally, including to P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (New York). Other formats include the *Critical Run*, *The Biennalist* and *The Penetration*. His formats always involve many participants – often several hundred – and are occupied with social psychology, conflict and collaboration. Central to his philosophy is the concern that contemporary artists have an obligation to confront current thematics, that he calls "emergencies." Besides his art practice, he has also made several productions for the Danish national television network DR2. SEE PAGE 253

Liam Gillick (1964, United Kingdom) lives and works in London and New York. His practice, an elaborate investigation of post-Fordist production, incorporates structures that hover on the boundary of art, architecture and design as well as writing that moves between theory, criticism, fiction, scenarios and fables. Recent publications include *Proxemics: Selected Writings 1988-2006*, edited by Lionel Bovier (JRP | Ringier, Zurich 2006) and *All Books* (Book Works, London, 2009), which compiled all of his fictional writing to date. *Meaning Liam Gillick*, a critical reader on and around Gillick's work, was published in 2009 by The MIT Press. Recent solo exhibitions include *The State Itself Becomes a Super Whatnot* (Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York, 2008), *Three Perspectives and a Short Scenario* (Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Kunsthalle Zürich, München Kunstverein,and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2008-2009), and, most recently, *One long walk...Two short piers...*(Bundes Kunsthalle, Bonn, 2010). In 2002, he was nomitated for the Turner Prize (London) and, in 2008, for the Vincent Prize (Amsterdam). In 2009, he represented Germany in the 53rd Venice Biennale with the exhibition *How are you going to behave? A kitchen cat speaks*, curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen. UNABLE TO ATTEND

Piero Golia (1974, Italy) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work explores the boundaries between reality and fiction and the processes of myth making in contemporary society. His actions, sculptures and installations express the heroic poetry of the extreme gesture – the challenge of completing a nearly impossible feat or legendary action. On January 14th 2005, he vanished from New York City leaving no documented proof of his whereabouts. He traveled from one place to another, crossing borders without a trace, resurfacing only on the morning of February 7th at the Royal Academy of Arts in Copenhagen for a unique lecture on his adventurous trip. His work has been shown in numerous exhibitions including *The Gold Standard* (P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2006/07) and *Uncertain States of America – American Art in the 3rd Millennium* (Serpentine Gallery, London; Bard College, New York, 2006). In 2004 his feature film *Killer Shrimps* was selected for the Venice Film Festival. SEE PAGE 182

Nicoline van Harskamp (1975, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. Her work involves highly concentrated research on the distribution of governmental and private power, and individual and collective resistance to existing political systems. She has had artist residencies at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center in Istanbul, Project Studio Büro Friedrich in Berlin and at the Christiania Researcher in Residence Program in Copenhagen. She has screened her work widely both inside and outside the context of art. Recent exhibitions of her work include *Be(com)ing Dutch* (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2008), Taipei Biennial (2008) and *Nicoline van Harskamp – To Live Outside the Law You Must Be Honest ...* (Kunsthallen Nikolaj, Copenhagen, 2007). She was nominated for the Beck's Futures Prize in 2004. She won the Prix de Rome Prize in 2009. SEE PAGE 256

Jeanne van Heeswijk (1965, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. Her work creates contexts for interaction in public spaces where she stimulates and develops cultural production and creates new public (gathering) spaces or remodels existing ones. To achieve this, she often works closely with artists, designers, architects, software developers, governments and ordinary citizens. She regularly lectures on topics such as urban renewal, public participation and cultural production. Her projects include *It Runs in the Neighborhood*, a hospital soap series for Stavanger (Norway), *The Blue House*, a house for the unplanned IJburg district (Amsterdam), and *Dwaallicht*, a narrative monument for a working-class neighborhood now part of the Historisch Museum in Rotterdam. SEE PAGE 169

Carsten Höller (1961, Belgium) lives and works in Stockholm. His work is heavily influenced by his educational background in insect behavior and often focuses on evolutionary forces and human emotion. Many of his projects invite the audience to participate, explore and experience, while questioning human perception and psychological reaction. Recent solo exhibitions include *Test Site* (Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, 2007), *Reindeers and Spheres* (Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills, 2009), *Carrousel* (Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2008), *One: Some: Many: 3* (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2007) and *Neon Circle* (Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, 2007). He studied agricultural sciences at the University of Kiel. SEE PAGE 234

Richard Hutten (1967, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. He is an internationally successful and influential Dutch Designer and is known for what he refers to as "no sign of design" furniture. He is a prominent exponent of "Droog Design" ("Dry design"), in which he has been involved since its inception in 1993. His work can be found in more than fifteen museum collections worldwide, including the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), MoMA (New York), MoMA (San Francisco), Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (Rotterdam). He has taught and lectured at many institutions including ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne, University of Helsinki, University of Reykjavik, Royal College of Art (London) and the University of Berlin. SEE PAGE 261

Runa Islam (1970, Bangladesh) lives and works in London. Multi-screen, sculptural and architectural, her work produces discourse around forms of documentation and methods of reproduction. Her investigations into the production of distinct visual and conceptual languages result in analytical and experimental sequences that emphasize notions of limited and subjective versions of truth, memory and historical perception. She has had numerous international exhibitions including the solo shows *Restless Subject* (Kunsthaus Zurich, 2008-2009), *Conditional Probability* (Serpentine Gallery, London, 2006) and *Rapid Eye Movement* (MIT List Visual Arts Centre, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2003). She completed an MPhil at the Royal College of Art in London in 2004. SEE PAGE 220

Luis Jacob (1971, Peru) lives and works in Toronto. His practice challenges categorization: Using formats such as video, performance and photography, his work often extends into other fields of social and cultural work. Experimentation with theatrical forms and the creation of social interaction and participation plays a central role. He is also active as a teacher, author and curator. He has had many exhibitions including *The Order of Things* (MuHKA, Antwerp, 2009), *Martian Museum of Terrestial Art* (Barbican Art Gallery, London, 2008), *documenta XII* (Kassel, 2007), *Luis Jacob: Habitat* (Kunstverein Hamburg, 2007) and *7 Pictures of Nothing Repeated Four Times, in Gratitude* (Stadtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, 2009). He is also involved in the community-education collective at the Anarchist Free University in Toronto. SEE PAGE 201

Henrik Plenge Jakobsen (1967, Denmark) lives and works in Copenhagen. He works in a variety of media including sculpture, installation, performance and public intervention. His work often critiques the social spaces in which we live through spatial arrangements of visual elements, frequently involving an additional action or performance. Since the mid-1990s, he has received considerable international attention, exhibiting his work at numerous venues, such as the South London Gallery (London), Statens Museum for Kunst (Copenhagen), Artists Space (New York) and the Serpentine Gallery (London). He is a professor at The National Academy of Fine Arts in Oslo. SEE PAGE 206

Gabriel Kuri (1970, Mexico) lives and works in Brussels and Mexico City. His sculptural practice addresses issues of coding experience, temporality and space and encompasses an array of media grounded in the grammar of everyday lexical exchange. His vocabulary of forms places emphasis on process and the open and unstable nature of meaning. He has had numerous exhibitions including the solo shows *Model for a Victory Parade* (Sadie Coles Gallery, London, 2008), *Space Made to Measure Object Made to Measure Space* (Esther Schipper Gallery, Berlin, 2007), *Reforma Fiscal* (Kurimanzutto Mexico City, 2007) and *Start to Stop Stopping* (MuHKA, Antwerp, 2003). He received an MA in Fine Arts at Goldsmiths College, University of London in London. SEE PAGE 171

Matthieu Laurette (1970, France) lives and works in Amsterdam, Paris and New York. His conceptual work uses a variety of media including television, video, installation and public intervention. He is interested in exploring the relationships between conceptual art, Pop Art, Institutional Critique, economics and contemporary society. His best-known works are *Apparitions* (1993-ongoing), *Money-back Products* (1991-2001), *Citizenship Project* (1996-ongoing), *El Gran Trueque* (2000) and *Déja vu, The International Look-alike Conventions* (2000-ongoing). Recent solo exhibitions include *I Am An Artist* (Gaudel de Stampa, Paris, 2009), *Artists' Biopic Cinema* (SMART project space, Amsterdam, 2008) and *Exhibition Non Stop* (Blow de la Barra, London, 2008). He has held events at the Dia Art Foundation Fall Gala (New York), Institute of Contemporary Art (London), Contemporary Art Centre (Vilnius) Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Artsonje Center (Seoul), Castello di Rivoli (Torino) and Centre Pompidou (Paris). SEE PAGE 170

Tim Lee (1975, South Korea) lives and works in Vancouver and is currently in Berlin as a DAAD scholar. His work uses video, photography and sculpture to integrate specific moments in popular culture with specific moments in the history of art. He has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions including most recently at the Hayward Gallery (London, 2009), CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts (San Francisco, 2008) and Contemporary Arts Museum (Houston, 2008). He has also participated in many group exhibitions including the Sydney Biennial and Yokohama Triennale (both 2008), *Sliding Doors* (Tate Modern, London, 2006) and *Intertidal* (MuHKA, Antwerp, 2005). He has an MFA from the University of British Columbia (Vancouver).
SEE PAGE 161

Gabriel Lester (1972, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam and New York. As both a filmmaker and artist, his work involves various media including installation, performance, film and video, and often focuses on elements of composition and editing. He has also been active as an electronic musician, recording and performing in the Netherlands and abroad. Recent solo exhibitions include *A Man of Action [Returns]* (Gallery BirteKleeman, Berlin, 2008), *BIG BANG* (Bloomberg Space, London, 2007) and *Last piece of John Fare* (GB-Agency, Paris, 2007). He has exhibited at Galerie Fons Welters (Amsterdam), Artists Space (New York), Queen's Nails Project (San Francisco), University Art Gallery, UCSD (San Diego), Stedelijk Museum CS (Amsterdam), DUVE Berlin and Friedrich Petzel Gallery (New York). SEE PAGE 181

An Te Liu (1967, Taiwan) lives and works in Toronto and Berlin. His installations and sculptures explore issues of function, malfunction and cultural coding in built and hypothesized environments, offering revised readings of the logics and intentions embedded in artifacts at domestic and urban scales. His work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions in New York, Vancouver, San Francisco, Frankfurt am Main, Rotterdam, Cologne, Berlin, Seoul and Toronto. His most recent exhibitions include *Fremtidens arkitektur er grøn!* (Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, 2009), *Transclimatic* (Customs House, Sydney, 2009), *Mouth of Lenin* (Exhibition 211, New York, 2009), *Two Caulk Studies* (NEXT space and MKG127 at the Toronto International Art Fair, 2009), *The Leona Drive Project* (Willowdale, site specific, 2009) and *Pook X Pookie* (SCI ARC Gallery, Los Angeles, 2009). He is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto, where he also holds an Adjunct appointment in the Department of Fine Arts. SEE PAGE 260

Oswaldo Maciá (1960, Colombia) lives and works in London. His multimedia and installation-based work seeks to question common ideas about knowledge and perception, challenging what we tend to consider common knowledge. It is by articulating this central preoccupation that he confronts the audience through particular selections of sounds, smells or visions in order to contemplate and complicate various perspectives on reality. His work has been presented at the Liverpool Biennial (2004), the 51st Venice Bienniale (2005), the Shanghai Biennial (2004), Marian Goodman Gallery (Paris, 2007), the South London Gallery (2006) and the Whitechapel Art Gallery (London, 2009).
SEE PAGE 172

Goshka Macuga (1967, Poland) lives and works in London. Macuga is an artist whose installations often incorporate works by other artists, thereby blurring the boundaries between artist, curator and collector. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Bloomberg Commission: Goshka Macuga,* a work revolving around the tapestry of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica,* (Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2009-2010) *Goshka Macuga: I Am Become Death* (Kunsthalle Basel, 2009), *Art Now: Goshka Macuga* (Tate Britain, London, 2007), Goshka Macuga (Andrew Kreps, New York, 2007) and *Goshka Macuga – Sleep of Ulro* (Greenland Street, Liverpool, 2006) which also resulted in a major publication. In 2008, she was nominated for the Turner Prize. And in 2009, her work was featured in *Making Worlds*, the main exhibition of the 53rd Venice Biennale, curated by Daniel Birnbaum.
UNABLE TO ATTEND

Josephine Meckseper (1964, Germany) lives and works in New York. Her work often includes shop windows, vitrines, installations, shelves, and films, where she draws a direct correlation between the way consumer culture defines and circumvents subjectivity and the sublimation of individual political agency. From 1994-2000, she produced the conceptual magazine *FAT* (Copenhagen). She has had numerous solo exhibitions including % (Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, 2005), *The Bulletin Board* (White Columns, New York, 2005) and *IG-Metall und die künstlichen Paradiese des Politischen* (Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, 2004). The fifth monograph on her work titled *The Accident of Art* (written by Sylvere Lotringer in conversation with Paul Virilio) has just been published to accompany her recent exhibition at the migros museum für gegenwartskunst in Zurich (2009). SEE PAGE 165

Sarah Morris (1967, United Kingdom) lives and works in New York. She is an internationally recognized painter and filmmaker known for her complex abstractions, which play with architecture and the psychology of urban environments. Her films operate between documentary, biography, non-narrative fiction and sites of production and leisure, to which her paintings act in parallel. She has exhibited widely – at Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus (Munich, 2008), Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (Rotterdam, 2006), Moderna Museet (Stockholm, 2005), Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2005), Kestner Gesellschaft (Hannover, 2005), Kunstforeningen (Copenhagen, 2004), Miami MOCA (2002), Hirshhorn Museum (Washington, D.C. 2002) and Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin, 2001) among others. She has had numerous international solo exhibitions, including recently at the Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main (2009), MAMbo Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna (2009) and Fondation Beyeler (Basel 2008).
SEE PAGE 185

Deimantas Narkevičius (1964, Lithuania) lives and works in Vilnius. He works in film and video, sculpture, photography and installation. His films deal with the political and cultural instability in Eastern Europe since the breakup of the Eastern Bloc focusing on collective perceptions of history and notions of temporality and memory. He has had numerous international exhibitions including recent solo shows such as *The Unanimous Life* (Museo Nacional Centro De Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2008; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2009), *The Dud Effect* (Barbara Weiss Gallery, Berlin, 2008) and *Genius Seculi* (The Center of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, 2008). SEE PAGE 162

Olaf Nicolai (1962, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. His conceptual work is often characterized by socio-political references, in which multiple antipodal socialist and capitalist, hedonist and idealist aspects merge and even overlap. His work often deciphers and attentively reads nature, languages and systems. He has participated in numerous exhibitions, such as *documenta XI* (1997), the 49th and 51st Venice Biennales (2001 and 2005), Sydney Biennial (2002), Gwangju Biennial (2002), Sharjah Biennial (2005) and Athens Biennial (2007). His work has been shown in institutions worldwide including the migros museum für gegenwartskunst (Zurich), Museo Serralves (Porto), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Fondation Cartier (Paris) and Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus (Munich). SEE PAGE 258

Wendelien van Oldenborgh (1962, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. Her work often uses the format of a film shoot, collaborating with participants in different scenarios, to co-produce a script that explores social relationships through an investigation of gesture in the public sphere. She has shown in numerous international exhibitions including the Istanbul Biennial (2009), *No False Echoes* (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2008), *Lecture/Audience/Camera* (MuHKA, Antwerp, 2008), *Maurits Film* (Recife and Capacete, Rio de Janeiro, 2008), *Maurits Script* (Casco, Utrecht, 2006) and *The Basis For A Song* (Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2005). She was a guest professor for Kunst und Kommunikatieve Praxis in the Universitat für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna in 2008-2009.
SEE PAGE 249

Ulrike Ottinger (1942, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She is a filmmaker, documentarian and photographer. In 1966, she wrote her first screenplay *Die mongolische Doppelschublade*. In 1969, she founded the Visuell film club, which she headed until 1972. Since then she has made 21 films, including feature-length fictions and experimental documentaries, which incorporate fascinating visual effects through inventive and expressionistic use of costuming, composition and setting. She has won numerous awards for films such as *Johanna D'arc of Mongolia* (1989), *China. The Arts – The People* (1986) and *Prater* (2008). She has taken part in major international art exhibitions such as the Venice Biennial, documenta and the Berlin Biennale, among others. She has had solo exhibitions at Witte de With (Rotterdam, 2004), the Museo Nacional Reina Sofia (Madrid, 2004), Kunst-Werke Berlin (2001) and the David Zwirner Gallery (New York, 2000). Her artist's book *Bildarchive* (collected photographs form 1975-200) was published in 2005. SEE PAGE 228

Judy Radul (1962, Canada) lives and works in Vancouver. Her practice is interdisciplinary and involves the consideration of the forms and conditions of video, language and performance using video installation, photography, live actions and audio. Her critical writing has been widely published. She has had numerous exhibitions including *World Rehearsal Court* (Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, Vancouver, 2009) and *Intertidal: Vancouver Art and Artists* (MuHKA, Antwerp, 2005-2006). She has had solo exhibitions at Catriona Jeffries Gallery (Vancouver), Oboro (Montreal), Presentation House Gallery (Vancouver) and The Power Plant (Toronto). She is a professor at the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. SEE PAGE 232

Lili Reynaud-Dewar (1975, France) lives and works in Paris. Her installation-based work embraces an integrated approach to sculpture, which aims to step out of the conventions of high art by integrating posters, iconic design objects, mainstream and sub-cultural symbols. At the center of her practice is the concept of identity and questions of its integrity and authenticity. Recent exhibitions of her work include *Black Mariah* (Centre d'art contemporain Parc Saint-Leger, Pougues-les-Eaux, 2009), *Born under a bad sign* (Power House Memphis, 2009), *LOVE = U.F.O* (FRAC, Bordeaux, 2008) and *Power Structures, Rituals & Sexuality of the European Shorthand-Typists* (Mary Mary, Glasgow, 2009). She had a solo show at Frac Champagne Ardennes (Reims, 2010) and an upcoming solo at Kunsthalle Basel in 2010. SEE PAGE 194

Jimmy Robert (1975, France) lives and works in Brussels. He employs photographs, collages, objects, performances and films to emphasize process and transition as unstable elements of representation. He often inserts his own presence into installations of found imagery, which he has transformed and restaged, generating an intriguing dialectic of alienation and belonging, of "physical" and "political" action. In 2009 he was awarded the Follow fluxus-after-fluxus grant. His work has been featured in numerous international exhibitions including the 5th Berlin Biennial (2008), the *Yokohama Triennial* (2008), the Gwangju Biennial (2008), *prospectif cinema* (Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2006) and *The artists' cinema* (Frieze Art Fair, 2005). SEE PAGE 193

Willem de Rooij (1969, The Netherlands) lives and works in Berlin. His research-based work investigates the cultural resonance of artifacts and the afterlife of visual mass-distribution. From 1994-2006 he worked in collaboration with Jeroen de Rijke (1970-2006) as the artist duo de Rijke/de Rooij. He has had numerous exhibitions at international institutions such as Witte de With (Rotterdam), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam) and Tate Modern (London). De Rijke/de Rooij's film *Mandarin Ducks* (2005) was screened at the Dutch Pavilion at the 51st Venice Bienniale. De Rooij's installation *Birds* was exhibited at Cubitt Gallery (London, 2009) marking the third part of a triptych of temporary installations including *Birds in a Park* (Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne, 2007) and *The Floating Feather* (Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2006). He is a professor at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main and at De Ateliers in Amsterdam.
SEE PAGE 215

Martha Rosler (1943, United States) lives and works in New York. Over the course of her prolific career, she has produced works using video, photo-text, installation, and performance. Her work engages with questions of social structure, social process, and power in public and private manifestations as various as the kitchen, the media, the built environment, systems of transport, the street and the battlefield. She has had numerous solo exhibitions and her work has been seen at many international venues, including the recent *documenta XII* (Kassel), *SkulpturProjekteMünster*, several Whitney Biennials, the Institute of Contemporary Art (London), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Art Institute of Chicago and the Dia Center for the Arts (New York). She teaches Photography and Critical Studies at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University in New Jersey. SEE PAGE 157

Nedko Solakov (1957, Bulgaria) lives and works in Sofia. He makes use of almost all media, with a focus on painting, drawing, text, photography and installation. Central themes in his work are reflections on history, perceptions of art and the mechanisms present in the art business. He has shown extensively in international exhibitions including a mid-career retrospective *A 12 1/3 (and even more) Year Survey* (Casino Luxembourg; Rooseum, Malmö; and O.K Centrum Linz, 2003-2005), *Emotions* (Kunstmuseum Bonn; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; and Mathildenhoehe, Darmstadt, 2008-2009) and recently *Just Drawings (with and without stories)* (Dvir gallery, Tel Aviv, 2009), *Nedko Solakov* (Sofia City Gallery, Sofia, 2009), *The Freedom of Speech (or how to argue properly)* (Castello di Rivoli, Turin, 2009) and *Some Newly-Born Utopias* (artconnexion, Lille, 2009).
SEE PAGE 221

Superflex (Jakob Fenger, 1968, Rasmus Nielsen and Bjornstjerne Christiansen, both 1969) live and work in Copenhagen. They began working together in 1993 under the company name Superflex. Touching upon issues of commercialism and globalization, they seek to promote transparent power structures and to establish a new balance of power. They describe their projects as "tools," as proposals that invite people to actively participate in and communicate the development of experimental models that alter the prevailing economic production conditions. Their projects enlist the help of experts and the tools they produce can be further utilized and modified by their users. They have had numerous group and solo exhibitions including *Flooded Mc Donalds* (South London Gallery, London, 2009), *FREE BEER* (Galleria Vermelho, Sao Paulo, 2007) and *Supershow / I was paid to go there* (Kunsthalle Basel, 2005).
SEE PAGES 204, 205

Piotr Uklański (1968, Poland) lives and works in New York and Warsaw. His work uses motifs and strategies from popular culture, art, and cinema to refer to issues of cultural identity and authenticity, employing photography, collage, performance, sculpture, and installation. In 2006 he directed, wrote and produced the film *Summer Love*. His work has been exhibited internationally in various contexts including at the Museum of Modern Art (New York, 2000), the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, 2007), the 50th Venice Bienniale (2003), the 26th São Paolo Biennial (2004), Ludwig Museum (Cologne, 1998), Kunsthalle Basel (2004), Wiener Secession (2008) and Palazzo Grassi (Venice, 2006). SEE PAGE 250

Anton Vidokle (1965, Russia) lives and works in New York and Berlin. His work has been exhibited in shows such as the Venice Biennale, Lyon Biennial, Dak' Art Biennal of Contemporary African Art (Dakar), Lodz Biennial, Tate Modern (London), Moderna Galerija (Ljubljana), Musée d'art Modern de la Ville de Paris, Museo Carrillo Gil (Mexico City), UCLA Hammer (LA), ICA (Boston), Haus Der Kunst (Munich) and P.S.1 (New York) among others. With Julieta Aranda, he organized e-flux video rental, which traveled to numerous institutions including Portikus (Frankfurt), Kunst-Werke (Berlin), Extra City (Antwerp) and Carpenter Center (Harvard University). As founding director of e-flux, he has produced projects such as *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated By An Artist, Do it, Utopia Station poster project, An Image Bank for Everyday Revolutionary Life* and *Martha Rosler Library*. He is currently co-editor of *e-flux journal*. SEE PAGE 233

Barbara Visser (1966, The Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. Her work utilizes a range of media including photography, film, video, text, printed matter and performance in order to analyze notions of authenticity and ambiguity in the image/observer. She frequently mystifies the identity of the artist and she is known for being replaced by stand-ins. She has exhibited widely in international exhibitions including *Translation Paradoxes and Misunderstandings* (Shedhalle, Zurich, 2009), *Twilight Zone* (Kunst Raum Niederösterreich, Vienna, 2009), *Manifesta 7* (Trento, 2008), *Double Agent* (ICA, London, 2008), *Mystic Truths MYSTIC TRUTHS* (Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, 2007), *Habitat/ Variations* (Batiment d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, and Madrid, 2007) and the 27th São Paulo Biennial (2007). She is currently a guest lecturer at Academie van Bouwkunst in Amsterdam and mentor at the Design Academy in Eindhoven. SEE PAGE 219

Jeff Wall (1946, Canada) lives and works in Vancouver. He is known for his large photographic transparencies mounted on light boxes, which depict subject matter ranging from mundane corners of the urban environment to elaborate imaginary scenes. Drawing on the aesthetics of cinema, photography and painting, his work and writing have played a key role in the development of photographic imagery as an important arena in contemporary art. His work has been the focus of exhibitions around the world. He has had numerous international retrospectives including at Tate Modern (London, 2005), Museum of Modern Art (New York (2007), Chicago Art Institute (2007), Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco, 2008) and *Jeff Wall: Exposure* (Deutsche Guggenheim, 2008). He has won numerous awards including the Hasselblad Award (2002) and the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement, British Columbia's annual award for the visual arts. In 2006, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and named an Officer of the Order of Canada in December 2007.
SEE PAGE 214

Klaus Weber (1967, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. He conceives works across a variety of media and spatial units, which are often based on multifaceted technological interconnections and intricately organized production processes. His work often uses everyday structures and images and elements of nature in order to explore the sustainable potential of the impossible or untamable in a humorous and anarchic manner. Recently his work was exhibited at Transmission Gallery (Glasgow, 2009), Wiener Secession (Vienna, 2008), Bonner Kunstverein (Bonn, 2008), Andrew Kreps Gallery (New York, 2007) and the Hayward Gallery (London, 2007). SEE PAGE 174

Eyal Weizman (1970, Israel) lives and works in London. As a trained architect, his work includes buildings and stage sets in Israel/Palestine and Europe. In cooperation with the human rights organization B'Tselem, he initiated a report titled "Land Grab" on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law through the use of architecture and planning. Produced alongside this report was a map, the first of its kind to represent planning as a formal dimension of the Israeli Occupation. The map and report are currently widely used by NGOs and international organizations. He co-curated/co-edited the exhibition and publication *A Civilian Occupation, The Politics of Israeli Architecture,* which was based on his findings. These projects were banned by the Israeli Association of Architects, but later shown in New York, Berlin, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Malmö and Tel Aviv. He has taught at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, the Technion School of Architecture and Planning in Haifa (Lebanon) and the Bartlett School of Architecture in London. He was the recipient of the James Stirling Memorial Lecture Prize for 2006-2007 and was chosen to deliver the Edward Said Memorial Lecture (Warwick, 2010). He is the director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths College, University of London. UNABLE TO ATTEND

Jordan Wolfson (1980, United States) lives and works in Berlin and New York. His films, videos and installations often echo precedents in conceptualism fused with a unique poetic language of cultural references and personal experiences. He has exhibited internationally, including the solo shows *The Exhibition Formerly Known as Passengers: 2.6 Jordan Wolfson* (CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2009), *Untitled false document* (Swiss Institute of Contemporary Art, New York, 2008) and *Art Statements (with T293)* (Art 38 Basel, Basel, 2007). SEE PAGE 241

CO-ORGANIZER OF THE ARTISTS

Tanja Elstgeest (n.d., The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. She works as a freelance curator and project leader in contemporary arts. She studied Art History at the University of Amsterdam, graduating in 1999. From 1997-1998 she enrolled in the Curatorial Training Programme of De Appel in Amsterdam and co-curated the exhibition *Seamless.* After that she worked as a curator and organizer for several institutions in the Netherlands: De Appel, Amsterdam; de Vleeshal, Middelburg and Wittte de With, Rotterdam (2000-2005). From 2005-2008 she worked for the music theater ensemble De Veenfabriek, where she realized different projects in which she researched the interdisciplinary relationship in art practice of artists, theater makers and musicians. Together with Frédérique Bergholtz and Annie Fletcher she started *If I Can't Dance*...a curatorial platform with a special interest in performativity in 2005. Together with philosopher/researcher John Heijmans, she curated and organized the *Symposium on Sound* in Leiden (2008). Currently she is working on a project entitled *Silence, a composition,* for the Hiroshima Museum of Contemporary Art with support of the Fonds BKVB, Amsterdam.
SEE PAGE 257

THE EDITORS

Zoë Gray (1978, England) lives and works in Rotterdam. She is a curator at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. She has co-curated a number of projects there including solo exhibitions of Brian Jungen, Margaret Salmon, Gareth Moore, Geoffrey Farmer, Saâdane Afif, Liam Gillick, Annette Kelm and Billy Apple. Her writing has appeared in several catalogues and artists' books, and in many art journals including as *Metropolis M* (Amsterdam), *Contemporary* (London) and *The Fillip Review* (Vancouver). She recently curated the exhibition *Beton Belvedere* with Cyprien Gaillard (Stroom Den Haag, 2009). She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Cambridge and has an MA in Creative Curating from Goldsmiths College, London.
SEE PAGE 107

Miriam Kathrein (1980, Austria) lives and works in Vienna. She was a research fellow of the *Rotterdam Dialogues* symposia at Witte de With and subsequently worked as a curator at the Kunstverein Hamburg. She has organized a number of projects including *Tino Sehgal* (Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria, 2006) and *Artist vs. Curator/Curator vs. Artist: an ongoing debate project* (Kunstverein 'das weisse haus' Vienna, 2008, the Vienna Art Fair, 2008 and various locations in London and Vienna). She studied at the University of Applied Arts in London, Vienna and Montréal and at ELISAVA - Escola Superior de Disseny in Barcelona. She has an MA in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design in London. She now works as an independent curator at the intersection of visual arts, design and artistic & curatorial practice in the field of contemporary art - exploring artistic practice, collaborative strategies and new tendencies in contemporary art production and exhibition making.
SEE PAGE 137

Nicolaus Schafhausen (1965, Germany) lives and works in Brussels and Rotterdam. He is the Director of Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. He was the curator of the German Pavilion at both the 52nd and 53rd Venice Biennial (2007 and 2009). He was artistic director of Kunstlerhaus Stuttgart from 1995-1998 and Director of Frankfurter Kunstverein form 1999 to 2005. He has curated numerous solo exhibitions with Gerard Byrne, Isa Genzken, Liam Gillick, Jonathan Meese, Marcel Odenbach, Stephen Prina, Jozef Robakowski, and Cerith Wyn Evans. He has curated and co-curated a number of group exhibitions including *Populism* (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Center for Contemporary Art (CAC), Vilnius, National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, 2005) *Buhne des Lebens–Rhetorik des Gefuhls,* (Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Kunstbau, Munich (2006). In 2008, he was co-curator at the first Brussels Biennial. He is the curator of the 2010 media city Seoul (with SunJung Kim and Clara Kim).
SEE PAGE 155

Monika Szewczyk (1975, Poland) lives and works in Berlin and Rotterdam. She is a writer and editor who has been head of publications at Witte de With since 2008. In Rotterdam, she is also a tutor at Piet Zwart Institute. Szewczyk has published essays on contemporary art in numerous catalogues and journals, among them *MOUSSE* (Milan), *C Magazine* (Toronto), *Art Papers* (Atlanta) *frieze, Afterall* (both London), and *A Prior* (Ghent) for which she was a contributing editor (2007-2009). Books co-edited include *On (Surplus) Value in Art* by Diedrich Diedrichsen, the first of the Reflections Series co-published with Sternberg Press; monographs on Manon de Boer and Ian Wallace; Source Books on Geoffrey Farmer, Sung Hwan Kim and Billy Apple; as well as the critical reader *Meaning Liam Gillick* (co-published with The MIT Press and the institutions organizing *Liam Gillick: Three Perspectives and a Short Scenario* in 2009). She completed undergraduate studies in International Relations, Theatre and Film, and has an MA in Art History from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
SEE PAGE 218

Ariadne Urlus (1964, The Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. She is the Director of showroom MAMA (Media and Moving Art) in Rotterdam. She was a Project Co-ordinator at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, where she worked from 1996 until 2010. She is also a board member of the Rotterdam artist initiative ROOM. She studied art at Enschede (AKI) and Breda (Sint Joost) and arts and cultural sciences at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. SEE PAGE 73

*Editors' Note: Biographies were current at times of symposia.

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